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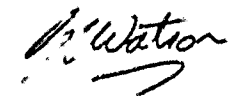
**CATHOLICISM IN ANGLICAN CULTURE AND THEOLOGY:
RESPONSES TO CRISIS IN ENGLAND (1937-1949)**

Giles C. Watson

March 1998

*A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
of the Australian National University*

Except where indicated otherwise in the notes and acknowledgments this thesis is entirely my own work.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Giles C. Watson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Giles C. Watson

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to the following, who must bear much of the credit for my having completed this thesis, and none of the blame for its deficiencies:-

Dr. Geoffrey Bartlett, who has been a good friend as well as a supervisor, for his helpful criticisms, good humour, enduring patience and timely admonitions. My advisors, Dr. David Blaazer and Prof. Iain McCalman, and the staff and students of the Department of History in the Australian National University. Professor David Parker, for his perceptive comments on my chapter on Elliot. Professor Ann Loades, Professor David E. .wn, Dr. Alan Suggate, Dr. Sheridan Gilley, and the staff and postgraduate students of the Department of Theology in the University of Durham, who helped to make my stay in Durham so profitable. Dr. Andrew Chandler, Revd. Canon Alan Wilkinson, Dr. John Wolffe, Dr Kenneth Wolfe and Dr. Jane Garnett, for their enthusiastic and encouraging responses to my research. Dr. Barbara Reynolds, for replying to my correspondence with such enthusiasm, and for numerous tips on Dorothy L. Sayers. Christopher Dean, of the Dorothy L. Sayers Society, and the editorial board of *VII: An Anglo American Literary Review*, Wheaton College, Illinois. Bishop Peter Walker, Hans Feibusch, Quentin Bell, and Bishop Frank West for their friendly and helpful correspondence. Dr. Marjorie Reeves, for comments and reminiscences concerning the Moot. Revd. Dr. Christopher Evans, for providing a living, and lively, link with so many of the "characters" discussed here, and for agreeing to wear a cope, purported to have belonged to Edward King, at my wedding.

The staff of the British archives holding papers relevant to my research: Lambeth Palace Library (especially Melanie Barber); New College Library in the University of Edinburgh; Durham Dean and Chapter Library (especially Roger Norris); the Department of Western Manuscripts, Bodleian Library; the Library of King's College, London; the Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York; the Guildhall Library, London; the Modern Archive, King's College, Cambridge; the West Sussex Record Office; St. Paul's Cathedral Library; the Newsome Library, Institute of Education, London; and York Minister Library. The Churches of St. Matthew at Northampton, St. Elisabeth at Eastbourne and St. Michael and All Angels at Berwick for supplying reproductions of art works, and Bishop Hannington Memorial Church, Hove, for allowing me to take photographs. The Tate Gallery and

the Imperial War Museum, for reproductions of art works and permission to take photographs.

I should also like to thank a number of my relatives and friends, who did so much to sustain me during my research and writing. First, I am deeply thankful to my parents and my grandmothers, for their love and practical support, and to my daughter, Hannah-Rose, who had much to do with my persisting with this work and bringing it to completion. Then to my late great uncle, Alexander Watson, who provided the earliest starting point for this thesis through his reminiscences on the bombing of Coventry, and his enthusiasm for Church art. Yvonne and Andrew Parrey have been the source of inexhaustible support, friendship and timely advice, as has Kathryn Pratt, whose zest for life and expertise in organised frivolity has been much appreciated. I am indebted to Heather Davies and her family for companionship and support during the first half of my researches. Thanks are also due to my friends Steve and Nedra Playford and Wendy Macknamara, to the postgraduate students in the Department of Theology at Durham University, to Elizabeth Raine, John Squires and Sarah Acland. The congregations of All Saints' Margaret Street, London, and of St. Oswald's and St. Margaret's, Durham, were most welcoming, and I owe particular thanks to Revd. Ben de la Mare for many discussions on matters historical, literary and theological. I am also grateful to Roger Haynes, Paul Young, Tim James and Michelle Nickerson for the sustaining pleasure of their company. The staff and students of Ripon College, Cuddesdon, have provided an altogether congenial environment in which to conclude my researches. Finally, I thank my wife Natalie for past, present and future.

Abstract

This thesis views the Catholic tendency in English Anglicanism within the context of its wider theological and cultural environment, exploring its responses to the crises of 1937 to 1949. A preliminary chapter discusses the wartime writings of neo-orthodox writers D.R. Davies and Melville Channing-Pearce, and the Evangelical Bishop Christopher Chavasse, as non-Catholic Anglicans who dissociated themselves from liberal Protestantism. These groups emphasised original sin and redemption, and younger exponents of Catholicism sought a synthesis which would accept these emphases without abandoning Catholic ecclesiology. A discussion of the *Signposts* series of 1940 and of the Malvern Conference of 1941 focuses on Donald MacKinnon's appropriation of earlier Catholic representations of the Church as an extension of the Incarnation, in response to the Phoney War, the Blitz and the Fall of France. The Church, he argued, must prophetically criticise the actions of the State and the banalities of modern culture. He advanced a model of the Christian priest as embodying the paradox of a Church simultaneously composed of sinful individuals, and yet showing forth the divine Christ.

MacKinnon's wartime writings had their practical counterpart in the ministry of Bishop George Bell of Chichester. Bell's Incarnational theology motivated his patronage of artists, long-standing opposition to Nazism, and protests against war policies which implicitly accepted the notion of total war. T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* are interpreted in the context of his involvement in the Christendom Group. Eliot emphasised an Incarnational Catholic mysticism which confronts suffering rather than opting for the indifference of the "Yogi". Catholic Incarnational dogma, and its implications for liberty, morality and cultural integrity, also inspired Dorothy L. Sayers's unsuccessful attempt to produce an "Oecumenical Penguin" which would expound Christian doctrine to a lay readership, as part of her wider wartime campaign to popularise Catholic Christology through speeches and radio presentations such as *The Man Born to Be King*. Catholic Anglicans also contributed to a confidential ecumenical discussion group, the Moot, airing their concerns about the role of an established Church in the light of totalitarian threats to civilisation, and advocating a dissenting witness, combined with a reassessment of Christian language, in the face of repressive forms of collectivism. A final case-study explores the commissioning by Walter Hussey of Graham Sutherland's *Crucifixion* for St. Matthew's Parish Church in Northampton, a response to the Nazi concentration camps, and the Anglican Catholic contributions to the British Council of Churches Commission on *The Era of Atomic Power*, in which MacKinnon and Bell reiterated their plea for the Church to maintain a critical aloofness from the mechanisms of total war. The thesis argues that Catholics sought the "middle way", not merely in liturgy, but under "the conditions of actual life", where the problems of casuistry were fraught with awful dilemmas, and the conflicting claims of Yogi and Commissar, active and contemplative, Incarnationalist and Redemptionist, "Catholic" and "Protestant", assailed them from either side.

For Hannah-Rose

To some extent the Christian baptised into the death of Christ must always, if he is loyal to his Master, be a disruptive force in society. For in and through his baptism he accepts the verdict of rejection pronounced from the Cross upon man's cultural achievement and is thereby irrevocably committed to the task of pointing the whole social frame to its origin beyond itself. The Church in its members is both involved in, and independent of, the historical cultural moment. It is involved in it, for it is compact of individual historical men and women who are here to-day and gone to-morrow, but it is independent of it, for it is at the same time the Body of Him who is the dissolver of all cultural forms that destroy and impede the attainment by the creature of his true status.

- Donald Mackinnon, 1940.

And the lesson of Jesus Christ, among other things, is that the life that begins with God, which is centred on God, which endures the worst suffering and the deepest wrongs with a faith that nothing can shatter, is the life which has the scent of survival after death, and is indeed the only kind of life which is worth while; whereas the life that refuses conflict, that seeks comfort, is centred on worldly things, wealth, or pleasure, or power, carries the seeds, and often bears the fruits, of misery and ruin.

- Bishop George Bell of Chichester,
Septuagesima, 1939.

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Abbreviations

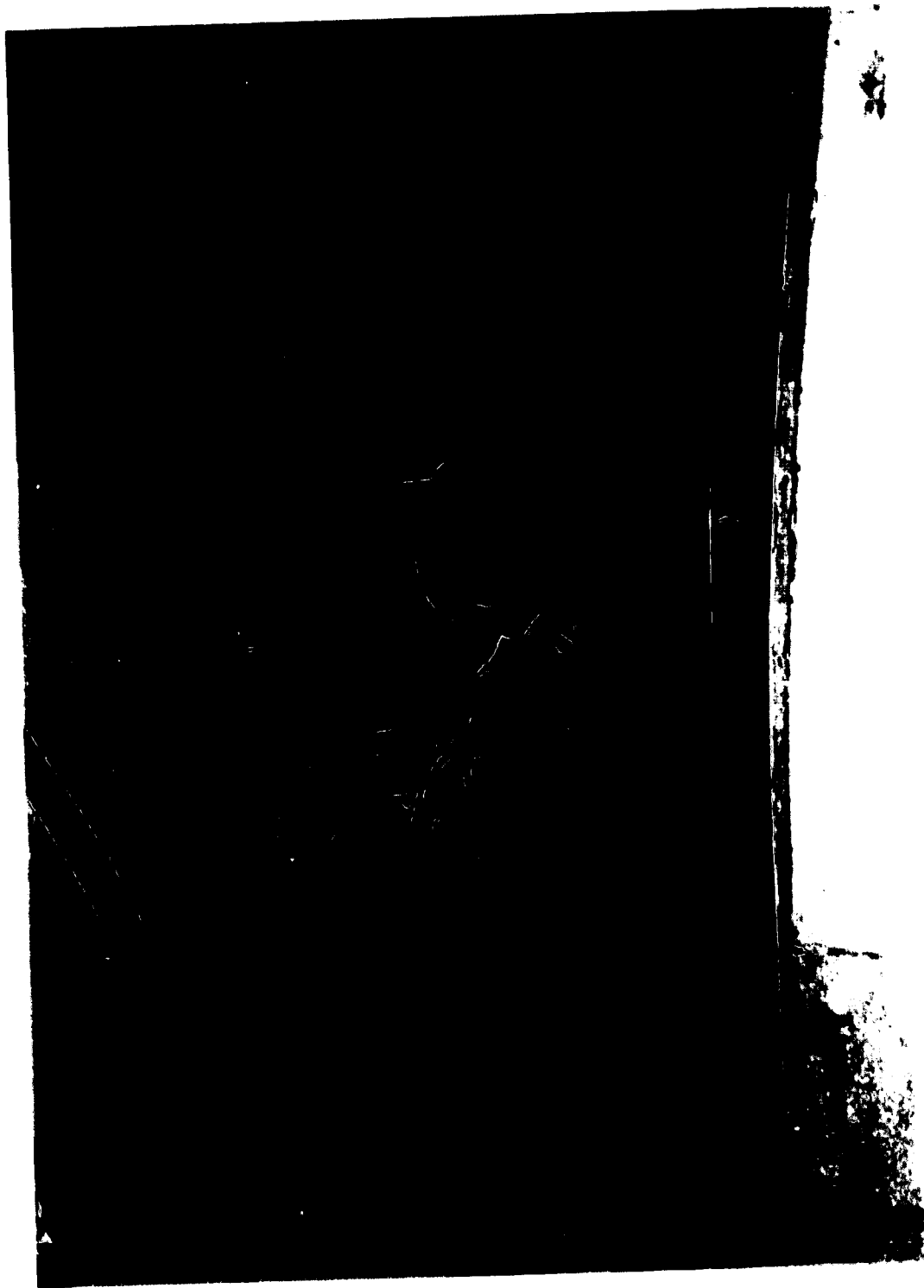
In addition to the standard abbreviations for page, folio, editor(s), volume(s), etc, the following are used in the footnotes.

BELLP	Papers of George Kennedy Allen Bell, Lambeth Palace Library.
BN	T.S. Eliot, 'Burnt Norton' (<i>Complete Poems and Plays</i> , 1977.)
BWC	Papers of the Bishops' War Committee, 1939-44, MS 2448, Lambeth Palace Library.
CAND	Diary of Henry de Candole, Lambeth Palace Library, MSS 3072-3093.
CFG	Papers of Cyril Foster Garbett, York Minster Library.
CGL	Papers of Cosmo Gordon Lang, Archbishop of Canterbury 1928-42, Lambeth Palace Library.
CMC	Sermons and other papers of Christopher Maude Chavasse, Bishop of Rochester 1940-1960, NRA 27561, Bodleian Library, Oxford.
CN-L	<i>The Christian News-Letter.</i>
CW	Papers of Charles Williams (uncat.), Bodleian Library, Oxford.
DOND	Wartime diaries of A.C. Don, MS 1469, 2861-71, Lambeth Palace Library.
DONS	Sermons and occasional addresses of A.C. Don, MS 1969, Lambeth Palace Library.
DS	T.S. Eliot, 'The Dry Salvages' (<i>Complete Poems and Plays</i> , 1977.)
EC	T.S. Eliot, 'East Coker' (<i>Complete Poems and Plays</i> , 1977.)
EU	Papers of Evelyn Underhill, King's College, London.
GF	Papers of Geoffrey Fisher, Bishop of London and later Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Palace Library.

HHHJ	Journal of Herbert Hensley Henson, Durham Dean and Chapter Library.
HHHL	Letterbook of Herbert Hensley Henson, Durham Dean and Chapter Library.
HHHS	Sermons and papers of Herbert Hensley Henson, Durham Dean and Chapter Library.
JKT	Papers of J.K. Talbot, Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York.
JRHM	Diaries of John Richard Humpidge Moorman, Lambeth Palace Library.
LG	T.S. Eliot, 'Little Gidding' (<i>Complete Poems and Plays</i> , 1977.)
LST	Papers of Lionel Spencer Thornton, Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York.
MOOTE	Moot Papers, John Baillie Collection, University of Edinburgh, New College Library.
MOOTL	Moot Papers, London University, Institute of Education Library, London.
TC	Papers of Philip Bayrd ("Tubby") Clayton, Guildhall Library, London.
TSE	Unpublished addresses, manuscripts and miscellaneous papers of Thomas Stearns Eliot, King's College, Cambridge.
WH	Walter Hussey Papers, West Sussex Record Office.
WT	Papers of William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury 1942-1944, Lambeth Palace Library.

Frontispiece

**Duncan Grant: *Christ in Glory* (detail, bottom right), chancel arch, St. Michael and All Angels, Berwick. Bishop George Bell of Chichester and George Mitchell, Rector of Berwick.
(Photograph by the author.)**



There are few more evocative accounts of the impact of the Second World War on the life of an influential clergyman than that contained in the diaries of Alan Campbell Don, chaplain to Archbishop Lang of Canterbury and the Speaker of the House of Commons, Canon of Westminster Abbey, and Rector of St. Margaret's, Westminster from December 1940. Don had been expecting war for some time, but, like Lang, had supported Chamberlain's appeasement policy¹. On 27th September 1938, Don described the air-raid precautions during the Munich crisis. Trenches were dug in the Archbishop's park, and preparations made to evacuate school children in the event of war. Don predicted that, "The dislocation of normal life will be enormous at first, if the worst comes."² Three days later, he rejoiced that, "Now at last and at the very eleventh hour there is a real chance that civilization may not only be saved but that a new era of pacification is opening up before us,"³ but in the following September, war could no longer be averted. Early in the morning of the 6th September, 1939, "one of the most lovely summer mornings imagineable", the staff of Lambeth Palace rose to the sound of air-raid sirens. Don hurried to Lang's bedroom, to find him "standing in his pyjamas fumbling his way into a purple cassock". He exhorted the elderly archbishop to hurry, "and mentioned the desirability of inserting his teeth." Lang absent-mindedly attended to his ablutions, insisted - wisely, as Don thought - on relieving himself, and was then escorted to the crypt, which had been converted into an air-raid shelter. Once installed there, Lang

¹ "A policy of general appeasement & the speeding up of our defences so that we may be able to speak to that ruffian Hitler on equal terms seems to be the only hope of avoiding war." *DOND*, 18 October 1938, M.S. 2866, p. 74. Neither Don nor Lang could agree with Chamberlain's critics about the "betrayal" of Czechoslovakia, (23 September 1938; M.S. 2866, pp. 63-64; and see J.G. LOCKHART, *Cosmo Gordon Lang*, London, 1949, pp. 426-427), but they were under no illusions about Nazi brutality. They were certainly better informed than Bishop A.C. Headlam of Gloucester, Chairman of the Church of England's Council on Foreign Relations, who remarked in the Anglican newspaper, *The Guardian* on 2 September 1938 that "It is quite untrue to say that National Socialism is incompatible with Christianity." See Alan WILKINSON, *Dissent or Conform? War, Peace and the English Churches 1900-1945*, London, 1986, pp. 137-139; Andrew CHANDLER, 'Munich and Morality: The Bishops of the Church of England and Appeasement', *Twentieth Century British History*, 5, No. 1, 1994, pp. 77-99; and his *Brethren in Adversity: Bishop George Bell, the Church of England and the Crisis of German Protestantism 1933-1939*, Church of England Record Society 4, Suffolk, 1997, pp. 11ff.

² *DOND*, 27 September 1938, M.S. 2866, p. 64.

³ *DOND*, 30 September 1938, M.S. 2866, p. 68.

"took a seat at a safe distance from his fellow refugees and sat miserably for a while, protesting that he had been dragged to this dungeon quite unnecessarily."⁴

The forced descent was indeed unnecessary⁵, as it would be for several months, but by 13th June 1940, Don was recording air-raids "taking place nightly in various parts of the country". At Chelmsford, Don reported in June, "the poor bishop is a bit shaken", because a German plane had crashed in flames in his garden, "and three dead airmen were hurled out into his paddock, one decapitated!"⁶ From early September, 1940, his diary records the Blitz in London. One bomb hit an old grave in the parish church adjoining Lambeth Palace, and blasted the head of the corpse onto the roof, filling the air with an intolerable stench. Lang quietly considered evacuating the Palace⁷. On 20th September, bombs damaged parts of it, and Don's own St. Margaret's was left "unusable for the time being". On 9th October, St. Paul's Cathedral was hit, the altar demolished and the sanctuary severely damaged. Then, on 16th November, Don reported the bombing of Coventry, in the course of which the cathedral was destroyed and "Mervyn the Bishop has seen ten years' work shattered in a night". In May 1941, there were problems with incendiaries landing on Lollard's Tower, and on the 11th there was a major raid on Westminster with direct hits on Lambeth Palace, Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament. The Deanery was ruined⁸. In 1944, London was terrorised once again, this time by "robot planes". At Matins on 18th June, one descended uncomfortably close to Don and his congregation in St. Margaret's:

I was reading the first lesson (the Song of Deborah and Barak) when we heard one of these infernal machines approaching - it flew directly over us with guns blazing at it - the noise was deafening and I stopped reading - we waited for the worst to happen - a moment later we heard a loud crash and everything shook and silence again reigned - I finished the lesson with the words "So let all thine enemies perish O Lord" etc, and the service continued. The sirens blew off again during my sermon and we were all relieved when the service was safely over.

⁴ DOND, 6 September 1939, M.S. 2867, p. 98.

⁵ Richard OVERY, *Why the Allies Won*, London, 1995, p. 107.

⁶ DOND, 13 June 1940, M.S. 2868, p. 67. For descriptions of air raids by another clerical diarist see JRHM, M.S. 3635, pp. 194, 196, 198, 200 (Sunday September 1st; September 8th; 15th, 22nd. Descriptions of air raids experienced first hand: October 6th 1940, p. 204; Oct 13th, 1940, p. 207; December 22nd, 1940, p. 227; Christmas 1940, p. 232. MS 3636: January 12, 1941, p. 3; May 11, 1941, p. 19; Manchester, 1 June 1941, p. 24.)

⁷ DOND, 17 September 1940, M.S. 2868, p. 94.

⁸ DOND, M.S. 2868, pp. 89-90, 95, 100, 103, 118, 125; M.S. 2869, pp. 28-34. See also W.R. MATTHEWS, *Memories and Meanings*, London, 1969, pp. 254ff.

I was gratified to be told by Mrs. Grunston that the only thing that didn't shake was my voice!

The bomb had flown on to hit the Guards' Chapel during a parade service, causing many casualties⁹. Later, another "Doodlebug" hit a petrol tank on Lambeth Road, blasting out the windows of the Palace and the Parish Church¹⁰, and in September, Don recorded the V2 rocket attacks on London. Small wonder that he frequently alluded to the possibility of his own imminent death. The war had indeed brought with it the "dislocation of normal life".

For other priests, the "dislocation" was less intense. The diary of Henry de Candole, who spent the war in the West Sussex country parish of Henfield¹¹, is more notable for lists of books read aloud by himself and his wife, than for descriptions of privation and danger on the home-front. Candole opened the diary with a potted history of the war up to September 1940, drawing upon stock mythology in his description of "the miraculous calm of the elements" during the withdrawal from Dunkirk¹². During the summer of 1940, Sussex had "become a frontline district instead of a 'reception area'". Bombs were occasionally jettisoned over country parishes: Henfield had received three in one night, but they had landed in the meadows. For Candole, "One of the oddest features of the war is our ignorance of what is going on anywhere beyond our immediate neighbourhood": he conjectured that the Kent coast "must be getting it badly". Much of East Sussex had been evacuated, with evacuee children from London being transferred to the Midlands. There was constant air-activity, and "an occasional dog-fight above us", but Henfield had no air-raid siren, and was still considered safe enough for some of the London evacuees to remain¹³. In 1944, Candole recorded the passing overhead of "Pilotless Planes", reflecting with ironic relief that these were rarely shot down over "open country", and "have so far done very little damage to our parts."¹⁴ Comparatively secure in his rural parish, he could afford a certain detachment, finding the war a cause for inconvenience and concern, but rarely disruption. More disturbing for

⁹ DOND, 18 June 1944, M.S. 2870, pp. 95-96. The destruction of the Guards' Chapel by the flying bomb was not officially acknowledged until early July. See HHHJ, Vol. 93, 9th July 1944, p. 3.

¹⁰ DOND, 21 July 1944, M.S. 2870, p. 104.

¹¹ For an account of Candole's life at Henfield, see Peter J. JAGGER, *Bishop Henry de Candole: His Life and Times 1895-1971*, Bedfordshire, 1975, pp.124-149.

¹² See Nicholas HARMAN, *Dunkirk, The Necessary Myth*, London, 1980; John TERRAINE, *The Smoke and the Fire: Myths and Anti-Myths of War 1861-1945*, London, 1980.

¹³ CAND, 14 September 1940, ff. 1-4.

¹⁴ CAND, 11 July 1944, M.S. 3078, ff. 61, 61v.

Candole were his visits to neighboring parishes trapped "in the depths of protestantism", and the secession of one of his curates to Rome¹⁵.

Herbert Hensley Henson, who had retired as Bishop of Durham in 1938, would turn 80 in 1943. He hoped to spend his final years at Hintlesham in Suffolk, but in 1940 had accepted a vacant Canonry in Westminster Abbey, which Winston Churchill had called a "piece of War Work"¹⁶. He held the Canonry for less than a year, before returning reluctantly to retirement due to failing eyesight¹⁷. Henson was frustrated, by his growing blindness, his ageing body, and his sense of impotence to contribute to the war-effort. He felt "stricken with shame and self-contempt", because he lived in comparative comfort amid this "unexampled cosmic disaster". He only hoped that he could contribute something towards "strengthening the national spirit"¹⁸. A powerful preacher, he now reflected that "*Sermons* are so patently and overwhelmingly futile, that no considering preacher can reflect without dismay that he has no other instrument wherewith to wage his battle..."¹⁹ It was the more frustrating because Henson saw the war as a "Crusade" to protect Christian principles from totalitarian paganism²⁰, using the word freely while other Church leaders shied from it. He had not supported appeasement: he protested, publicly and privately, over Abyssinia²¹, and by 1935 was preaching about the "cynicism" and "naked opportunism" of the continental Dictatorships²². He crossed swords publicly with Arthur Headlam, Bishop of Gloucester, who felt that the Confessing Church in Germany should accept the legitimacy of Nazi authority²³. If the war was a

¹⁵ *CAND*, 10 February 1943, f. 38.

¹⁶ Herbert Hensley HENSON to the Dean of Westminster, 3 August 1940, *HHHL*, Vol. 112, p. 404.

¹⁷ Owen CHADWICK, *Hensley Henson: A Study in the Friction Between Church and State*, Oxford, 1983, pp. 307-312; H.H. HENSON, *Last Words in Westminster Abbey*, London, 1941, p. 13. Henson held the canonry from September 1940 to April 1941. He took the bombing of Westminster Abbey as a "personal bereavement" (pp. 14, 142).

¹⁸ *HHHJ*, Vol. 85, 13 January 1942, p. 36.

¹⁹ *HHHJ*, Vol. 79, 11 June 1940, p. 71. Henson defended the legitimacy of the mediaeval crusades in his sermon on 'Christendom' on May 5th, 1940. (*Last Words*, p. 79.)

²⁰ Andrew CHANDLER, 'The Church of England and the Obliteration Bombing of Germany in the Second World War', *English Historical Review*, 1993, p. 924. Henson was supported by the Dean of Durham in the *Guardian*, January 5 1940, p. 6, who described the War as "The Last and Best Crusade".

²¹ "The assumption that the maintenance of *peace* is the rightful objective of Christian effort does not command my acceptance. I think there are situations in which, not peace, but *war*, may be the duty of Christians: & I strongly suspect that was the case when we gave down before Mussolini's blustering in the matter of Abyssinia." Herbert Hensley HENSON to the Dean of Chichester, December 3 1938, *HHHL*, Vol. 112, p. 92. His views were aired publicly in *Abyssinia: Reflections of an Onlooker*, London, 1936, and in *Last Words*, p. 96. See WILKINSON, *Dissent or Conform?*, pp. 165-168.

²² Herbert Hensley HENSON, Sermon preached in Sunderland Parish Church on the occasion of its re-opening after repair, 1935, *HHHS*, ff. 11a, 11b. See also Andrew CHANDLER, 'The Church of England and Nazi Germany 1933-1945', PhD Thesis, Cambridge University, 1991, pp. 7, 97.

²³ WILKINSON, *Dissent or Conform?*, pp. 145-151. Headlam outlined his case in 'The German Church', the *Guardian*, 2 September 1938, p. 568: "The idea that prevails in this country is that

"Crusade", however, this did not mean that it would be beneficial to religion, morality or good literature. There were, to begin with, the temptations to sexual "laxity". Henson complained about young girls, "some of them hardly out of school, who besiege the soldiers with their impudent attentions." "Temptation," he surmised, "comes mainly from the petticoats."²⁴ Later, when the Allied armies converged on Berlin, he fretted about the inevitable collision between the "sentimental" sex-attitudes of British soldiers, coloured by Christianity, and those of "the Russians who are professedly atheistic"²⁵. The war would stimulate "pseudo-religion and pseudo-science", but Henson castigated those optimistic ecclesiastics who assumed that "the war will be followed by a great Religious Recovery"²⁶. He complained privately to Lang that evacuated children were often "dirty, disorderly, verminous, and, in some cases, disgustingly diseased", and wondered, in one of his less endearing moments, "What is to be done for the unfortunate householders who have been deserted by their servants?"²⁷ At Hintlesham, the danger of bombardment was comparatively small. When a stray incendiary bomb landed in the roadway, igniting a nearby haystack, Henson discovered that the wooden handle of the water-pump had rotted away, and the gardener prosaically informed him that in any case there was not a pail to be found in the house. "My long absenteeism from normal human interests," he mused in his journal, "ensures a completeness of inutility when there is need of effective action which it is difficult to credit and impossible to exaggerate."²⁸ Not long afterwards, however, Henson and his household witnessed a bombing raid on the coast of Suffolk, which demonstrated how far they had adapted

Christianity is being persecuted [in Germany]... There are some things which give colour to this picture, but they are grossly exaggerated and the picture is not true." The Editorial offered a disclaimer, and there were angry responses in the issue for 23 September (p. 612). Headlam's view was also contradicted by the Dean of Chichester, A.S. DUNCAN-JONES, whose *The Struggle for Religious Freedom in Germany* was published in 1938. See also P. JEFFRIES, 'A.C. Headlam: His Place in the Tradition and Development of the Church', M.A. Thesis, University of Durham, 1991; CHANDLER, 'The Church of England and Nazi Germany', pp. 105-109.

²⁴ *HHHJ*, Vol. 82, 13 February 1941, p. 91. See also Vol. 92, 18 March 1944, p. 84: "Some [men returning from leave] have found their wives unfaithful, families broken up, and children not their own..." Henson's remarks are supported by the evidence offered by Kathleen BLISS, 'Sex Relationships in War-Time', *CN-L*, Supplement, No. 184, 16 June 1943. Other clergy submitted that the war was causing a decline in Church attendance. See *JRHM*, M.S. 3636, (Summary of Events up to the End of 1941), p. 27: "Numbers in Church are certainly down, especially at Evensong. The war has had the effect of choking off the people on the fringe..."

²⁵ *HHHJ*, Vol. 94, 9 July, 1945, pp. 76-78. See also Vol. 83, 20 July 1941, p. 373.

²⁶ *HHHJ*, in Letterbook, Vol. 112, 19 February 1945, p. 497. "War is always hostile to virtue, and to religion; and "total war" is the most degrading form of war," Vol. 94, 11 July 1945, (ideas for a talk to the Mothers' Union) p. 86, and See Vol. 90, 4 November 1943, p. 146. His expectations are confirmed by R. CURRIE, A. GILBERT, and C. HORSLEY, *Churches and Churchgoers: Patterns of Church Growth in the British Isles since 1700*, Oxford, 1977. They find significant wartime growth only among Pentecostals and Jehovah's Witnesses, and the membership statistics of these groups are unreliable.

²⁷ Herbert Hensley HENSON to Cosmo Cantuar, 14 December 1939, *HHHL*, Vol. 112, p. 297.

²⁸ *HHHJ*, Vol. 86, 26 June 1942, p. 49.

to the war. They "watched the performance for about half an hour, when it ceased and we went to bed". Henson reflected that, "It is strange that the spectacle should move us so little... our minds have been so familiarized by records of bombardment, & our own imaginations so fatigued by horrifying descriptions of the ravage and ruin that it causes, that we simply are unable to absorb or appreciate any more." The fear of Death had waned, not because of present danger, but through over-exposure to Press reports.²⁹

Henson read the newspapers avidly, commenting at length on the progress of the war in his journal. He also maintained a vast correspondence, with fellow Bishops, with government officials and with some who saw active service³⁰. He held in particular esteem a young army chaplain, "Dick" (D.B. Elliott) whom he had known since he had been brought as a child, by a schoolmaster, to visit Auckland Castle. Henson had paid for his education after the death of his father, and now wrote letters of fatherly advice, warning him that "men on active service are men in abnormal circumstances and their reactions to their experiences are not wholly trustworthy", and telling him to "be on your guard against hasty conclusions."³¹ When Dick wrote to ask, "*But are you sure that the use of force to destroy Paganism is either wise or Christian? Is not the Christian weapon suffering rather than the sword?*", Henson responded with a classical definition of the Just War³². Dick was a courageous chaplain, landing himself in "a spot of trouble... for preaching too openly about obeying God rather than men when one has no alternative but to choose between the two."³³ In Libya, Dick found that "Nowhere do we chaplains find

²⁹ HHHJ, 25 August 1942, p. 211.

³⁰ See, for example, the transcription of a letter from Hedley THOMPSON to Henson, recorded in HHHJ, Vol. 79, 5 July 1940, pp. 111-114. Thompson, a fighter pilot, had come to see war as a "monster", testifying that "I cannot but feel that the conscientious objectors are right, and yet our so-called Civilization has imbued in my mind a disgust for them... True, at the beginning of the War, I was filled with a Romantic delusion about war, but now I have drunk from its cup, and deeply... I know I am proud that I have done something for my country, but I hate it all the time."

³¹ Herbert Hensley HENSON to Dick, 14 April 1940, HHHJ, Vol. 112, p. 370. "I noticed during the last War, and I see many signs that the present War will yield the same result, that the Chaplains were disposed to regard with dislike and contempt many accustomed procedures which they found (or thought they found) to be irrational and unedifying, which yet, when the dust of conflict had settled, and the furniture of normal life had again to be reckoned with, they found were really indispensable." See CHADWICK, *Henson*, p. 326.

³² HHHJ, Vol. 82, 30 January 1941, pp. 57-58 (Henson's emphasis). "The Divine method in the government of mankind includes the use of physical coercion in the interest of moral advance... *War is the only known method of enforcing morality in the international sphere*, and must therefore be regarded as part of the Divinely ordered scheme of human progress... Christ does not prohibit War, but requires (i) right motive, (ii) congruous method of warfare, (iii) right use of victory..." Henson had defended the concept of *justa bella* in 'Some Reflections of Pacifism', *The Guardian*, July 14 1939, p. 444.

³³ HHHJ, Vol. 84, 17 December 1941, pp. 268-269. Henson argued that Dick should "give larger place to the indispensable principle that no man's responsibilities are unconditional and universal. To

ourselves so much in demand and so seriously considered as here in the desert."³⁴ The desert had affected Dick and his fellows deeply, "simplifying our lives and deepening our sense of religion," and he testified that while he looked forward to "returning to Parochial life... I would not have missed the experience of serving the ministry in the Army for anything."³⁵ Nine months after receiving this letter, Henson heard that Dick had died in a prison camp. He had eaten from a tin can that had been opened for a week, the resulting food-poisoning had gone untreated, and he had contracted peritonitis³⁶. Henson was deeply shaken; his journal entries became more pessimistic. He complained about "The monotonous tale of devastation, which is rapidly destroying the indispensable framework of modern civilization"; the crusade had become "almost an act of cosmic suicide"³⁷. When Montgomery described the Allied successes in the Desert War, Henson observed, "it is impossible to feel very exultant about victories which have been gained by the simple method of accumulating an absolutely overwhelming weight of metal, & then discharging it suddenly on an apparently helpless enemy. Total war is as basely ignominious as it is beyond all precedent cruel."³⁸

Henson's response to the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, like that of many ecclesiastics, revealed how far total war had departed from anything reconcilable with the Christian conception of a "Just War". The Vatican immediately condemned the attacks, pointing to the example of Leonardo da Vinci, who had suppressed his design for a helicopter, fearing it would be too dangerous to unleash it on the world. At first, Henson confessed, "I cannot see any difference in moral principle between using the latest and most tremendous lethal weapon, and using any

be, as the soldier is confessedly and conspicuously, under discipline, is to accept an allocation of responsibility, & not allow oneself to usurp the burden of another. Within the limits of discipleship this consideration may, perhaps, cover the ground." By the time of the Nuremberg trials, Henson had changed his mind.

³⁴ HHHJ, Vol. 85, 28 March 1942, p. 153.

³⁵ Transcribed letter from Dick, HHHJ, Vol. 86, 4 June 1942, p. 4. Secular literature commonly emphasised the dual role of the desert as a place which may "tempt and spiritualize". See Adam PIETTE, *Imagination at War: British Fiction and Poetry 1939-1945*, London, 1995, pp. 11-12. Piette argues that such portrayals of the desert were efforts to romanticise its effects, "products of war propaganda and war thinking," designed to shift attention from the fact that war in the desert was horrific and deadening.

³⁶ HHHJ, Vol. 87, 11 March 1943, p. 262, 1 April 1943, p. 305. Henson's esteem for Dick is testified by the fact that his 'Confessio Fidei', planned for the final volume of his autobiography, *Retrospect on an Unimportant Life*, was initially conceived as an imaginary letter to him (Vol. 89, 3 August 1943, p. 82).

³⁷ HHHJ, Vol. 88, 27 May 1943, p. 101. He prefixed these observations with a quotation from Cowper, 'The Task', Bk II: "My soul is sick with ev'ry day's report/ Of wrong and outrage with which the earth is filled/... in a world that seems/ To toll the death-bell of its own decease."

³⁸ HHHJ, Vol. 93, 19th July 1944, p. 29.

of the more familiar of such weapons."³⁹ In the days that followed, he read the growing correspondence on the subject in *The Times*. He found himself "out of accord" with the parishioners at Hintlesham, who, holding that the atomic bomb had "done the trick", launched themselves into paroxysms of thanksgiving⁴⁰. On August 14th, Henson lamented that Churchill's "great ministry will always be associated with a great crime - the use of the atomic bomb thus aligning Britain with Hitlerite Germany."⁴¹ Exploding the bombs had, in Henson's view, contravened the code of military conduct accepted as normative for "Christian belligerents" at the start of the war. The Allies had claimed that they would only use poison gas if the Germans used it first, but now they had deliberately used atomic weapons without warning. Henson applauded Dean Thickeness, who had banned the use of St. Alban's Abbey for a Thanksgiving service⁴². The destruction of the Japanese cities completed the erosion Henson's conception of the war as a "Great Crusade for the rescue of the moral values which Hitler had openly trampled under foot". Such a crusade was, it now seemed, impossible under the conditions of modern warfare. Having long resisted a tendency among younger priests to portray modern civilisation as inherently corrupt and responsible for the war, arguing instead that modern civilisation was demonstrating its nobility by resisting the dictatorships, he now found Churchill's "apology" in the House of Commons for the use of the atomic bomb "faulty in logic, unsound in principle, & irrelevant in reference", amounting to "nothing more than the cynical plea of Caiaphas." It was a disillusioned old man who, on 17th August, 1945, wrote that "the outlook is heavily clouded for the civilized world"⁴³.

The private responses of Don, Candole and Henson illustrate the variety of ways in which the war affected the lives of Anglican clergy. The differences between

³⁹ *HHHJ*, Vol. 94, 8 August 1945, pp. 132-133.

⁴⁰ *HHHJ*, Vol. 94, 12 August 1945, p. 146.

⁴¹ *HHHJ*, Vol. 94, 14 August 1945, p. 151. "We can see that this abominable weapon was not really needed to secure the surrender of Japan: and if it hastened that surrender, even this advantage may be found finally to have upset the economic and social situation in Britain and America."

⁴² *HHHJ*, Vol. 94, 16 August 1945, pp. 159-161. At the Thanksgiving service in his own Church, Henson "spoke very plainly about our deplorable and indefensible action in using the Atomic Bomb to destroy Japanese cities, & I poured scorn on the apologies (e.g. by Winston in the House of Commons) for an essentially immoral action. The congregation listened demurely." (Vol. 94, 19 August 1945, p. 170.)

⁴³ *HHHJ*, Vol. 94, 17 August 1945, pp. 164-166. Perhaps Henson had already reached this conclusion before the bombs were exploded. See, for example, his entry for 27 June 1944, (Vol. 92) p. 151: "War has now become so horrible and destructive that the instinct of self-preservation may possibly effect what Religion and Morality have hitherto failed to secure. Men, i.e. civilized men, will give up war because they are afraid to fight. But even this poor argument demands more reasonableness than we can reasonably assume in such creatures as the History of Humanity has disclosed. We are madmen, and we live in a cosmic madhouse!"

their experiences may be attributed partly to their various roles in the Church of England - Don as a priest acquainted with the ecclesiastical concerns of Lambeth Palace and the political life of Westminster, Candole as a priest destined for episcopal office, working in a quiet country parish, and Henson as a retired Bishop. The three possessed very different temperaments: Don was, as his position demanded, calm, reliable and humorous, Candole was studious, and Henson irrepressibly Victorian and sometimes rather abrasive, the product of decades of disagreement with anyone who toed the line of one of the Church "parties". Don, like Lang and Temple, took for granted a "Catholic" interpretation of the Church, but disliked the "excesses" of Anglo-Catholicism: he liked the smell of incense, but found all that censing at All Saints' in Margaret Street quite superfluous. Candole was an Anglo-Catholic, not particularly "advanced", but determined to Catholicise the liturgy of his parish church. Henson was an arch-Protestant, deeply critical of the Papacy, disgusted with the leaning of Anglo-Catholics towards Rome, repelled by "Catholic orthodoxy", yet unable to accept developments in the liberal Protestantism espoused by Major and Barnes or by his old friend Ralph Inge⁴⁴, who he suspected was more Buddhist than Christian. As leaders in the Church of England, the three represented the diversity of that institution. Their responses to the demands that the War placed on their ministries were equally diverse. Yet all three were conscious that this war was very different from earlier ones. For Don, experiencing the Blitz at first hand, the idea of total war entailed that civilians were effectively in the front line. For Candole and Henson, the crisis took other forms: the ever-present possibility of bombardment, the demands of evacuated children, the sense of helplessness in the face of second-hand reports about others who experienced the privations of war more acutely. Most importantly, all three were united in asserting that Christian belief ought to provide the backbone of the Allied resistance to Nazism, and that this was the fundamental issue in the period of crisis⁴⁵. Members of

⁴⁴ Retired Dean of St. Paul's.

⁴⁵ For contemporary theological reflections on the word "crisis", see William TEMPLE, 'On the Eve of War', Broadcast August 27, 1939, in *Thoughts in War-Time*, London, 1943, p. 3: "It is a time of crisis, and the very word 'crisis' is the Greek word for judgement." See also G.K.A. BELL, 'The Church and the Future of Europe', originally published in *Fortnightly Review*, March, 1943, and reprinted in *The Church and Humanity*, p. 110: "The world has crashed because it has gone awhoring after strange gods," and C.S. LEWIS, Letter to Owen Barfield, 12 September 1938, *Letters*, p. 317: "We force God to surgical treatment, we won't (mentally) diet." "Crisis" has been portrayed in more recent historiography as an agent for social change. See, for example, the portrayals of the evacuation of the urban poor in Angus CALDER, *The People's War: Britain 1939-45*, London, 1969; E.S. TURNER, *The Phoney War on the Home Front*, London, 1961; J.K. DAVID, *A Child's War: World War II Through the Eyes of Children*, New York, 1989; Ruth INGLIS, *The Children's War: Evacuation 1939-1945*, London, 1989. Paul FUSSELL, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, 1975, portrayed the First World War as a revolutionary agent for cultural change, but in his later *Wartime: Understanding and Behaviour in the Second World War*, Oxford, 1989, the Second World War is a cultural destroyer, impeding the expression of what war itself is like. This argument is supported by

a diverse, sometimes divided institution, they recognised a common element in Christianity which was incompatible with totalitarianism. They would have agreed with Bishop George Bell of Chichester's analysis in 1942:

The powers of the modern State have escaped from control and as a consequence civilisation is threatened with destruction. The great question for Christians is whether religion will abdicate in the face of this crisis and leave the direction of human life to the state and the totalitarian parties, or whether it will devote itself to the creation of a new spiritual order.⁴⁶

In the midst of the crises of 1937-1949, some were forced to wrestle with the conclusion that the demands of catholic Christianity were also incompatible with the means and methods of total war, even when the employment of those methods appeared to be essential for the survival of civilisation.

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The present study attempts to locate a particular Anglican tradition - that which advances a more "Catholic" than "Protestant" interpretation of Anglicanism - within the context of its wider theological and cultural environment, and to explore its responses to the crises of 1937 to 1949. Its case-studies concentrate more on lay intellectuals and cultural creators than on clergy, although Bishop Bell of Chichester plays a pivotal role throughout the analysis because of his conviction, underlined by his practical support of such creators, that the Church's religious and cultural agenda ought to be inseparable. 1937 has been chosen as the start because it was then that Anglican thinkers became interested in the implications of the Spanish Civil War. Not only did the bombing of Guernica, immortalised by Picasso's painting, provide a disquieting model for total war; the pragmatic decision of the Spanish Church to side with Franco in order to secure its own preservation aroused a debate in England which would gain more urgent significance in the 1940s⁴⁷. It would be inadequate to stop at 1945, because so much anguished reflection on the meaning of the war ensued. In 1949, however, the changed situation in world affairs was underlined

David CRAIG and Michael EGAN, *Extreme Situations: Literature and Crisis from the Great War to the Atom Bomb*, London, 1979, pp. 25, 28, 64.

⁴⁶ G.K.A. BELL, *The English Church*, London, 1942, p. 48.

⁴⁷ See my discussions of the responses of D.R. Davies, below, pp. 30, 58, and Donald MacKinnon, below, p. 72.

when the U.S.S.R. exploded its first atomic bomb⁴⁸. The U.S.A. had gained economic ascendancy, while Britain struggled to regain momentum after a war that had exhausted material, moral and human resources. Greater powers were in opposition, armed with cataclysmic weapons: on the heels of total war came the Cold War. 1949 ended one era, and heralded the replacement of one form of crisis with another.

The protagonists in this study were members of the Church of England who perceived themselves as "Catholics", as opposed to "Liberal Protestants", "Evangelicals" or "Neo-Calvinists". The Catholic tendency in Anglican theology and liturgy has been associated with a number of names, referring either to the tendency in general, or to specific aspects of it. The early Catholic revival in the Church of England is associated with the terms "Oxford Movement" and "Tractarianism", while its heirs are frequently labeled either "Anglo-Catholic" or "High Church"⁴⁹. This complex terminology has, wherever possible, been avoided because the majority of the individuals discussed preferred the simple label, "Catholic" (Roman Catholics are referred to as such). The use of this term reduces the temptation associated with the terms "Anglo-Catholic" and "High Church" to assume that all who so described themselves were waspish individuals bent on controversy and determined thoroughly to "Romanize" the Church of England, or committed, as one recent author has put it, to a "camp" way of worshipping⁵⁰. It also avoids provoking the assumption that Catholicism is restricted to that "party" of the Church of England which the secular commentator George Orwell described as "the ecclesiastical equivalent of Trotskyism"⁵¹. Catholicism in the sense employed here denotes not a party, but a tendency to combine appreciation of liturgical tradition and of the Church as a historical and mystical entity, with strong convictions as to the social and cultural relevance of "Catholic dogma". It follows that Catholics are concerned to establish certain standards of "orthodoxy" as a basis for Christian action⁵². The catholicity, or universality, of the Church must, they argue, be based

⁴⁸ Honoré M. CATUDAL, *Soviet Nuclear Strategy from Stalin to Gorbachev: A Revolution in Soviet Military and Political Thinking*, London, 1988, p. 25.

⁴⁹ For a detailed discussion of this terminology, see W.S.F. PICKERING's sociological study, *Anglo-Catholicism: a Study in Religious Ambiguity*, London, 1991, pp. 17-28. Other terms, such as "Ritualists", were employed in a derogatory sense, while still others, such as "Anglo-Papalist", refer to comparatively small factions (see below, p. 101).

⁵⁰ Francis PENHALE, *Catholics in Crisis*, Oxford, 1986.

⁵¹ George ORWELL, *Inside the Whale*, London, 1940, p. 167. Orwell was commenting on Eliot's conversion to Anglo-Catholicism in the context of the increased advocacy of communism among the English intelligentsia of the same period.

⁵² An apt working definition of orthodoxy is supplied by BELL, 'The Church and the Theologian', in G.K.A. BELL and D. Adolf DEISSMANN, *Mysterium Christi: Christological Studies by British and German Theologians*, London, 1930, p. 279: "When we describe the teaching of the Church as

upon these credal standards, and on its autonomy from secular interests. Catholics, therefore, cannot be content with erastianism⁵³. It is tempting to characterise the Catholic wing of the Church of England in terms of the controversies in which it has been engaged - in particular, in terms of the "Anglo-Catholic" teaching on the Apostolic Succession, and the practice of reservation of the Sacrament⁵⁴, an issue that came to a head in the rejection by the House of Commons of the revised Prayer Book in 1928. It is misleading, however, to define the movement on the basis of its controversies⁵⁵, and more rewarding to seek for the doctrinal motivations - the association of dogma acknowledged to be "orthodox" with the acceptance of an institution charged with the preservation and embodiment of that dogma - which led individuals in the Church of England to lay claim to Catholicism.

The historian of Anglican Catholicism in the 1930s and 1940s must take account of two seminal works on English Christianity in the twentieth century, both published in the 1980s. Hastings's *A History of English Christianity 1920-1985* provides a perception which represents a starting-point for this thesis. He emphasises the degree to which the late thirties and early forties saw the resurgence of Catholic opinion amongst Anglicans, lay and clergy alike: "The central tide of English thought and culture in the 1930s was flowing quite perceptibly in one large direction: from irreligion to religion, from liberal or Modernist religion to neo-orthodoxy, and from Protestantism towards Catholicism"⁵⁶. Hastings's findings suggest the fruitfulness of further research into the relation between Catholicism, in both its Roman and Anglican forms, and wider cultural developments in the thirties and forties. The dogmatic orthodoxy of writers such as T.S. Eliot and C.S. Lewis is seen as symptomatic of a more generalised trend in English Christianity away from

Orthodoxy we ought to mean that it is right-thinking and right-teaching, and we should maintain that the Church can no more teach that which is rationally indefensible than it can teach heresy." (See also pp. 280-281.)

⁵³ This was the burden of John Keble's Assize Sermon on 14 July 1833, widely recognised as the beginning of the Oxford Movement. See PICKERING, *Anglo-Catholicism*, p. 17.

⁵⁴ Reservation was a divisive issue because once the Sacrament was reserved, it could also be venerated. Controversies of this kind had precedents in the trials and imprisonment of "ritualist" priests at the end of the nineteenth century. In a notable case, Bishop King of Lincoln had been tried by a special spiritual court under the Archbishop of Canterbury. See G.K.A. BELL, *Randall Davidson, Archbishop of Canterbury*, Oxford, 1935, Vol. 1, pp. 124-149. Reservation of the Sacrament and Benediction were resisted by Evangelicals because they implied belief in the Real Presence.

⁵⁵ An example of the attempt to define Anglican Catholicism in this way is Ivan CLUTTERBUCK's, *Marginal Catholics. Anglo-Catholicism: a Further Chapter of Modern Church History*, Herefordshire, 1993, which attempts to demonstrate that Catholics have been deliberately marginalised by the Church, and finds the culmination of this process in the 1992 decision to ordain women. Clutterbuck's use of the word "marginal" as a prefix becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy: those who do not feel marginalised by the decision are no longer regarded as Catholics.

⁵⁶ Adrian HASTINGS, *A History of English Christianity, 1929-1985*, London, 1986, p. 289.

the liberal Protestantism which had predominated in the 1920s and early 1930s⁵⁷. Such arguments are broadly supported by another study which explores Anglican responses to war in the twentieth century, Wilkinson's *Dissent or Conform?* In a chapter titled 'The Retreat from Liberal Optimism', Wilkinson chronicles the increasing literary pessimism of writers as divorced from orthodox Christianity as George Orwell, and the gradual intellectual conversion of C.E.M. Joad from a kind of cultured hedonism to Anglican Christianity. He explores the impact of the "neo-orthodox" revival, spurred on by the influence of Barth and Niebuhr, on D.R. Davies and the Congregationalist Nathaniel Micklem, and conflates this tendency with similar adaptations in the language of the Catholic E.C. Hoskyns. Ultimately, however, he supports the conclusion of Peter Berger that neo-orthodoxy was "not the end but an interruption of the development of liberal theology"⁵⁸. Such a perception compels the historian of Anglican Catholicism in this period to ask: what were the sources of the appeal of this "orthodoxy" in wartime? In order to answer such a question, it is necessary to ask another: is the generalised phrase "neo-orthodoxy", as used by Wilkinson, too reductive to be applied to a study of Catholic attitudes? The theological divide in the wartime Anglican Church, as depicted in *Dissent or Conform*, is not between Protestantism and Catholicism, but between "various forms of liberalism" and "neo-orthodoxy", and the latter term is applied as readily to the Catholic Hoskyns as to Barthian Protestants. It is certainly true that Catholics, Evangelicals and neo-orthodox Protestants often united in denouncing liberalism as bankrupt. However, it is the present author's contention that the synthetic nature of Anglican Catholicism in the period of the Second World War defied such categories as "neo-orthodoxy" and "liberalism".

"Neo-orthodoxy" as it is used here thus applies exclusively to theologies which accepted not only the language of Barth and Niebuhr, but also their distinctively Protestant emphases. It is further distinguished from Evangelicalism, the other

⁵⁷ Other examples cited by Hastings include John Middleton Murry, Rosalind Murray and W.H. Auden. The growing popularity of the poetry of Hopkins is also taken as symptomatic of this general trend. *ibid.*, pp. 290ff.

⁵⁸ WILKINSON, *Dissent or Conform? War, Peace and the English Churches, 1900-1945*, London, 1986, p. 230; Peter BERGER, *The Heretical Imperative*, London, 1980, pp. 79, 81, 90, 139. Liberal Protestantism, partly because of the espousal of it by the Modern Churchmen's Union, was frequently referred to as "Modernism". "Modernism" in the stricter sense of the word refers specifically to a Roman Catholic movement, condemned by Pius X in 1907, which would not regain popularity until after the Second Vatican Council. (E.A. LIVINGSTONE, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Oxford, 1977, p. 341.) For a more detailed discussion of the origins and uses of the term "Modernism" with reference to theology, see Alan M.G. STEPHENSON, *The Rise and Decline of English Modernism: The Hulsean Lectures 1979-80*, London, 1984, pp. 5-7. Stephenson also supplies a generalised description of the typical "Modern Churchman" (pp. 7-8). See also C.R. PEARSON, 'H.D.A. Major and English Modernism 1911-1948', PhD Thesis, Cambridge University, 1990, and the discussion of liberalism below, pp. 24-28.

expression of Anglican Protestant orthodoxy⁵⁹. The synthetic nature of Anglican Catholicism meant that Neo-orthodox and Evangelical theologians provided texts which influenced Catholic discourse, and for this reason, examples of their theological response to war are discussed in Chapter 1. Their particular emphasis on original sin would prove influential among theologians who could not accept their Protestantism. Writers such as MacKinnon and Hoskyns engaged with neo-orthodox theologians, but retained their Catholic view of the Church and the sacraments. The degree to which the categories "orthodox" and "liberal" tended to coalesce in Anglican Catholicism as it faced the crises of the late thirties and the forties, and as it engaged with Protestant neo-orthodoxy, is the theme of the second chapter. I argue that the willingness of wartime Catholic theology to engage with Barth, Niebuhr and their English interpreters, was a product of the synthetic nature of Anglican Catholicism as it had developed in the tradition of *Essays Catholic and Critical*.

At this point, another theme emerges which recalls the perceptions of Wilkinson's analysis. His primary motive in writing a history of the English churches and war in the first half of this century is to answer the question, "How can the church be a creatively dissenting community in the modern world?" He is also aware of "the anti-erastian and dissenting character of much Anglo-Catholicism", and describes Bishop George Bell of Chichester as the "paradigm of creative religious dissent in England in the first half of the twentieth century"⁶⁰. The second

⁵⁹ According to David BEBBINGTON, Evangelicals were characterised by "conversionism", evangelistic "activism", "Biblicism" and "crucicentrism". Evangelical theology was primarily redemptionist, and the stress placed by Evangelicals on conversions and evangelism are natural corollaries of this. Bebbington distinguishes: the "liberal school" epitomised by the Anglican Evangelical Group Movement and the Methodist Fellowship of the Kingdom; the conciliatory "centrist school", typified in wartime Anglicanism by Christopher Chavasse (see below, Chapter 1, *passim*); the "moderate conservatives" of organisations such as the Fellowship of Evangelical Churchmen and the Church Pastoral Aid Society; and the "Fundamentalists", represented by the Advent Testimony Movement. (*Evangelicalism*, pp. 2-17, 251-2.)

⁶⁰ WILKINSON, *Dissent or Conform?*, pp. 1, 152. I identify George Bell as Catholic, aware that he was prepared to resist extreme Anglo-Catholicism in defense of church order. Liturgically and doctrinally he was best described as a "moderate Catholic", an exponent, as Peter WALKER has put it, of the "Middle Way" (*Rediscovering the Middle Way*, London, 1988). Walker follows Gordon RUPP, (*I Seek My Brethren: Bishop George Bell and the German Churches*, London, 1974, p. 9) in including F.D. Maurice, B.F. Westcott, Gore and Temple in this category, and adds the names of Henry Scott Holland, Oliver Quick and V.A. Demant (p. 13). Alan WILKINSON lists a number of liberal Catholic influences on the young Bell, including the atmosphere of his curacy at Leeds Parish Church (1907-1910), and his friendship with Neville Figgis of the Community of the Resurrection ('Bishop Bell and Germany' in CATTERALL and MORRIS, *Britain and the Threat to Stability in Europe 1918-45*, London, 1993, pp. 76-77; see also Kenneth SLACK, *George Bell*, Naperville, 1971, pp. 23-24). Bell's moderate Catholicism later in life is typified by his treatment of episcopacy in *Christian Unity: The Anglican Position*, (Olaus Petri lectures at Upsala University, October, 1946), London, 1948, pp. 17ff.

and third chapters of this thesis seek to uncover the theological motivations behind the dissenting tendencies of Donald MacKinnon in the "Phoney War" and the crisis of 1940-41, and George Bell throughout the whole period, and suggest that these are to be found in the traditional Catholic doctrine of the Incarnation and the perception of the Church as an extension of the Incarnation. These chapters explore the intimate relation which Catholic theologians and ministers sought to establish between dogma and freedom. Bell's artistic commissions form an essential part of his cultural and theological agenda; the spiritual weapons of humanity, art and sanctity were advanced by him as the Christian response to the totalitarian threat. The link between Bell's emphases on creativity and ethical dissent was his Catholic Incarnational theology. These themes are further addressed in different forms in Chapters 4 and 5. T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* are discussed in the context of contemporary Catholic concerns about the relation between mysticism and the changing conditions of war on the home-front, and Dorothy L. Sayers's attempts to produce an "Oecumenical Penguin" on agreed Christian doctrine are described against the backdrop of her attempts to portray the Catholic doctrine of the Incarnation in terms accessible to popular audiences. Sayers is seen in the context of a Catholic tradition which encourages artistic creativity and strives for the development of a Christian aesthetic.

Chapter 6 explores Catholic Anglican contributions to the meetings of the Moot, a confidential discussion group which met throughout the war years: an opportunity to observe the reactions to various social, political and cultural issues expressed by Catholics in an ecumenical environment. It traces adaptations to the concept of "Civilisation" as it was understood by Catholics throughout the period, and points to a common emphasis on the contribution of orthodox "catholicity" to "Civilisation", and on its fundamental incompatibility with totalitarian ideologies. Once again, typical Catholic motivations and concerns are uncovered: the preoccupation with the relation between religion and creativity in Eliot's cultural evaluation of religion, and the recognition of the need for dissent in H.A. Hodges' attempt to differentiate a "Confessional Church" from "the Christian Raquet". The general tendency of the Moot discussions, like those of the Catholic contributions to the British Council of Churches' Commission on the Era of Atomic Power, was to affirm that the only possible course for such a "Confessional Church" lay in the language of tragedy and martyrdom⁶¹. Hodges predicted in Moot meetings that the Christian archetype of the Cross would gain renewed meaning for such a Church,

⁶¹ WILKINSON adds that such a tendency has characterised the response of the English Churches to the Second World War and the Holocaust. *Dissent or Conform?*, pp. 315ff.

while MacKinnon and Bell were prompted by the disclosures about the atomic bomb to affirm the absolute demands of Catholic Christianity. The ultimate model of Christian obedience, they concluded, was the "obedience unto death" of the Cross. Chapter 7 focuses on this theme of the disclosure of atrocity and the imagery of crucifixion as it appeared in the report on *The Era of Atomic Power*, and in the artist Graham Sutherland's response to the holocaust, which was given ecclesiastical approval when Walter Hussey commissioned his *Crucifixion* for St. Matthew's, Northampton.

Catholic dissent in the period of crisis must be understood in the context of the attempt by Catholic Anglicans to produce a synthetic discourse which harmonised apparent opposites. It is my contention that this is equally true in terms of cultural and of theological traditions. In theological terms, Catholic discourse of the period attempted to unite the "Incarnationalist" and the "Redemptionist" traditions of Christianity, partly by combining insights of "liberal Incarnationalism" with neo-orthodox language about sin and redemption, and partly by recourse to its own Eucharistic theology. Anglican Catholics constantly emphasised the dogma of the Incarnation: the coming of God in human form subject to the particularities of history, culminating in his rejection, execution and resurrection. This dogma saw the entirety of Christ's life as sacrificial, and saw the life of the Church as the Body of Christ as a continuation of that sacrifice; hence, Incarnation and Redemption were two sides of the same coin. This led to the acceptance of the authority of the Church. There was a strong insistence on the relevance of this dogma to every other aspect of life, nowhere more evident than in the theological writings of Sayers. Ethics would collapse once divorced from their Christological and ecclesiological foundations, as the rise of the totalitarian states had demonstrated. What was new in the Catholic agenda in the late 1930s and in the 1940s was the realisation that its own emphasis on Incarnation and its link to ecclesiology (and, according to some, apostolic authority), could be presented as a radical alternative to totalitarian forms of collectivism, whether in the form of overt Nazism, or of more covert totalitarian tendencies within British society itself.

In cultural terms, the strands of "neo-Romanticism"⁶² and artistic "Modernism"⁶³ are also inextricably intertwined in wartime Catholicism. In

⁶² For a detailed discussion of British neo-Romanticism, see Stuart SILLARS, *British Romantic Art and the Second World War*, London, 1991. Neo-Romantic artists and writers were commonly fascinated with the occult, Arthurian romance, and resistance of classicism, in their quest for an archaic Britishness. Examples are Charles Williams, Cecil Collins, Keith Vaughan, Michael Ayrton and David Jones. (See Charles MOORMAN, *Arthurian Triptych: Mythic Materials in Charles Williams, C.S. Lewis, and T.S. Eliot*, New York, 1973, Frank TRENTMANN, 'Civilisation and its

Evangelicalism, the neo-romantic and the Redemptionist motifs tended to predominate⁶⁴; in theological Liberalism, the neo-Romantic and the Incarnationalist, and in Protestant neo-orthodoxy, the Modernist and the Redemptionist⁶⁵. I shall argue that these four cultural and theological traditions, Incarnationalism, Redemptionism, neo-Romanticism and artistic Modernism, were all subject to the Catholic Anglican synthesis, and were deliberately brought into iconographic unity in the heart of the liturgical space at St. Matthew's, Northampton. The Catholic discourse of wartime was rich in intertextual echoes⁶⁶, whether in the form of snatches of texts from mediaeval and counter-reformation mystical, sacramental or moral theology, neo-Romantic arcadian representations of nature, or the Modernist motifs of broken-down forms and flatness of pictorial space. By working towards this theological and cultural synthesis of various aspects of the Christian tradition within a framework that remained recognisably Catholic, wartime Catholicism was

Discontents: English Neo-Romanticism and the Transformation of Anti-Modernism in Twentieth Century Western Culture', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 29, 1944, 583-625; Malcolm YORKE, *The Spirit of Place: Nine Neo-Romantic Artists and their Times*, London, 1988, pp. 11-23.) For further discussion of the impact of neo-Romanticism on the St. Matthew's commissions, see below, pp. 314-316.

⁶³ Literary Modernism has often been defined in terms of the fragmentation of traditional forms and the stylistic economy which became the trademarks of T.S. Eliot, in marked contrast to contemporary Georgian poetry. This definition has been questioned by George Jay BORNSTEIN, *Transformations of Romanticism in Yeats, Eliot, and Stevens*, Chicago, 1976. Modernism for Eliot came increasingly to require the submission of the individual writer to literary tradition. The same was true of several English painters who were branded "Modernist" (See Myfanwy EVANS (Ed.), *The Painter's Object*, 1937, p. 118; John PIPER, 'Prehistory from the Air', *Axis*, No. 8, 1937, pp. 5-8, MELLOR, *A Paradise Lost*, pp. 38-39, and see below, p. 315).

⁶⁴ This summation is supported by the analysis of the origins of evangelicalism in BEBBINGTON, *Evangelicalism*, pp. 14-80.

⁶⁵ Alan WILKINSON argues that most "dissenters" were redemptionist, while those who "sought for an alignment of Christ with culture" were mostly incarnationalist. Incarnationalism was the predominant force in Anglicanism during the 1930s, but redemptionist motifs became more common under the pressures of war. (*Dissent of Conform?*, pp. 1-2.)

⁶⁶ A cultural history of the type offered here may be taken as a practical experiment in applying the linguist's notion of "intertextuality" in the study of religious discourse. The concept of "intertextuality" can also be applied to images, and to the complex relationships between texts and images which one tends to find in "high" cultural media. Thus the art historian's notion of "influence" is seen as an aspect of the study of the wider cultural milieu from which a given artistic work arises. Discourse is not so much a chain as a web, one mode of communication constantly interacting with the work of other individuals in the same or different modes. The picture is further complicated by the historical dimension, in that modes of communication are constantly affected by texts and images from the past. Norman Fairclough describes intertextuality as "the property texts have of being full of snatches of other texts, which may be explicitly demarcated or merged in, and which the text may assimilate, contradict, ironically echo, and so forth." (Norman FAIRCLOUGH, *Discourse and Social Change*, Cambridge, 1992, p. 84.) Texts and images tend to "respond" to earlier texts and images which form a part of the communicator's cultural environment. In the words of Bakhtin, texts always add to existing "chains of speech communication." (M. BAKHTIN, *Speech Genres and other Late Essays*, Ed. C. EMERSON and M. HOLQUIST, trans. V.W. McGEE, Austin, Texas, 1986, p. 94, and see M. FOUCAULT, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, London, 1972, p. 98; David BOUCHER, *Texts in Context: Revisionist Methods for Studying the History of Ideas*, Dordrecht, 1985; J. KRISTEVA, 'Word, Dialogue and novel', in T. MOI (Ed.), *The Kristeva Reader*, Oxford, 1986, p. 39.)

attempting to do what Catholicism continually aims to do: to bring the whole of life within its orbit, and to emphasise the role of the Church as a divine society, the continuation of the Incarnation. The protagonists chosen for this study, whether clerical or lay, all exhibit this tendency to synthesise apparent opposites, both cultural and theological, in their attempts to demonstrate why the obscure life and execution of a man in first century Palestine should make so absolute a claim on people's allegiance, in a world in which violence found its fullest expression not in whips, nails and thorns, but in high explosives, incendiary bombs, gas-chambers and atomic weapons. Faced with a conflict which plumbed the depths of cruelty and blasphemy, these inheritors of a "liberal Catholic" tradition were convinced that the dogmas which it embodied, and its concomitant ethics and cultural convictions, commanded their consistent adherence, not merely for the sake of civilisation, but for the sake of truth itself.

The discourse of Anglican Catholicism, particularly in its moderate forms, rewards cultural-historical study precisely because of its synthetic nature. In the late thirties and early forties, many Catholic Anglicans willingly participated in open discourse with the representatives of other traditions, theological and cultural. This tendency is observable in the determination with which Bell and Hussey pursued their artistic commissions, in MacKinnon's engagement with Protestant neo-orthodoxy, and in Sayers's attempt to produce an oecumenical statement of Christian doctrine. It is observable again in the Catholic contributions to the Malvern Conference, the Moot, and the British Council of Churches' Commission on the Era of Atomic Power. This study argues that the broad tradition of Anglican Catholicism combines ecumenism with a conscious "orthodoxy" defined by the creeds. For this reason, the study of Anglican Catholic discourse is also the study of the appeal of catholicity; the study of a universal Church which adapts itself to changing conditions, transcends denominational differences, and yet insists on truths of which it claims to be custodian, as guarantors of freedom. It explores a way of acting, thinking and worshipping, and an institution which claims to preserve the right of human beings to possess both a theology and a culture: an institution which, by its very emphasis on the importance of discourse, presented itself as the antithesis to the claims of totalitarianism. Finally, it is the study of an interpretation of Christianity which insisted on its relevance to every aspect of human life, and asserted that Christians were required to place themselves at risk for the sake of their creed, but which often struggled to bridge the gulf between ideals and practice, between the convictions of its educated élite, the more mundane concerns facing the wider Church, and the unperceived spiritual needs of a populace increasingly indifferent to

Christianity in all its forms. Such an interpretation, and such frustrations, compelled another wartime clerical diarist, John Moorman, to chafe against the exemption of the clergy from military service, on the grounds that it excluded them either from the dangers of combat or from imperiling their respectability through conscientious objection:

I want to be able to say, "I too have had my life dislocated."⁶⁷

⁶⁷ *JRHM*, M.S. 3636, February, 1942, p. 71.

Chapter

1

**"Down Peacock's Feathers":
Neo-Orthodox and Evangelical Doctrines of Original Sin
as Explanations of War**

"There is," A.R. Vidler told a mission at Oxford University in January 1938, "a cleansing satisfaction in concluding that all is vanity."¹ Formerly a "liberal Catholic", he was coming under the influence of a revived Protestant orthodoxy based on despair of human nature. His experience was common to a number of former liberals, from the Anglican tradition and beyond, in the late 1930s and the 1940s, including Melville Channing-Pearce², an Anglican layman who, in the summer of 1941, retreated to the Down-country in an attempt to resolve a profound spiritual crisis provoked by the Blitz. His journal is replete with imagery of rural beauty; the names of the rivers which meet in Salisbury are recalled like charms: "the Ebble, the Wylie, the Nadder, the Till, the Avon." He visited Salisbury Cathedral "transplanted so strangely from Old Sarum", and walked to Old Sarum itself, "that now stark site of vanished city, castle and church", a "mausoleum of pre-history", covered with a carpet of downland flowers. Afterwards, it rained, and Channing-Pearce returned to spiritual despondency. His spirit seemed to have grown "old", yet surely, it ought to be "eternally maiden and undefiled, for ever waiting beneath the foul and exhausted soil of self, to rise again in 'bright shoots of everlastingness'". Such a faith must be maintained, or else one would meet with a "hideous... hell", but then,

Is this 'flash talk of the spirit' also vanity, the illusion of the frustrated ego? Could we know again that eternal springtide of the spirit we should know the answer, and, on that answer, build again (as the thirteenth-century architects rebuilt Salisbury) that 'new mystic' for which the world waits. And that... implies the renunciation of the 'Old Sarum' of our civilization.³

Channing-Pearce chronicled his journey from despair to renewal, later publishing his journal, *Midnight Hour*, under the pseudonym "Nicodemus", and calling it "the tale of a re-conversion to Christ, of a deep damnation and a 'crowning mercy'".⁴ The

¹ VIDLER, *God's Demand and Man's Response: A Course of Addresses delivered during the Mission to Oxford University, January 29th - February 7th, 1938*, London, 1938, p. 12.

² Master of Southleigh College, Oxon.

³ NICODEMUS, *Midnight Hour: a journal from 1st May to 30th September 1941*, London, 1942, pp. 23, 24, 26 (1 June 1941); 32 (9th June 1941). See also his essay, 'The Masque of May', in *Renascence*, London, 1943, pp. 88-91.

⁴ NICODEMUS, *Midnight Hour*, p. 124 (31 July 1941).

conversion experience described in *Midnight Hour* presupposes the despair, morbidity, and sense of damnation which hangs over the first half of the book. In his spiritual crisis, "Nicodemus" had found relief in the discovery that "all is vanity", affirming an orthodox doctrine of original sin. His publishers, Faber and Faber, were discovering that there was a growing public for such an author.

The phenomenon of a growing reaffirmation of orthodoxy, with an emphatic insistence on original sin and a rejection of theological liberalism, has been noted by Hastings, and by Wilkinson, who writes of a "retreat from liberal optimism" beginning in the mid-1930s with the publication of E.C. Hoskyns's translation of Karl Barth's *Römerbrief*, intensifying with the Spanish Civil War and the Munich Crisis, and culminating with the outbreak of the Second World War. These writers have shown that the shift away from liberalism in the wider intellectual culture preceded the growth of neo-orthodox theologies, and transcended denominational and church-party differences. Yet if these differences were transcended by the conclusion that "all is vanity", they certainly were not obliterated. In the Church of England, Protestant and Catholic repudiations of liberalism took very different forms, as did responses to the theological challenges of Reinhold Niebuhr and Karl Barth⁵. Before assessing the development of distinctively Catholic theology in the Anglican thought of 1937-1949, it is necessary to distinguish it from some of the more Protestant expressions of this phenomenon. The non-liberal exponents of Anglican Protestantism tended to belong to one of two distinct theological traditions. The first was Evangelicalism, which included highly conservative Protestants, as well as others, such as the president of the Oxford Conference of Evangelical Churchmen, and Bishop of Rochester from April 1940, Christopher Chavasse, who voiced Evangelical concerns through reports such as *Towards the Conversion of England*⁶. In the late 1940s, less conservative Evangelicals were prepared to discuss matters of "catholicity" with the other Anglican traditions, and the Evangelical voice

⁵ Alan WILKINSON, *Dissent or Conform? War, Peace and the English Churches 1900-1945*, London, 1986, pp. 203-206, discusses the Anglo-Catholic theologian E.C. Hoskyns in the context of "neo-orthodoxy", and, indeed, sees him as the "leading exponent of neo-orthodoxy in England". However, Wilkinson's presentation of this analysis of Hoskyns in a section dealing also with Barth and Niebuhr ought not to be taken as an argument that these three theologians were forming a deliberate three-pronged attack on liberalism. Hoskyns's brand of neo-orthodoxy was fundamentally at odds with those of Barth and Niebuhr, particularly in terms of ecclesiology and the sources of authority. For more detailed discussion of the work of Hoskyns, see below, pp. 75-79, 87-88, 116. Some liberal theologians, as Wilkinson recognises (pp. 220-221), also renounced social optimism without resorting to the denunciatory language of neo-orthodoxy. See F.R. BARRY's *Church and Leadership*, London, 1945, pp. 92-97; Frank H. WEST, *F.R.B. - A Portrait of Bishop Russell Barry*, Nottinghamshire, 1980, p. 64.)

⁶ R.C.D. JASPER, *The Development of the Anglican Liturgy 1662-1980*, London, 1989, p. 181; Selwyn GUMMER, *The Chavasse Twins*, London, 1963, pp. 160-179.

was encouraged by the promotion of Geoffrey Fisher - himself a Protestant and no friend to the liberalism of Bishop Barnes of Birmingham - to the Archbishopric of Canterbury. It was not, however, the most productive period for Anglican Evangelicalism, and Evangelical expressions of religious orthodoxy were eclipsed by the rise of a lower form of dogmatic Protestant orthodoxy, influenced by Karl Barth, often filtered through the comparatively less voluminous works of Emil Brunner⁷, and by the American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr. Its most vocal Anglican advocate was D.R. Davies, a lapsed Congregationalist minister who renounced his liberalism, converted to the Church of England and, in addition to his work as a parish priest, wrote a series of books in the 1940s on original sin. More enigmatic, and more eclectic in his spiritual interests, was Channing-Pearce, who sought, and was denied, ordination. Davies was influenced primarily by Niebuhr⁸, and communicated this influence to A.R. Vidler, the liberal Catholic who, as the new editor of *Theology*, also registered the impact of neo-orthodoxy. Channing-Pearce was more influenced by Barth and Kierkegaard⁹, and by mysticism. Both writers reflected the Protestantism of their American and continental mentors. They treated the loss of liberal optimism as a wider cultural phenomenon, testifying to the Christian dogma of redemption as the only alternative to despair. Neo-orthodoxy had a strong cultural as well as theological agenda; it repudiated Romanticism as angrily as it ridiculed social optimism. Liberalism itself was criticised as inherently Romantic. It is doubtful whether Davies or Channing-Pearce could have completed this rejection of Romanticism with unreserved affirmations of cultural Modernism, but Channing-Pearce was prepared to admit that Modernist tendencies in art had much in common with neo-orthodox theology. The neo-orthodox Anglican critique of Romanticism was belied, however, by its own Romantic elements; Channing-Pearce's work oscillated between the mood of Wordsworthian poetry and that of a gothic horror-story¹⁰. Throughout the 1940s, Evangelicals such as Chavasse continued to draw uncritically on Romantic motifs, but their increasing use of neo-orthodox language in the assault upon theological liberalism was evidence of the lengthening shadow of the new "crisis theology".

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⁷ Richard H. ROBERTS, 'The Reception of the Theology of Karl Barth in the Anglo-Saxon World: History, Typology and Prospect', in his *A Theology on its Way?: Essays on Karl Barth*, Edinburgh, 1991, p. 113.

⁸ He described Niebuhr as "a gift of God to a tortured and troubled world." D.R. DAVIES, *Reinhold Niebuhr: Prophet from America*, London, 1945, p. 94.

⁹ See Melville CHANING-PEARCE, *The Terrible Crystal: Studies in Kierkegaard and Modern Christianity*, London, 1940.

¹⁰ Compare pp. 20-22 with pp. 18-20.

When the Archbishops' Commission on Christian Doctrine published its Report in 1938¹¹, after sixteen years of seeking some measure of consensus between representatives of the different "parties" in the Church of England, it found itself in the lamentable position of having pleased none of them. Archbishop Davidson had been pressed to appoint the Commission by an official letter, organised by the Bishop of Oxford but representative of all Anglican parties, after Major and Rashdall had questioned the doctrinal validity of the Creeds at the Modern Churchmen's Conference in 1921¹². The appointment of the Commission was a tacit admission of the pervasiveness of liberalism within the Church. Its mandate was not to determine what beliefs were permissible, but to document the range of doctrines which were in fact held by Anglican clergy and lay theologians¹³, and its introduction observed disarmingly: "To admit acrimony in theological discussion is in itself more fundamentally heretical than any erroneous opinions upheld or condemned in the course of the discussion."¹⁴ The result was merely that the theologically conservative appended their disclaimers to the Report's concessions to liberalism. The document, for all the frustration it registered, provides a convenient summary of the doctrinal divergences between "Modern Churchmen", Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals¹⁵ in the 1930s. It recorded the liberals' dissent from the traditional literal understandings of the Virgin Birth, Resurrection and Biblical miracles, and occasionally asserted that the doctrines of liberals and traditionalists "should all be regarded as permissible in the Church of England"¹⁶. It was the kind of document which that crusty centrist, Bishop Headlam of Gloucester, could find congenial; it was "'modernist' in the best sense", accessible to the twentieth century mind, but still affirming the doctrines of Incarnation, Atonement and the divinity of Christ¹⁷.

¹¹ See below, pp. 230-231, 244, 247-8.

¹² G.K.A. BELL, *Randall Davidson: Archbishop of Canterbury*, Oxford, 1935, Vol. 2, pp. 1134-1150. In addition to the Bishops, signatories of the request included A.S. Duncan-Jones, J.K. Mozley, O.C. Quick, C.E. Raven, E.G. Selwyn, W. Spens and L.S. Thornton.

¹³ William TEMPLE, 'Chairman's Introduction', *Doctrine in the Church of England: The Report on the Commission on Christian Doctrine Appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in 1922*, London, 1938, p. 2.

¹⁴ 'Introduction', *Doctrine in the Church of England*, p. 23.

¹⁵ Members of the Commission who aligned themselves with theological liberalism included W.R. Matthews and B.H. Streeter. Catholic members included O.C. Quick, A.E.J. Rawlinson, E.G. Selwyn, Will Spens and L.S. Thornton. Evangelical members included Burroughs (Dean of Bristol and later Bishop of Ripon) and H.A. Wilson (Bishop of Chelmsford). Members who styled themselves "liberal Evangelicals" included V.F. Storr and F.R. Barry.

¹⁶ TEMPLE, 'Chairman's Introduction', p. 2.

¹⁷ The Bishop of Gloucester, 'The Report on Doctrine', *Church Quarterly Review*, Vol. 126, 1938, pp. 84-89.

The Report's clemency towards liberals was not merely an echo from the decade in which it had been commissioned. The disavowal of liberalism in the 1930s and 1940s was far from wholesale¹⁸. Major¹⁹, author of the seminal *English Modernism* (1927), continued to edit the organ of Anglican Modernism, the *Modern Churchman*, throughout the war. Its cover was adorned with a quotation from Erasmus: "By identifying the new learning with heresy, you make orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance". Its contributors included Bishop Hunkin of Truro, J.M. Creed, and the former and current Deans of St. Paul's²⁰. Major himself observed in 1940 that while traditionalists enjoyed "declaring that Modernism is dead", this did not seem to prevent them "speaking ill of it." The *Modern Churchman*, he claimed, represented a Modernism which was not "negative and destructive", as traditionalists would have it, but "a truth-seeking, forward-glancing spirit which seeks to adjust our traditional orthodoxy to our enlarging knowledge of the truth."²¹ This entailed accepting that the creeds²², and such doctrines as the two natures of Christ²³, were dated, and not essential to a Christianity which merely asserted that "in the life and character, the teaching and the personality of Jesus Christ the world had received its highest revelation of God..."²⁴ The journal attracted others whose liberalism was less thoroughgoing, such as Henson, who regarded much liberal theology with disdain²⁵, but recognised that if alignment with a Church party was unavoidable, he must choose Modernism by default. Writing in his journal about an invitation to address the "Modern Churchmen" in 1939, Henson

¹⁸ Among non-Anglicans, the continuation of a consistent liberal witness may be seen in the Congregationalist and pacifist C.J. Cadoux, author of *The Case for Evangelical Modernism* (1938) and *A Pilgrim's Further Progress* (1943).

¹⁹ Alan M.G. STEPHENSON, *The Rise and Decline of English Modernism: The Hulsean Lectures 1979-80*, London, 1984, pp. 5-7. See also C.R. PEARSON, 'H.D.A. Major and English Modernism 1911-1948', PhD Thesis, Cambridge University, 1990.

²⁰ W.R. Inge and W.R. Matthews.

²¹ 'Signs of the Times: "Prophetic Orthodoxy" versus "Repetitive Orthodoxy"', *Modern Churchman*, XXX, No. 1, April, 1940, p. 6.

²² The *Modern Churchman* did not recommend "revision" of the existing creeds, but wished that the Church would adopt additional ones. It offered two examples, the first being a series of quotations from John's Gospel, quoted in H.D.A. MAJOR's *English Modernism: Its Origin, Methods, Aims*, Cambridge, 1927, pp. 98-99, and set to music in *Songs of Praise* (No. 433); the second being written by Dr. Douglas White, which affirmed belief in "Jesus Christ, Revealer of God and Saviour of men:/ And in the Spirit of Holiness, which is the Spirit of God and of Jesus/ By which Spirit man is made divine." 'Signs of the Times: The Demand for a Modern Christian Creed', *Modern Churchman*, XXX, No. 12, March 1941, p. 482.

²³ C.J. WRIGHT, 'The Doctrine of the Incarnation and its Presuppositions', *Modern Churchman*, XXIX, Nos. 5, 6 and 7, September 1939, pp. 336ff.

²⁴ H. RASHDALL, 'Christ as Logos and Son of God', *Modern Churchman*, XI, Nos. 5 and 6, September 1921, p. 286.

²⁵ See, for example, *HHHJ*, 11 April 1937, Vol. 69, f. 131: "These modernists who definitely reject the Atonement must needs find the Communion service & much else in the Prayer Book extremely distasteful. Indeed, Christianity being from the first a Religion of Redemption cannot possibly dispense with the concepts of sin and atonement."

revealed his ambivalence: "Is it wise to identify myself with that mangle-mangle of heretics? Is it fair to refuse association with those who, not wholly without excuse, would claim me as a fellow dabbler in heresy?"²⁶

Barnes of Birmingham, whose reputation for controversy was bolstered by his pacifism, and by the zeal with which he had wielded episcopal authority to bludgeon Anglo-Catholic clergy into submission²⁷, represented the ideals of Modernism among the bishops. Modernists were for him "heirs of the Reformation and the Evangelical movement", and therefore could not countenance the concessions to Catholic sacramentalism offered by the revised Prayer Book²⁸. Yet Barnes's rigid loyalty to the Black Rubric and to Article XXVIII was coupled with an increasing doctrinal minimalism in other matters. In the 1920s, Barnes had preached repeatedly on the compatibility of Darwinian evolutionary theory with Christianity²⁹, a view shared by many clergy, but which invited predictable fundamentalist protests. In his quainter moments, he held that transubstantiation could be disproved by experiment, and suggested that the stigmata of St. Francis had been caused by verminousness and excessive scratching³⁰. By the 1940s, he was rejecting both the reality and the doctrinal significance of the Virgin Birth, denying that the Resurrection had been a visible occurrence, and reducing Christianity to an "ethical monotheism" exemplified by the life of Christ³¹. As for Christ's deity or sinlessness, "These questions each man must answer for himself... As he gropes for truth so he will shape his life."³² These convictions, published in their most crystallised form in *The Rise of Christianity* (1947), roused the ire of Archbishop Fisher³³, but merely recycled the stock arguments of nineteenth century Biblical criticism about Pauline accretions and the production of the Gospels in the second

²⁶ HHHJ, 12 February 1939, Vol. 74, f. 125. See also John WOLFFE, *God and Greater Britain: Religion and National life in Britain and Ireland 1843-1945*, London, 1994, pp. 169-170.

²⁷ Barnes's campaign against Reservation and the "rebel" clergy who resisted his authoritarianism, is described in detail and with approval by his son, John BARNES, *Ahead of his Age: Bishop Barnes of Birmingham*, London, 1979, pp. 152 ff.

²⁸ Sermon on 'The Necessity of Modernism', preached in Westminster Abbey, September 1926. *ibid.*, p. 187.

²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 192.

³⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 193-194, 201, 212.

³¹ Ernest William BARNES, *The Rise of Christianity*, London, 1947, pp. 87-89, 164-173, 336.

³² *ibid.*, p. 337.

³³ See Geoffrey FISHER, 'Draft - Strictly Confidential' on Barnes's *The Rise of Christianity*, BELL, Vol. 207 (Chichester D-F), ff. 241-255: "I am left in no doubt that this book has caused widespread distress and indeed indignation among church people... It attempts by critical analysis to strip the New Testament of all that the author considers to be unhistorical accretions... In the process the Bishop has discarded or omitted to include [sic] much that holds an accepted place in the Church's doctrine..." Bell agreed, adding that Henson was "furious with the book", but counselled Fisher not to denounce it officially. Bell to Fisher, 3 October 1947, *ibid.*, f. 257. Fisher disregarded this advice. See the *Chronicle of Convocation*, II-5, No. 2, October 1947, pp. 173ff; 187-191.

century. Barnes saw little value in neo-orthodoxy, and rejoiced that "Providence which allowed Brunner to pose as a theologian also fortunately enabled man to invent the wastepaper-basket."³⁴

Barnes was a force to be reckoned with because of his willingness to wield the full power of episcopal office, and to write *The Rise of Christianity* notwithstanding what Bell described as his "extreme weakness in Biblical scholarship"³⁵. By contrast, Charles Raven, Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, was a more complex character and subtle thinker who found himself sidelined by the ecclesiastical power-structure because of his liberalism and pacifism³⁶. Raven distinguished himself as a priest who kept abreast of contemporary scientific developments, and his Hulsean Lectures of 1926-7 had firmly established his reputation as a mediator between biology and Christianity³⁷. His enthusiasm for natural history found expression in books on ornithology³⁸ which arguably remain more readable than his theology, but his understanding of theological development as akin to biological processes did provide a viable alternative to the doctrinal rigidity of many conservative Evangelicals and extreme Anglo-Catholics. Raven was unafraid to promote a Cross-centred pacifism throughout the war³⁹, or to insist in 1945 that the wartime influx of women to the workforce was irreversible, and that the Church must inevitably consider women's ordination⁴⁰. By his consistency, he demonstrated that liberalism was not quite the spent force that the neo-orthodox claimed. He did so by maintaining his own brand of Incarnational orthodoxy, as different from the denials of the creeds offered by Modern Churchmen as it was from the orthodoxy of more conservative Protestants. Like most liberals, however, he rejected outright the challenges of "dialectical theology", with its emphasis on original sin, and its insistence that war was an act of divine judgement. His wartime exchange with the exiled Confessing Church pastor,

³⁴ BARNES, *Ahead of his Age*, p. 296.

³⁵ George BELL to Geoffrey Cantuar, 3 October 1947, BELL, Vol. 207, 'Chichester D-F', f. 257.

³⁶ F.W. DILLISTONE, *Charles Raven: Naturalist, Historian, Theologian*, London, 1975, p. 297.

³⁷ Charles E. RAVEN, *The Creator Spirit: A Survey of Christian Doctrine in the light of Biology, Psychology and Mysticism: The Hulsean Lectures, Cambridge, 1926-7, The Nobel Lectures, Harvard, 1926*, London, 1932. The aim of the lectures was to "formulate and defend a Christ-centred view of the universe in such wise as to heal the breach between science and religion." (p. vii.) See also *Science, Religion and the Future*, Cambridge, 1943, and *Science and the Christian Man*, London, 1952.

³⁸ Charles E. RAVEN, *In Praise of Birds*, London 1925 (new edition 1950); *Ramblings of a Bird Lover*, London, 1927, *Bird Haunts and Bird Behaviour*, London, 1929.

³⁹ Charles E. RAVEN, *Is War Obsolete?*, London, 1935; *War and the Christian*, London, 1938; *The Cross and the Crisis*, London, 1940; *The Theological Basis of Christian Pacifism*, London, 1952. Raven was an active member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. See DILLISTONE, *Charles Raven*, pp. 211-237.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 255-273.

Franz Hildebrandt, revealed the gulf that separated his thought, pervaded by images of the English countryside and versed in the nuances of English manners⁴¹, from the biblicism of continental neo-Protestants, conditioned by the rise of Nazism. In his attempt to apply knowledge of evolution to the study of human spiritual development, Raven emphasised change and adaptation⁴². Viewing the same process, Hildebrandt saw the cruelty of natural selection, the dominance of the strong over the weak. "You love your birds," he told Raven in an open letter, "I love Tinkle our black Persian kitten. Both I believe are lovely gifts of God, delightful for us humans to play with; but one day Tinkle will grow into a big fat cat and neither your nor my pacifism will be strong enough to prevent him running away and killing one of your little birds. On which side is God? What do our animals tell us of His nature?"⁴³ If religion were to be understood in evolutionary terms, who was to say that Anglican liberalism, and not fascism, was better adapted for survival? Environmental influence and temperament combined to keep Raven a liberal optimist, even when the survival of Anglicanism was ensured by the Allies employing the techniques of total war more effectively than the Axis.

There had, however, been another sub-agenda implicit in the Doctrine Report which anticipated the theological shift so decisively rejected by Major, Barnes and Raven. It contained a chapter on "The Fact of Sin", and the section on the Incarnation was subordinated to discussion of "Redemption in Christ". It recorded its accustomed range of opinions on original sin and the Fall, but concluded that the pervasiveness of sin dictated that "if left to his own resources and to the influence of his natural environment [man] cannot attain to his destiny as a child of God."⁴⁴ Under Temple's leadership, the Commission registered a growing suspicion of the social optimism of liberal theology, and his Introduction stressed the need for a theology which would "sound the prophetic note":

If the security of the nineteenth century, already shattered in Europe, finally crumbles away in our country, we shall be pressed more and more towards a theology of Redemption. In this we shall be coming closer to the New Testament. We have been learning

⁴¹ DILLISTONE, *Charles Raven*, p. 180, draws a revealing contrast between the environments in which Charles Raven and Paul Tillich were raised, and speculates as to the impact on their theologies. Hildebrandt's *This is the Message* was a reply to Raven's own *Good News of God*, London, 1943. Raven took exception to the use of his Christian name on the title page of Hildebrandt's book.

⁴² "As we try to trace the development of the creative process, we find the whole of its order so constituted as to make possible the emergence of life, of consciousness, of mind, of reason, of communion with the eternal." Charles RAVEN, *The Creator Spirit*, p. 129.

⁴³ Franz HILDEBRANDT, *This is the Message*, London, 1944, p. 24.

⁴⁴ 'Part I: The Doctrines of God and of Redemption', *Doctrine in the Church of England*, pp. 60-64.

again how impotent man is to save himself, how deep and pervasive is that corruption which theologians call Original Sin. Man needs above all else to be saved from himself. This must be the work of Divine Grace.⁴⁵

Temple was grimly aware that "the heirs of Luther's Augustinianism are apt to accuse English Christianity as a whole of Pelagianism"⁴⁶. If the Report made concessions to liberalism, therefore, it also accommodated those whom the popular liberal apologist: "John Hadham" would call in 1940 "the judgment-of-Godites", as he watched with consternation "the increasing influence of Continental Protestant theology in this country"⁴⁷.

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Observers of theological developments in the thirties and forties employed a range of metaphors to describe the impact of Karl Barth on theology⁴⁸, most of them drawing on apocalyptic language. His theology resounded like "thunder" in the sheltered world of the English church; it was a "trumpet blast" to rouse from slumber a Christianity which had acquiesced in liberalism. The rallying cry came with the publication of Barth's Commentary on the *Epistle to the Romans*:

How vast a gulf separates the nineteenth century conquering-hero attitude to religion from that distrust of men at themselves, which is the characteristic mark of true religion!⁴⁹

This "theology of crisis" arose, D.R. Davies would argue, out of "a new experience of Christ's saving power"; it was a new orthodoxy, loyal to "the New Testament proclamation of the Christian Gospel of redemption from original sin through

⁴⁵ TEMPLE, 'Chairman's Introduction', *Doctrine in the Church of England*, p. 16-17.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴⁷ John HADHAM, *God in a World at War*, Harmondsworth, 1940, p. 52.

⁴⁸ Barth served as a pastor in the Swiss Reformed Church between 1912 and 1921, held professorships in theology in Göttingen, Münster and Bonn, was dismissed in 1935 for refusing to swear loyalty to Hitler and for supporting the Confessing Church, and took up a professorship in his native Basel. John BOWDEN, *Karl Barth*, London, 1971. A large body of non-biographical literature on Barth exists, including: Hans Urs Von BALTHASAR, *The Theology of Karl Barth: Exposition and Interpretation*, San Francisco, 1992; George HUNSINGER, *How to Read Karl Barth: The Shape of His Theology*, New York, 1991; Eberhard BUSCH, *Karl Barth. His life from letters and autobiographical texts*, (trans. J. Bowden), London, 1976. For a contemporary discussion of Barth's resistance to "Prussianism", see H.P. KINGDON, 'Church and State in Germany', *Theology*, XXXVIII, No. 224, February 1939, pp. 144-145.

⁴⁹ BARTH, *Epistle to the Romans*, (trans. E.C. Hoskyns), Oxford, 1933, p. 289.

Christ"⁵⁰. Barth had been made accessible to English readers through Hoskyns's translation of the *Römerbrief*, and later, through Barth's Gifford Lectures of 1937 and 1938, and *Letter to Great Britain from Switzerland* of 1941. Still more influential was the Professor of Christian Ethics at Union Theological Seminary, Reinhold Niebuhr⁵¹. His most vocal British disciple, D.R. Davies, son of a Welsh miner, had become a Congregationalist minister in 1917, "largely in the belief that... Christianity was the true socialism". Davies had embraced liberalism and "the social gospel", participating in the Copec movement⁵² and speaking regularly on Labour Party platforms. In the late 1920s, he had drifted away from the Church, but remained an active Socialist, and in 1937 went to Spain with the Dean of Canterbury to witness the Civil War. Faced with "the aerial bombardments, the terror-stricken refugees, the lean faces of the little half-starved children, and the pathetic stolidity of young men about to die", he despaired and attempted to drown himself⁵³. In 1939 he re-emerged, the author of a semi-autobiographical spiritual manifesto, *On To Orthodoxy*, and was ordained as an Anglican⁵⁴. His new mentor, A.R. Vidler, told Temple "that he had never ordained anyone who believed more wholeheartedly in

⁵⁰ D.R. DAVIES, *The Two Humanities*, London, 1940, pp. 196-197. See ROBERTS, *A Theology on its Way?*, pp. 95-154.

⁵¹ Niebuhr, a former pastor of Bethel Evangelical Church in Detroit, and ex-chairman of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, disavowed his pacifism in 1932 because of his increasing conviction that the fact of original sin made pacifism untenable. WILKINSON, *Dissent or Conform?*, pp. 209, 212-213. Niebuhr's critique of pacifism is best exemplified by his essay, 'Why the Christian Church is not Pacifist' in his *Christianity and Power Politics* (1940), reprinted in Robert McAfee BROWN, *The Essential Reinhold Niebuhr*, Yale, 1986, pp. 102-103. For a Christian pacifist response to Niebuhr, see the Scottish theologian G.H.C. MACGREGOR's *The Relevance of the Impossible*, London, 1941. See also Richard HARRIES, 'Reinhold Niebuhr's Critique of Pacifism and his Pacifist Critics', in Richard HARRIES (Ed.), *Reinhold Niebuhr and the Issues of Our Time*, London, 1986, pp. 105-121. Biographies and other works on Niebuhr include: Richard FOX, *Reinhold Niebuhr: A Biography*, New York, 1986; Paul Merkley, *Reinhold Niebuhr: A Political Account*, Montreal, 1975; June BINGHAM, *Courage to Change: An Introduction to the Life and Thought of Reinhold Niebuhr*, New York, 1972; Charles W. KEGLEY (Ed.), *Reinhold Niebuhr: His Religious, Social and Political Thought*, New York, 1984; Robin W. LOVIN, *Reinhold Niebuhr and Christian Realism*, Cambridge, 1995; Charles C. BROWN, *Niebuhr and His Age: Reinhold Niebuhr's Prophetic Role in the Twentieth Century*, Philadelphia, 1992. In 1939, W. Norman PITTENGER could claim that in America, Niebuhr's "incisive criticism has destroyed the older liberalism almost completely. "Some Trends in American Theology", *Theology*, XXXVIII, No. 223, January 1939, p. 67.

⁵² The Conference on Christian Politics, Economics, and Citizenship, organised by William Temple, is discussed in detail by F.A. IREMONGER, *William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury: His Life and Letters*, Oxford, 1948, pp. 328ff.

⁵³ DAVIES, *In Search of Myself*, London, 1961, pp. 189-190; *Reinhold Niebuhr: Prophet from America*, p. 7. Unlike Davies, his fellow traveller Dean Hewlett Johnson of Canterbury continued to espouse Communism into the 1940s, much to the chagrin of Archbishop Lang. See, for example, DOND, 19 April 1937, M.S. 2865, p. 41. For Hewlett JOHNSON's own perspective, see his *Searching for Light: An Autobiography*, London, 1968.

⁵⁴ DAVIES, *On To Orthodoxy*, (1939), London, 1948, (second edition), pp. 111-112. Stuart MEWS, 'Religious Life between the Wars, 1920-1940', in Sheridan GILLEY and W.J. SHEILS (Eds.), *A History of Religion in Britain: Practice and Belief from Pre-Roman Times to the Present*, Oxford, 1994, p. 462.

the [Thirty-Nine] Articles than Davies"⁵⁵. His response to Barth and Niebuhr was quite different from that of Hoskyns, Barth's translator in 1933, who remained a Catholic⁵⁶. If Hoskyns was influenced, as Ramsey would later contend, primarily by Barth's "eloquence, language... and mode of expression: incisive, passionate, paradoxical"⁵⁷, Davies adopted both the language of Barth and Niebuhr and their Protestant neo-orthodoxy.

Vidler, aware of this distinction, came under Davies's influence in the early years of the war. Taking over the editorship of *Theology* in 1938, he told the proprietors that he did not intend to maintain it as the organ of liberal Catholicism⁵⁸. He was convinced that the traditional Church parties were due to be superseded by the new orthodoxy⁵⁹, and until Vidler developed an interest in F.D. Maurice later in the 1940s⁶⁰, Davies markedly influenced his writing and editorship. Following Barth, Vidler saw "dialectical theology" as the inevitable response to the "bankruptcy" of liberalism⁶¹. The word "bankruptcy" so used, is almost a litmus test for neo-orthodox influence in wartime Christian writing⁶². Davies used it with abandon, declaring that the thirty years before the Second World War had revealed "the complete and utter bankruptcy of Modernism and Liberal Christianity." For Davies, writing copiously against the religious philosophy he had once upheld, liberal Christianity had its own policy of "appeasement": it had capitulated to secularism and social optimism⁶³, and emptied the Gospel of supernatural content⁶⁴. It was an "essentially Romantic movement... incapable of political realism"⁶⁵, the religious expression of a Utopian ethic which believed in the progress of humanity

⁵⁵ WILKINSON, *Dissent or Conform?*, p. 219.

⁵⁶ See below, pp. 75-79.

⁵⁷ A.M. RAMSEY, *From Gore to Temple*, London, 1960, p. 137, and see also WILKINSON, *Dissent or Conform?*, p. 203; CHANDLER, 'The Church of England and Nazi Germany', pp. 48-49.

⁵⁸ The former editor had been E.G. Selwyn, the driving force behind *Essays Catholic and Critical*. (See below, p. 78.)

⁵⁹ A.R. VIDLER, *20th Century Defenders of the Faith: Some Theological Fashions Considered in the Robertson Lectures for 1964*, London, 1965, pp. 79-81.

⁶⁰ A.R. VIDLER, *The Theology of F.D. Maurice*, London, 1948. In this book, Vidler explicitly rejected the neo-orthodox emphasis on sin, in response to Maurice's teaching that "Sin... is not... man's true state; his evil nature is due to his departure from his true state." (p. 42.) Vidler hoped that trends in contemporary theology would become more sympathetic to Maurice, and found evidence for this in the work of the Catholic Anglican, E.L. Mascall (pp. 49-51).

⁶¹ VIDLER, *God's Judgment on Europe*, London, 1940, p. 64.

⁶² CHANING-PEARCE recognised that the word was derived from Kierkegaard. See his *Soren Kierkegaard: A Study*, London, 1945, pp. 27, 65.

⁶³ DAVIES, *On To Orthodoxy* (second edition), italics original, p. 31.

⁶⁴ DAVIES, *The Two Humanities*, p. 32. See also *On To Orthodoxy*, (first edition) London, 1939, p. 13.

Davies used the words "Liberalism" and "Modernism" interchangeably.

⁶⁵ DAVIES, *On To Orthodoxy*, (first edition), p. 28.

from "slime" to "civilisation", culminating in the Kingdom of God in history⁶⁶. Liberalism was Christianity "denuded" and "devitalised"⁶⁷, because it denied the reality of sin, making man "a mere tool of a secularized, degenerated Providence"⁶⁸. It removed the Protestant emphasis on personal decision and conversion⁶⁹, and, in the face of the events of the late 1930s, it "leaves the realist no alternative but sheer, absolute despair and utter pessimism."⁷⁰ The war was the Church's opportunity "to get rid of Modernism, to exorcise its evil spirit from the Church"⁷¹.

If *On to Orthodoxy* was neo-orthodox reading during the Phoney War for churchmen such as Vidler and Temple, in 1941 another book elicited a bewildering variety of responses. "Nicodemus"'s *Midnight Hour* was not originally intended for publication. It made harrowing reading, oscillating between fascination with death and putrefaction, and reverence for the countryside, expressed in lyrical passages of great beauty. In 1940, Channing-Pearce had felt, like Barth, "a hand shaking the foundations of all that is and will be"⁷². He applied for ordination in July 1941, hoping to become a priest in a country parish. At the last minute, the Bishop of Salisbury refused to ordain him, telling Temple that this was because of Channing-Pearce's abrasive personality⁷³. When *Midnight Hour* was published, the Bishop felt still more strongly that he was not suited to the priesthood⁷⁴. Temple read it through, and admitted that "the book itself alienated me from the writer". Yet some of Temple's trusted advisors saw it as "a most important religious document."⁷⁵ One such was E.K. Talbot of the Community of the Resurrection, who thought *Midnight Hour* was "a new and imposing apologia for Anglicanism."⁷⁶ The *Church Quarterly*

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p. 16. "The point of departure in time is the amoeba. The goal (still within time) is the Kingdom of God."

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

⁶⁸ DAVIES, *The Two Humanities*, pp. 113-114.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 169.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p. 140.

⁷¹ *ibid.*, p. 226.

⁷² NICODEMUS, *Midnight Hour*, pp. 9-10.

⁷³ Bishop of SALISBURY to White-Thompson, 22 April 1942, *WT*, Vol. 10, f. 207.

⁷⁴ Bishop of SALISBURY to William Temple, 14 November 1943, *WT*, Vol. 51, ff. 233-4. R.C. MONNINGTON, Memorandum on *Midnight Hour*, *WT*, Vol. 51, f. 265, and see ff. 211-214. The reasons offered for refusing ordination to CHANNING-PEARCE appear trivial by comparison with the intense misogyny expressed in his *Religion and Reality: An Essay in the Christian Coordination of Contraries*, London, 1937, pp. 169-174. Channing-Pearce was later refused ordination by Temple himself, but received other offers, which he declined. See NICODEMUS, *Treasures of Darkness*, London, 1945, p. 10. The Bishop also took exception to a passage from the book which was reproduced in *CN-L*, from *Midnight Hour*, p. 154-157 (30th September 1941).

⁷⁵ William TEMPLE to the Bishop of Coventry, 15 October 1943, *WT*, Vol. 51, ff. 285-6.

⁷⁶ Edward Keble-TALBOT, C.R., to William Temple, 6 September 1942, *WT*, Vol. 51, ff. 208-209. J.H. Oldham also spoke for Channing-Pearce, testifying that Archbishop Garbett had said "that no book he had read for a long time had so deeply moved him", and adding the personal testimony of

Review affirmed that "The general purport of the book is profoundly true. Our calamity is fundamentally of the spirit."⁷⁷ Besides, its sales were good enough for Eliot, a literary executive for Faber and Faber, to commission a sequel. Wilkinson suggests that the book's popularity demonstrated that "the masochistic denunciation of human sinfulness had become a stock reaction among Christians, especially in the early stages of the war,"⁷⁸ yet the writings of "Nicodemus" were never merely a slavish imitation of Barth and Niebuhr: the antagonism they provoked was, in part a tribute to their originality and literary merit.

It would be easy, given the prevalence of neo-orthodox rhetoric, to overlook the less strident but ultimately more resilient role played by the Evangelical wing of Anglicanism in providing an alternative to Catholicism or liberalism through a strongly crucicentric and conversionist theology⁷⁹. Evangelicals were dismayed by their declining influence in the Church of England. In 1944, J.N. Hoare, himself an Evangelical, confided to Henson that all the stimulating Evangelical theology seemed to be non-Anglican. Henson was perhaps not the most sympathetic recipient for this; he called the Evangelicals "case-hardened Pharisees [who are]... intellectually defective and unable to maintain any important position in the modern C. of E." His closing summation on the decline in Evangelical influence, recorded in his journal, was devastating: "Evangelicals contribute nothing to exegetics because they are Fundamentalists: to history because they have 'no use' for the Church: to liturgiology, because they are 'corybantic'."⁸⁰ The perception that Evangelicalism was being eclipsed in this period by other self-consciously orthodox Anglican movements may be discerned in recent appraisals. The middle decades of the twentieth century are seen as years of dearth for the movement in Britain⁸¹ - albeit relieved somewhat in the 1940s by the publication of the Archbishops'

Vidler and Eliot, fellow members of the Moot with Channing-Pearce. J.H. OLDHAM to William Temple, 17 September 1942, *WT*, Vol. 51, f. 229.

⁷⁷ F. WOOD, Review of NICODEMUS, *Midnight Hour*, *The Church Quarterly Review*, Vol. 135 (October-December 1942), p. 119.

⁷⁸ WILKINSON, *Dissent or Conform?*, p. 222.

⁷⁹ For conservative Evangelicals, failure to preach the Cross and a substitutionary view of the atonement was a failure to preach the Gospel. See for example Montague GOODMAN, 'The Wondrous Cross', *The Keswick Week*, London, 1947, p. 41; F. MITCHELL, 'Holy Father', *The Keswick Week*, London, 1947, pp. 28, 29: "There will be no quibbling about the substitutionary view of the Atonement if we recover a vision of the holiness of God." Compare this with Niebuhr's non-substitutionary crucicentrism in *Beyond Tragedy: Essays on the Christian Interpretation of History*, London, 1938, pp. 17-18.

⁸⁰ *HHJ*, January 22 1944, Vol. 91, pp. 136-137.

⁸¹ For example, Kenneth HYLSON-SMITH, *Evangelicals and the Church of England*, Edinburgh, 1988, p. 282, observes that "... there was very little comment on the war at all by Evangelicals; a vivid contrast to their fulsome and impassioned language during the First World War." The opening of Tyndale House, an Evangelical centre for biblical and theological study, in 1944, is one of the few major achievements of wartime Evangelicalism listed by him (p. 287).

Reports, *Towards the Conversion to England and The Rise of Christ*, and the collection of essays, *Evangelicals Affirm*. Bebbington finds a plausible explanation in the divisions, cutting across denominational boundaries between "conservatives", "centrists" and "liberals"⁸². Frank Buchman's Oxford Group Movement, known in the war years as Moral Re-Armament, was a further cause of dispersal within Evangelicalism, with its ambiguous non-denominationalism and its tendency to provide a substitute for church attendance⁸³. Another non-denominational phenomenon, the Keswick convention, possessed its own vitality, but its meetings were postponed throughout the war, and its theological conservatism limited its appeal for Anglicans⁸⁴. Christopher Chavasse endeavoured to remedy the splintering of Anglican Evangelicalism by adopting a centrist stance, conciliatory to conservatives and liberals, but committed to preserving a Protestant witness. In 1928, he had shown his resistance to Anglo-Catholicism, urging the rejection of the revised Prayer Book on the grounds that the new prayer of consecration of the Eucharist denoted too specifically the doctrine of the Real Presence.⁸⁵ After becoming Bishop of Rochester in 1940, he became the most influential episcopal spokesman for Evangelical concerns in the wartime Church of England, as Temple recognised when he gave Chavasse a prominent position on the Commission on Evangelism.

Neo-orthodoxy and Evangelicalism both asserted in the 1930s and 1940s that theological malaise was due to excessive identification with a corrupt culture. They denounced a range of common enemies: "humanism", "social optimism", "evolutionism", "perfectionism" and "utopianism". Preaching on New Year's Day

⁸² David BEBBINGTON, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*, London, 1989, pp. 181ff, discusses several causes of these divisions, including the rise of Biblical criticism, premillennialism, the impact of holiness teaching, differences over the "use of leisure" and the legitimacy of the "Social Gospel", and the influence of "High-Church" liturgical practices. See also Mark A. NOLL, David W. BEBBINGTON and George A. RAWLYK, *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond*, Oxford, 1994, and John WOLFFE, *Evangelical Faith and Public Zeal*, London, 1995.

⁸³ As a lawyer had discovered in the late 1930s, it did not even exist as a legally definable organisation. For a contemporary Catholic critique of the wider implications of "Moral Rearmament", see H.A. HODGES, 'The Meaning of Moral Rearmament', *Theology*, XXXVIII, No. 227, May 1939, pp. 322-332.

⁸⁴ Keswick preached personal sanctification by faith, and exemplified the strongly supernaturalist nature of an Evangelicalism influenced by the Holiness tradition. Unlike the Group Movement, which Bebbington has characterised as an Evangelical affirmation of cultural Modernism (pp. 235ff), its preachers disapproved of theatre and cinema attendance, and displayed a Romantic individualism, enhanced by the convention's venue, which increasingly appealed to the well-to-do. Keswick actively fostered overseas missionary service, but hardly encouraged theological speculation. See J.C. POLLOCK, *The Keswick Story: The Authorized History of the Keswick Convention*, London, 1964, pp. 162-165.

⁸⁵ Christopher CHAVASSE, 'The New Prayer Book: Can We Accept It?', *CMC*, Box 98.

in 1941, Chavasse offered the prodigious generalisation that "No one believes to-day that History possesses in itself any principle of ordered progress." The notion of the steady advance of civilisation was a dream, dissipated once and for all by "atrocities on the continent which would horrify a primitive savage."⁸⁶ In September, 1943, "the shameful moral collapse of France" and various unspecified British laxities, provided him with further ammunition for demolishing the myth of progress⁸⁷. In 1948, he claimed that the "theory of the Evolution of Human history" had been "shattered" by the two World Wars⁸⁸. These were stock Evangelical arguments, but attacks on the idea of progress by Berdyaev⁸⁹ and Niebuhr would prove more widely influential. Vidler later confessed that Niebuhr "got under my skin more than any of the other critics of theological liberalism". Niebuhr had convinced him that he was mistaken in seeing the social implications of Christianity "idealistic, utopian and perfectionist."⁹⁰ Berdyaev and Niebuhr denounced humanism in similar terms, reaching back several centuries for evidence of its unwholesome influence. The Renaissance was for Berdyaev a "second Fall of Man", and, he declared, "That Humanism has not strengthened man but weakened him is the paradoxical *dénouement* of modern history."⁹¹ Niebuhr argued that scientific and technological achievements had given modern civilisation a "sense of self-sufficiency" leading to irreligion. Yet science could neither cure senility nor abolish death⁹². Ironically, progressivism was only made possible by having grown from the soil of "Christian culture":

⁸⁶ CHAVASSE, Psa 91:3, New Year 1941, *CMC*, box 85.

⁸⁷ CHAVASSE, Zech 9:12, Rochester Cathedral and St. John, Tunbridge Wells, 3 September 1943, *CMC*, box 84.

⁸⁸ CHAVASSE, 'The Opened Book of Destiny', Rev 5:9-10, Rochester Cathedral, 1948, also preached in 1954 after exploding of the Hydrogen bomb, *CMC*, box 86. The ARCHBISHOPS' COMMISSION ON EVANGELISM, *Towards the Conversion of England*, Westminster, 1945, pp. 13-15, also elaborated this theme, in language which suggests neo-orthodox influence: "The trust in human progress (evidenced in the last war by the high hopes we entertained of a better social order) has been pulverised by the brutal logic of events." This passage was singled out for particular criticism by J.H. OLDHAM and others involved in the production of the *CN-L*, Supplement to No. 245, 'The Conversion of England', 17 October 1945.

⁸⁹ Berdyaev's existentialism led him to adopt his native Russian Orthodoxy; his writings were selectively quoted by neo-orthodox Protestants, and by Catholics such as Dorothy L. Sayers (see below, p. 269).

⁹⁰ VIDLER, *20th Century Defenders of the Faith*, p. 95. In his editorial for *Theology*, XXXVIII, No. 228, p. 403, Vidler recommended a number of books which might contribute to the growth of "a new Christian lead. These included Niebuhr's works, Maritain's *True Humanism*, Dawson's *Beyond Politics*, and Middleton Murry's *The Price of Leadership*. All of these authors were either members of, or required reading for, the Moot (see below, Chapter 6, *passim*).

⁹¹ Nicholas BERDYAEV, *The End of Our Time*, p. 15, quoted by DAVIES, *On To Orthodoxy*, (second edition), p. 60.

⁹² NIEBUHR, *Beyond Tragedy*, pp. 100-101. Niebuhr's response to utopianism has been discussed by Roger L. SHINN, 'Realism, Radicalism, and Eschatology in Reinhold Niebuhr: An Assessment', in Nathan A. SCOTT (Ed.), Chicago, 1975, pp. 85-99.

It is a secularized version of Biblical apocalypse and of the Hebraic sense of a meaningful history, in contrast to the meaningless history of the Greeks. But since the Christian doctrine of the sinfulness of man is eliminated, a complicating factor in the Christian philosophy is removed and the way is open for simple interpretations of history, which relate historical process as closely as possible to biological process and which fail to do justice to the unique freedom of man or to the daemonic misuse which he may make of that freedom.⁹³

Davies referred repeatedly to Niebuhr and Berdyaev in his innumerable disavowals of humanism. The sense of individuality had grown more acute with the advance of civilisation, but this advance did not include moral improvement.⁹⁴ Civilisation was in moral decline, yet maintained "an invincible, blinkered optimism", and erected progressivism into a dogma. Throughout the 1940s, Davies repeatedly echoed Berdyaev's critique of the Renaissance. In 1940, he reflected on Michaelangelo's depiction of Adam in the Sistine Chapel, using the image, "so vital, so triumphant, so beautiful", as a metaphor for the aspirations of Renaissance humanism. Yet now this Adam was being "battered into shapelessness", in an age that did not build churches, but bombed them. The Adam which a wartime Michaelangelo might portray would surely be "a bowed, defeated and decrepit figure, bereft of hope and life... The dream of Humanism has turned into the nightmare of Nazism."⁹⁵ The Renaissance had broken with Medievalism in the interests of individual creative freedom, but this had not improved the moral conscience of humanity. Humanism had degenerated from an affirmation of freedom into "an assertion of man's self-sufficiency"⁹⁶. The result was capitalism, which Davies continued to regard with his pre-conversion socialist distaste. Now he affirmed that only Christianity, having "more political and social realism in its little finger than current humanism (Left or Right) has in its entire makeup"⁹⁷ was capable of directing society towards a viable alternative. For Davies the Gospel was true "realism" because it taught of human "corruptibility"⁹⁸. The notion that the

⁹³ NIEBUHR, *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation*, (Gifford Lectures, University of Edinburgh), Vol. 1: *Human Nature*, London, 1941, p. 26.

⁹⁴ DAVIES, *Secular Illusion or Christian Realism?*, London, 1942 (2nd Ed. 1948), p. 22. For a similar argument see David M. PATON, 'The World of God and the World of Wells', *Theology*, XL, No. 238, April 1940, pp. 259-260.

⁹⁵ DAVIES, *The Two Humanities*, p. 27. "By 'Humanism' I mean the attitude towards man which the Renaissance first formulated as a conscious, deliberate ideal. This attitude concentrated on man as the centre and object of energy, thought and social being." (*ibid.*, pp. 26-27n.)

⁹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 32.

⁹⁷ D.R. DAVIES, *On To Orthodoxy*, (first edition), London, 1939, p. 101.

⁹⁸ DAVIES, *The Two Humanities*, p. 240.

Kingdom of God is realisable in time must be sternly denied, but "the fullness of the Kingdom of Satan in time is a monstrous possibility". Humanity was capable of creating a Hell on earth which would rival the descriptions in Jonathan Edwards's sermon, *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*.⁹⁹ Recycling the theme in 1947, Davies proclaimed that Renaissance humanism had degenerated into totalitarianism, and linked the stylistic and iconographic innovations of Renaissance art with the Jewish holocaust and the Siberian concentration camps¹⁰⁰.

At Oxford in 1938, Vidler had confessed that his generation had been misled by "facile idealism" and romantic Utopianism.¹⁰¹ In 1940, these convictions seemed vindicated; Utopianism was impossible unless it was "assumed that man is naturally good and naturally reasonable" - a notion denied by the traditional dogma of original sin. Utopianism had been superseded by the revelation of God in Christ, thus demonstrating that "the goal of history lies beyond history".¹⁰² Like Davies, Vidler offered an anti-humanistic and anti-liberal philosophy of history. The acceptance of Marxism by "young English intellectuals" was a rejection of idealism, but the Church had failed to demonstrate in response the "thoroughgoing realism" of Christianity.¹⁰³ While Davies chronicled the degeneration of the Renaissance vision of Adam into the modern reality of totalitarian man, Vidler portrayed European Man "proudly emancipating himself from the rule of God." Modern civilisation had become conceited by its technological and scientific advancement, so that it no longer perceived its dependence on divine grace¹⁰⁴. Vidler criticised his former "Utopian Christianity" as a contradiction in terms, preferring an orthodoxy which emphasised redemption and repentance. Christ had come because "Human nature, if left to itself, would have destroyed itself."¹⁰⁵ The neo-orthodox attack on humanism culminated in the attack on liberal Christianity, with its assumption that Christ came not as a Saviour, but as an example. Moreover, it implied that British culture ought not to be praised too highly for its wartime spirit.

⁹⁹ DAVIES, *On To Orthodoxy*, (second edition), p. 62.

¹⁰⁰ D.R. DAVIES, *Theology and the Atomic Age*, (Lichfield Cathedral Divinity Lectures No. 1), London, 1947, pp. 23-24. See also DAVIES, *The Sin of Our Age*, London, 1947, pp. 30-31.

¹⁰¹ VIDLER, *God's Demand and Man's Response*, p. 11.

¹⁰² Vidler attacked pietism by the same logic that had caused him to reject secular utopianism, since both represented "ways of escape" from "the painful contradiction" of human life. VIDLER, *God's Judgment on Europe*, pp. 27-29. His early editorials in *Theology* also repudiate humanistic assumptions: "The word 'crisis' is in a fair way to becoming as characteristic of this period as 'evolution' or 'progress' was characteristic of the period that ended in 1914." (Vol. XXXVIII, No. 224, February 1939, p. 81, and see Vol. XXXVIII, No. 223, January 1939, pp. 4-5, and see XXXVIII, No. 224, February 1939, p. 83.)

¹⁰³ VIDLER, *God's Judgment on Europe*, pp. 11-12.

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*, p. 71.

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, p. 35.

Chavasse readily joined secular propagandists in 1940 by commending "the amazing fortitude of our people under intense aerial bombardment", and wondered how far the English people might have succeeded in "building Jerusalem on [sic] England's green and pleasant land, if only this country had exhibited one tenth of its present spirit in those past days of peace"¹⁰⁶. Such observations, symptomatic of an instinctive patriotism¹⁰⁷ and optimism about the British spirit, could not have been made by Channing-Pearce, Davies or Vidler. By publishing his private journal, Channing-Pearce demonstrated that his rejection of utopianism and social optimism was not merely a philosophical, but also a profoundly psychological and spiritual transformation. Yearning for emotional and spiritual peace in the midst of total war, he declared: "There is no peace for evolutionism, for evolutionism is perpetual motion and peace is rest."¹⁰⁸ It was not to evolutionism or patriotic ardour, but to the stillness and detachment of mysticism, that "Nicodemus" turned in 1941. *Midnight Hour* seemed to echo the Prayer Book's plea for that "peace which the world cannot give." Channing-Pearce's rejection of the Renaissance ideal of a self-sufficient humanity was the result of his sense of total depravity, borne out of "an extreme and most bitter self-knowledge and humiliation". He recognised that this would alienate many readers:

Yet it is a conclusion to which not only Christianity but the calamity of our civilization and the more realistic psychology of our day compel rather than to the counter-conclusion that there is still some inner good will, 'self of self' or core of consciousness in which we can put our trust.¹⁰⁹

Like Davies and Vidler, he wrote of a "religious realism" that accepted "sin, hell, judgment, 'dying into life', redemption by blood [as the] grim foundations of the

¹⁰⁶ CHAVASSE, 'Come to the Kingdom', Esther 4:14, Tunbridge Wells, 10 November 1940; St. James Palace, 24 November 1940, CMC, box 84. However, in his Centenary Sermon for St. Mary, Platt, Eph. 4:3, 3 October 1943, CMC, box 87, Chavasse complained that "despite their cheerfulness, fortitude, and resolution... English people to-day are infected with an epidemic of unfaithfulness, dishonesty and unchastity, that threatens to foredoom all hopes of a more Christian society after the war."

¹⁰⁷ After the war, he suggested that rebuilt churches would stand as a monument to Christian Europe, which in "the Ages of Faith in the past" had sent the crusaders "to free the Holy Land from infidile [sic] occupation." CHAVASSE, Commemoration of the Night of Destruction in Bromley Parish (16 April 1941), Bromley 16 April 1946, CMC, box 84. Chavasse's adulatory biographer, GUMMER, admits that "His only danger was a national pride which might at times be interpreted as a form of jingoism." (*The Chavasse Twins*, p. 137.)

¹⁰⁸ NICODEMUS, *Midnight Hour*, p. 96 (22nd July 1941).

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*, p. 94 (21st July 1941).

faith"¹¹⁰. If such language had some echoes of Churchill on "blood, toil, tears and sweat"¹¹¹, it lacked any parallel to the congratulatory clauses of his Battle of Britain speeches. In a book of Lenten devotions published in 1945, Channing-Pearce described Easter as "the only real renaissance - a rebirth from temporal to eternal life", challenging "all human renaissance and plans for 'new orders.'"¹¹² The rejection of Utopianism and evolutionism in favour of a rigorous "realism", made more vivid and gruesome by the horrors of war, had two discernible results in Channing-Pearce's writings, the one theological, the other sociological. His attack on humanism predisposed him to minimise the free will in a manner suggestive of Calvinist influence, possibly through Barth¹¹³. It also caused him to reject the claim that the war had revealed a "latent Christianity" among otherwise non-religious English people. The co-operative spirit of the British during the Blitz was merely "enlightened self-interest", producing a community fuelled more by fear than by love. The only "real community" was the Church, because a society that was not "policed by law and power" could only be found among "those who have lost their selves"¹¹⁴. By contrast, Chavasse claimed in 1946 that "a strong latent Christianity in the nation... brought us through". Compelled to choose between patriotism and the belief that human progress was a chimera, Chavasse chose the former, 'Nicodemus' the latter, thus underlining a fundamental difference between the responses of Evangelicalism and neo-orthodoxy to the British war-effort.

Evangelicalism and neo-orthodoxy drew on a stock vocabulary in their criticisms of humanism and the loss of contact with spiritual reality through mechanisation and secularisation. Mechanisation and irresponsible environmental stewardship were favourite themes of Chavasse's Harvest Festival sermons throughout the 1930s and 1940s. Speaking in 1937 on the American depression, he criticised the farming practices which had led to large quantities of topsoil turning into dust and being blown into the Atlantic. Modern man, with "brutal disregard for nature's laws", had depleted the soil by using scientific methods to create unnatural yields. God could not be blamed now that the harvest had failed. Chavasse used harvest failure as a parable about modern life. Mankind's greed was "turning

¹¹⁰ NICODEMUS, *Renascence*, London, 1943, p. 12.

¹¹¹ Winston S. CHURCHILL, House of Commons Speech, May 13 1940, in Robert Rhodes JAMES (Ed.), *Churchill Speaks: Winston S. Churchill in Peace and War, Collected Speeches, 1897-1963*, Leicester, 1981, p. 705.

¹¹² NICODEMUS, *Treasures of Darkness*, p. 122.

¹¹³ For example: "The picture of man which the Bible presents is very unflattering to his vanity... Who that has come to God does not know as he looks back that, however real his 'decision' seemed when he made it, he was, in fact, irresistibly drawn by God and had really precious little to say in the matter?" *ibid.*, p. 70.

¹¹⁴ NICODEMUS, *Midnight Hour*, p. 114 (27th July 1941).

civilisation into a wilderness", and mechanisation, for all the luxuries that it had produced, "is fast making of us a race of irritable and nervous crocks". He complained about noise pollution and suggested that "the increase in sexual excess" and of "nervous disorders" was due to "the monotony of mechanical work". The parable had a broader political application, too: totalitarian states could expect no "social harvest" when "the soil of the home has been destroyed". Deforestation was a symbol of religious persecution in Italy and Germany; religion protected the nation against rampant patriotism, like trees protecting the soil from erosion by rain. Amid quotations from Tennyson on the Vices of Sin, Chavasse implored his listeners to search their hearts for the sources of "harvest failure" in their moral lives. He appealed for listeners to choose "the way of the Cross... a process of the soil of human nature altering itself from within", achieved through the Incarnation and death of Christ. The top soil of the Middle West would not be replaced by some "scientific miracle", but by centuries of reforestation and irrigation; the League of Nations could not prevent war, but human nature must be changed through "whole generations of teaching, example, education and service."¹¹⁵ Sermons such as this typified Chavasse's preaching throughout the period, with their emphasis on mechanisation and human pride, their crucicentric denial of the validity of easy solutions, and their evangelical appeal to the individual conscience.

If the most distinctive aspect of Chavasse's preaching was his emphasis on environmental stewardship, his exhortations to Christian action in terms of nature conservation were vague in comparison to his call for Christians to uphold the value of family life. Yet such preaching was little more than a protest against the *status quo*, or a nostalgia for an agrarian idyll. Vidler, by contrast, saw a mechanised age as a challenge to the relevance of Christianity itself. Vidler was a member of the Moot, which was concerned about the increasing collectivisation of society, revealed in its extreme in Nazism, but evident also in English society¹¹⁶. If society was becoming "collectivised and depersonalised" by mechanisation, then the question of the appeal of Christianity to the individual conscience became more problematic

¹¹⁵ CHAVASSE, Harvest Festival Sermon, 'When the Harvest Fails', Jer 8:20, Thurme, Alleston, Liverpool, 1937, CMC, box 86. See also the *Towards the Conversion of England*, pp. 13-15, which maintained that "The machine has taken charge of its directors and reduced the common people to mere cogs in its wheels."

¹¹⁶ In the first issue of *Theology* under Vidler's editorship, Leslie S. HUNTER (Archdeacon of Northumberland) also reflected on the effects of mechanisation on the appeal of Christianity, in his article, 'The Worship of God and the Life of the People', F.A. COCKIN, *Theology*, XXXVIII, No. 223, January 1939, pp. 38-39. For a detailed discussion of the Moot, and of Vidler's involvement in it, see below, pp. 291-299. Niebuhr also attended one meeting of the Moot, in June, 1943.

than traditional Evangelical preaching, such as that offered by Chavasse, had recognised¹¹⁷. In his Gifford Lectures in 1941, Niebuhr observed:

The idea of individuality which is the most unique emphasis of modern culture is ... a tragically abortive concept, which cannot be maintained either as fact or as idea within the limits of the cultural presuppositions of modernity. The social history of modern life moves from the individualism of the early commercial period to the collectivism of industrialism... [The individual's] revolt against this collectivism betrays him into the even more grievous tyranny of primitive racialism and imperial nationalism.¹¹⁸

If Niebuhr succeeded in getting under Vidler's skin, it was surely because of statements such as this. Christianity had developed under conditions in which collectivisation was not a problem. Vidler wondered whether Christianity might be "inherently incapable of being the dominant religion in a society which is becoming completely collectivized."¹¹⁹ If so, then Chavasse's insistence that peace could come through a steady process of Christianisation, would itself be idealistic social optimism. The Christian understanding that history was concerned with the relationship between God and individual human souls was at radical variance with a world where individualism was crushed beneath the mass, and "reduced to the status of a cog in a vast machine." Vidler wondered whether Christianity had anything original to say to a collectivised society¹²⁰, and looked, for the moment, to neo-orthodoxy for an answer.

Davies was certainly aware of the problem. In the crisis of 1940, scientific progress was symbolised by the bomber. He observed that man's "freedom from God has made him a slave, first of Nature, then of himself via his conquest of Nature."¹²¹ Even the development of social services inhibited personal compassion. Developments in technology and aesthetics were out of balance. Aesthetics had been subjected to a "mechanized pattern" in which "Life has been subordinated to the Frankenstein of technique", exemplified by the rise of Cubism and Surrealism.¹²²

¹¹⁷ VIDLER, *God's Judgment on Europe*, pp. 48-51.

¹¹⁸ NIEBUHR, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Vol. 1, p. 97.

¹¹⁹ VIDLER, *God's Judgment on Europe*, pp. 48-51.

¹²⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 53-54.

¹²¹ DAVIES, *The Two Humanities*, pp. 55-56. The phrase would be echoed in C.S. LEWIS's *The Abolition of Man: Reflections on Education with Special Reference to the Teaching of English in the Upper Forms of Schools*, London, 1943.

¹²² DAVIES, *The Two Humanities*, pp. 45-46.

In 1942, he declared that industrialism had turned human beings into robots.¹²³ He compared Medieval with modern civilisation, claiming that while the latter was superior in material terms, its "spiritual, cultural world... is woefully more confined". The instruments of mass culture had produced a "dangerous uniformity in taste, in opinion, in expression, in attitude and in mode of life."¹²⁴ By 1947, he could claim that mass propaganda had degenerated from a means of conveying information into an institution which "presupposes a mechanized, de-humanized individual", aimed at "the eliciting of a passive response"¹²⁵. Medieval cathedrals communicated a sense of the presence of God. Modern buildings, even such aesthetically attractive ones as the Battersea power station, inspired awe of man: they were "the real religious temples of our time".¹²⁶ Art was a barometer of social change which theologians ignored at their peril, and Renaissance painters were "the first trickle of the flood which was to submerge civilization in blood and filth".¹²⁷ Davies did not attempt to recover a Christian aesthetic as a corrective to such trends, such as Dorothy L. Sayers was suggesting, or to foster a renewed relationship with the arts, as Bishop Bell of Chichester was doing: perhaps his cultural pessimism prevented it. In any case, his denunciation of modern culture did little to answer Vidler's question about how Christianity could be relevant to a collectivized and mechanized society.

Davies's view of pre-Renaissance society owed much to the neo-romantic cultural milieu which also affected Christian writers such as C.S. Lewis. Medieval culture was for Davies "a community of God, man, angels and devils", while modern man had "imprisoned himself" in a "ghastly isolation". Fascism, viewed from the vantage point of 1947, was an attempt to escape from this "into a tribal consciousness of the herd":

Mass man is the extreme and terrible endeavour of a wholly secular civilization to compensate the loss of another world. The pre-Copernican world was a much larger spiritual universe than the solar system of modern thought. In the confined, provincial world of the medieval idea, medieval man was a freeman of eternity.

¹²³ D.R. DAVIES, *Down Peacock's Feathers: Studies in the Contemporary Significance of the General Confession*, London, 1942, pp. 104-105.

¹²⁴ DAVIES, *The Sin of Our Age*, pp. 68, 69.

¹²⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 107, 108 (italics original).

¹²⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

¹²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 33.

But in the limitless world of infinite space of modern science, man is a prisoner in a contracting world.¹²⁸

This nostalgia for a medieval world found a parallel in the first two volumes of C.S. Lewis's science fiction trilogy. Lewis peopled his solar system not only with a rich variety of sentient alien beings, but also with *eldila*, angel-like creatures which, like ancient gods, guarded the planets. The planets themselves passed not through "space", but through "deep heaven", which was not dark but resplendent with the rays of the sun. The effect of Lewis's hero, Ransom, travelling to Mars (Malacandra)¹²⁹ and then to Venus (Perelandra)¹³⁰ and learning the language of their inhabitants, is precisely to recover this lost world, and to place humanity within a homely, organic universe, in contrast to the desolate modern conception of "space". This enables Ransom to perceive spiritual realities. By contrast, the Earth is Thulcandra, the "silent planet", insular and isolated, rendered so by the Fall. A scientific expedition to Malacandra turns into a lustful hunt for gold, and Ransom's scientist captors assume that the peaceful inhabitants are savages and that the voice of the *eldil* is mere ventriloquism. Lewis would not have relished the association with Davies's brand of neo-orthodoxy, yet both saw modern culture as spiritually destitute, and both indulged in romantic anti-industrialism¹³¹. Channing-Pearce's work contained similar elements. In 1940, he praised the poet John Clare for his having "return[ed] to nature" with a sense of "deference and self-obliteration" which contrasted favourably with the "urban, adult, sophisticated" pose of modern poets and critics.¹³² A decade later he used houses as a metaphor for the isolation of modern culture:

We build houses of life and religion ever more securely walled against that wild and tempestuous *res* - the thing-in-itself, 'that which is'. We become mere householders, killed by our comforts and immunities.¹³³

There were no houses on Malacandra or Perelandra, and on the latter, Ransom dispensed even with clothes. Lewis's apologies for Romantic Christianity were

¹²⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 63-64. See Charles WILLIAMS, *The Descent of the Dove: A Short History of the Holy Spirit in the Church*, London, 1939, pp. 219-220.

¹²⁹ C.S. LEWIS, *Out of the Silent Planet*, London, 1938.

¹³⁰ C.S. LEWIS, *Perelandra*, London, 1943.

¹³¹ For an exposition of this aspect of Lewis's thought, see Meredith Veldman, *Fantasy, the Bomb, and the Greening of Britain: Romantic Protest 1945-1980*, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 62-69.

¹³² Melville CHANNING-PEARCE, 'John Clare', *Hilbert Journal*, Vol. XXXIX, (1940-41), pp. 296, 298. Clare (1793-1864) was a Northamptonshire poet who demonstrated acute power of observation through his descriptions of nature.

¹³³ NICODEMUS, *Fore-Dawn*, London, 1950, p. 83.

undisguised¹³⁴. Neo-orthodox theologians, by contrast, pilloried Romanticism wherever they found it in their surrounding culture, but failed to exorcise it from their own most instinctive reactions.

Despite its Romanticism, neo-orthodoxy was wary of applying romantic motifs to war itself, particularly when this appropriated Christian imagery. Channing-Pearce complained in 1945 of the tendency towards an "adolescent, romantic chatter about the Cross"¹³⁵, and the ease with which propagandists could make "glib comparisons between Dunkirk or Alamein and the Cross". The uniqueness of the Cross of Christ must not be minimised, especially when war had emphasised the need for transcendent truth¹³⁶. This reaction demonstrates that there were limits to Channing-Pearce's acceptance of Romantic motifs, and points to a further difference between his neo-orthodoxy and Chavasse's Evangelicalism. Chavasse employed Romantic motifs freely¹³⁷, particularly in sermons on war. In 1940, drawing on his own experiences at the Somme, he compared the poppies and mustard flowers that covered the appalling scenes of trench warfare in the First World War with the flowers that bloomed on buildings destroyed in the Blitz¹³⁸. In a sermon on an "Air-Raid Massacre", he called upon his congregation to stand at "the Altar of Sacrifice and Suffering for the redemption of the world"¹³⁹. In 1941, he added chivalric metaphors, referring to Britons as "God's Chivalry"¹⁴⁰. Later sermons explicitly identified the war-dead with the sacrifice of Christ. The British people in April 1944 were about "to march down the Calvary road of sacrifice to the uttermost"¹⁴¹, and on Remembrance Sunday in 1946, Chavasse justified the use of crosses as a symbol of sacrifice for war memorials, since they "all seem to merge with the form of the Crucified Himself"¹⁴². In 1948, he maintained that the "crucifixion of Mother Earth" entailed by war echoed the crucifixion of Christ, while the blooming flowers echoed

¹³⁴ See C.S. LEWIS, *The Pilgrim's Regress: An Allegorical Apology for Christianity Reason and Romanticism*, London, 1933 (Revised Edition 1943).

¹³⁵ NICODEMUS, *Treasures of Darkness*, p. 115.

¹³⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 116-117.

¹³⁷ He quoted approvingly from Romantic poems, such as Wordsworth's 'The Rainbow', comparing the poet's delight with John's vision on Patmos. CHAVASSE, Harvest Festival Sermon, 'The Bow in the Cloud', Gen 9:13, Ditton, 29 September 1940; Bromley, Bromley Common 6 October 1940; West Ham, Shipbourne, 12 October 1940, CMC, box 86.

¹³⁸ CHAVASSE, Harvest Festival Sermon, 'The Bow in the Cloud', Gen 9:13, Ditton, 29 September 1940; Bromley, Bromley Common 6 October 1940; West Ham, Shipbourne, 12 October 1940, CMC, box 86.

¹³⁹ CHAVASSE, 'Air Raid Massacre', Jer 31:15-17, Northfleet, 24 August, 1940, CMC, box 84.

¹⁴⁰ CHAVASSE, 'National Day of Prayer', March 25 1941, CMC, box 84. See GUMMER, *The Chavasse Twins*, pp. 140-141.

¹⁴¹ CHAVASSE, 'The Triumph of Easter', Rev 12:10, Wrotham Gap, Rochester Cathedral, 8 April 1944, CMC, box 86.

¹⁴² CHAVASSE, 'And the people stood beholding', Luke 23:35, Sermon for Remembrance Sunday, 1946, CMC, box 84.

his resurrection.¹⁴³ Other churchmen had sought to dissociate themselves from such Romantic themes after the First World War; neo-orthodoxy reflected this reticence, and in the process, magnified the exclusive nature of the sacrifice of Christ.

Neo-orthodoxy, for all its own incipient Romanticism, lamented the Romantic impact on modern culture and theology. "Nicodemus" proclaimed that "Romanticism is the devil in religion", because it emphasised the ecstatic element in spiritual experience without recognising that true religion is, in characteristic 1941 rhetoric, "realistic, stark, sober, dogged, silent".¹⁴⁴ The Romantic emphasis on the sublimity of nature could also be overstressed: one might find it in an English wood, but in the jungle, one would find "only a murderous strife for 'living space' in which the very trees are assassins."¹⁴⁵ In underlining these paradoxes about Romanticism, "Nicodemus" demonstrated a typical neo-orthodox concern about the relationship between Christianity and culture. Niebuhr believed that Romanticism had arisen because idealistic rationalism had "identified spirit too simply with reason and reason too simply with God". In reaction, Romanticism had emphasised "natural vitality as a source of human creativity or... natural unities... as sources of order and virtue". Modern culture was torn between these two extremes. Christian civilisation had originally been equipped to resolve such a conflict, as it had recognised that "God is the source of vitality as well as of order"¹⁴⁶. Because of its mistaken belief in human goodness, Romanticism would always lead to cynicism¹⁴⁷, and when separated from Christianity, would descend into nihilism.¹⁴⁸ Fascism was a form of "Romantic primitivism"¹⁴⁹. Davies, Niebuhr's disciple, echoed this view, seeing in Romanticism the first step along the road to Nazism¹⁵⁰. Indeed, neo-orthodox writers insisted that Nazism was the product of cultural modernity itself. Davies announced in 1939 that "Hitlerism is the final consequence of the gospel of Humanism"¹⁵¹. Channing-Pearce

¹⁴³ CHAVASSE, 'Garden of Remembrance' John 19:41, St. James, Elmers Road, 17 October 1948, CMC, box 84. These recurring motifs in Chavasse's sermons bear comparison with Anglican statements on sacrifice and redemptive death during the First World War. See Alan WILKINSON, *The Church of England and the First World War*, London, 1978, pp. 186-193.

¹⁴⁴ NICODEMUS, *Midnight Hour*, p. 110 (25th July 1941).

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 147 (21st September 1941).

¹⁴⁶ NIEBUHR, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Vol. 1, p. 29.

¹⁴⁷ NIEBUHR, *Beyond Tragedy*, p. 131.

¹⁴⁸ NIEBUHR, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Vol. 1, pp. 30-31.

¹⁴⁹ NIEBUHR, *Beyond Tragedy*, pp. 143, 144.

¹⁵⁰ DAVIES, *The Sin of Our Age*, p. 92-93. Davies's belief that Nazism was a logical progression from Romanticism was derived from Niebuhr. See, for example, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Vol. 1, p. 21. See also the anonymous article, 'The Nazi Creed: Its Links with Prussia and Nihilism', *The Christian News-Letter*, No. 80, April 1941.

¹⁵¹ DAVIES, *On To Orthodoxy*, (second edition), p. 45 (italics original). He repeated his claim in 1942: "Hitler is the incarnation of the secular illusion about man" (*Secular Illusion or Christian Realism?*, p. xii). He also saw Nazi collectivism as the logical outcome of a "profound protest against freedom in modern life" which had resulted in a situation in which "To be a personality... is a fearful

went further: the modern denial of "spirit" had indeed culminated in Nazism, but that was a mere symptom of "an epidemic... of the modern soul". The only possibility of defeating Nazism, therefore, lay in "a re-arming of our spirits".¹⁵² Victory in war would not be enough. Channing-Pearce surveyed the prospect for civilisation in June 1941 with profound pessimism:

Naziism [sic] is a lunatic logic which can only destroy; our patriotism is all too often compact of greed, fear and bombast, its 'decencies' damnable; our 'planning' of the future a mere simian chattering... It is mere sentimentality to pretend that for such a civilization there can be any future other than a diminuendo of life in mutual destruction, a deterioration of the standard of life increasing, as the war continues and widens, by geometrical progression, a growing brutalization and regimentation.¹⁵³

Although totalitarian tendencies in modern society must be counteracted by Christianity, it mattered greatly to neo-orthodox writers that it should be precisely Christianity as they understood it, for the traditional religions were, in their eyes, profoundly deficient. Liberalism was condemned by Evangelicals and neo-orthodox writers alike as the expression of modern humanism and Romanticism in religious language. Liberal optimism was blamed for the overwhelming support which Anglican clergy had given to appeasement. Chavasse had supported appeasement in a sermon at St. Peter Le Bailey on 18th September 1938, but by September 1942 saw it as a manifestation of the country's surrender to "agnostic materialism", encouraged by a Church which preached "a Gospel of this world"¹⁵⁴. In 1942, such language was commonplace; Chavasse had probably borrowed it from writers such as Niebuhr and Davies. Its implication was obvious: liberalism was the product of an optimistic, Utopian culture which had watched its dreams being swallowed by its own mutated creations: mechanisation, totalitarianism and total war.

United in rejecting liberalism for its refusal to emphasise sin and redemption, Evangelicalism and neo-orthodoxy also rejected traditional Catholic ecclesiology,

fate, a spiritual martyrdom." (*The Two Humanities*, p. 67.) See also NIEBUHR, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Vol. 1, p. 22.

¹⁵² NICODEMUS, *Midnight Hour*, p. 33 (11th June 1941).

¹⁵³ *ibid.*, p. 37 (19th June 1941).

¹⁵⁴ CHAVASSE, 'National Day of Prayer', 1 Cor 16:13, Beckenham Parish Church, 3 September 1942; Rochester Cathedral 6 September 1942, CMC, box 84. He levelled similar criticisms at the church at the end of the war in a Whitsunday sermon, 'Power for Witness', Acts 1:8, Rochester Cathedral, 20 April 1945, CMC, box 86.

agreeing that it underestimated the sin of human collectives¹⁵⁵. Barth disapproved of the Catholic emphasis on natural theology¹⁵⁶, and while Niebuhr - and most Anglicans - disagreed¹⁵⁷, he could not accept the Catholic identification of the Church with the Kingdom of God¹⁵⁸. Vidler and Channing-Pearce went on to propose neo-orthodox ecclesiologies which would avoid the perceived shortcomings of Catholicism¹⁵⁹. Vidler argued that the Church was "interlocked with the sinful and humanly conditioned institutions through which we hear the Word of God and receive His grace". It was therefore necessary for Christians to throw in their lot with the existing churches, however imperfect, and to accept that "If they are sinking ships, we have got to go down with them."¹⁶⁰ Channing-Pearce felt that the Church was in desperate need of a rebirth, "But it is the Church itself which must be reborn - not some other new foundation." By choosing Christ, one chose the Christian creed; by choosing the creed, one chose the Church "which enshrines it, however woefully"¹⁶¹. By 1945, he was recommending an "existential Christianity" which would reject the assumption that the Word could be judged by "man's unaided reason", but continue to uphold the Protestant idea of "private judgement", by means of which the Word would judge man¹⁶².

¹⁵⁵ The Evangelical Commission on Catholicity would find in 1950 that one of the chief obstacles to Christian reunion had been that Catholics saw the Church as an extension of the Incarnation, while Protestants emphasised its "fallibility" due to the collective sinful state of its members. *The Fulness of Christ: The Church's Growth into Catholicity*, London, 1950, pp. 4, 5, 33, 62-63. However, see below, pp. 105, 259, 291, for examples of Catholic ecclesiology which included acute awareness of the Church's failings.

¹⁵⁶ "The positive content of the Reformation is the renewal of the church, based upon the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and this means implicitly the negation of all 'natural theology'." Karl BARTH, *The Knowledge of God and the Service of God According to the Teaching of the Reformation* (Gifford Lectures, 1937 and 1938), London, 1938, pp. ix, xi.

¹⁵⁷ WILKINSON, *Dissent or Conform?*, p. 206, and see also Reinhold NIEBUHR, *Christianity and Power Politics*, New York, 1940, p. 58, and 'Christian Faith and Natural Law', *Theology*, XL, No. 236, February 1940, pp. 86ff.

¹⁵⁸ NIEBUHR, *Beyond Tragedy*, p. 62. "Every interpretation of the church which promises an 'efficient grace,' by which man ceases to be man and enters prematurely into the Kingdom of God, is a snare and a delusion." Niebuhr felt that Thomism aimed at too exact a definition of the relationship between grace and free will, thus obscuring the "profundity of the experience of conversion". (*The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation*, Vol. 2, *Human Destiny*, London, 1943, p. 120; Vol. 1, pp. 234-235). See also DAVIES, *The Two Humanities*, pp. 62-63.

¹⁵⁹ Niebuhr denounced Roman Catholicism as "heresy". Anglo-Catholicism was "especially prone to refute its sanctificationist interpretations of the Church by its own actions": a prescient criticism when one considers the Anglo-Catholic resistance to the Church of South India scheme later in the 1940s (see below, pp. 100-101). NIEBUHR, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Vol. 2, p. 233. See also VIDLER, *God's Judgment on Europe*, pp. 57-58; NIEBUHR, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, p. 242).

¹⁶⁰ VIDLER, *God's Judgment on Europe*, p. 101.

¹⁶¹ NICODEMUS, *Midnight Hour*, p. 50 (1st July 1941).

¹⁶² NICODEMUS, *Treasures of Darkness*, pp. 9, 28-29; *Kierkegaard*, pp. 29ff. See ROBERTS, *A Theology on its Way?*, pp. 109-110. Consequently, Pearce's work struck one reviewer as being a "combination of modernist candour with traditionalist depth", avoiding Barth's "dependence on sheer Revelation", but deeply out of sympathy with of liberals such as Major. Review of Melville

Neo-orthodoxy refuted Protestant individualism as vociferously as it did Catholic collectivism. The Protestant belief in "human self-confidence", Niebuhr argued, was evident in its tendency to trust the "pious man"¹⁶³, notwithstanding the refusal to revere Saints or identify the Church with the Kingdom¹⁶⁴. An individualistic Protestantism had spawned capitalism¹⁶⁵, which in turn had precipitated the reactions of Marxism and theological liberalism¹⁶⁶. The neo-orthodox critique of traditional Protestantism insisted that a Christian sociology must be paradoxical, defining "society" as "a unity composed of independent unities - individual persons"¹⁶⁷. Salvation must be both individual and corporate, the interpretation of scripture must rely on "private judgment" informed by experience and tradition, and the social relevance of Christianity must be safeguarded by the refusal to divide life into secular and religious spheres¹⁶⁸. Fundamentalism must be rejected in favour of a "dialectical orthodoxy"¹⁶⁹, which Davies insisted did not denote "the officially accepted creeds and confessions of the Church so much as the substantive experience and knowledge that are proclaimed in those Creeds."¹⁷⁰ Channing-Pearce turned in the second half of the 1940s to a thorough investigation of the implications of this dialectical orthodoxy and its relationship to existentialist thought¹⁷¹, and by 1950, was looking for the growth of a "Deep Church" which would transcend party-divisions by replacing dogmatism with "deep inward experience... corresponding to the Christian pattern of the Fall, Redemption, Incarnation, and Resurrection."¹⁷²

CHANNING-PEARCE, *Religion and Reality, The Church Quarterly Review*, Vol. 124 (April-June 1937), pp. 328-329.

¹⁶³ NIEBUHR, *Beyond Tragedy*, pp. 123-124.

¹⁶⁴ It was typical for Evangelicals to avoid the association of the Church with the Kingdom by referring to the Church as "the Body of Christ". See, for example, Christopher CHAVASSE, Whitsuntide, 1944, 'There is one Body, and one Spirit', Eph 5:4, CMC, box 86: "The future of Christianity... depends on how far the Church of Christ can recover and fulfil the New Testament conception of the Church as *the Body of Christ*." (Chavasse's emphasis.)

¹⁶⁵ DAVIES, *The Two Humanities*, p. 87, could not resist describing Protestantism as "Capitalism on its knees... a translation of religion into terms of private property."

¹⁶⁶ NIEBUHR, *Beyond Tragedy*, pp. 298-299.

¹⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 136. It was still possible for Vidler to lead a mission with an individualistic emphasis reminiscent of Evangelical appeals to conversion, asking "Are you personally right with God?"

VIDLER, *God's Demand and Man's Response*, p. 75.

¹⁶⁸ Hitlerism was "the monstrous offspring of Erastianism", itself the result Luther's over-reaction against the Catholic tendency to absolutise the Church. DAVIES, *The Two Humanities*, p. 63.

¹⁶⁹ For a retrospective definition of neo-orthodoxy, see VIDLER, *20th Century Defenders of the Faith*, pp. 82-83.

¹⁷⁰ DAVIES, *On To Orthodoxy*, (second edition), p. 117n, and see p. 32.

¹⁷¹ NICODEMUS, *Treasures of Darkness*, p. 47.

¹⁷² NICODEMUS, *Fore-Dawn*, pp. xiii, 18-19.

The refusal to identify orthodoxy either with Biblical literalism or with Church tradition found its fullest development in neo-orthodox discussions of the Fall. Niebuhr disavowed the notion that human beings had existed in a state of perfection in a historical period before the Fall. Such a "historical-literalistic illusion" had caused Protestantism to assert that the image of God in man had been obliterated by sin, and had caused Catholicism to make an "unwarranted distinction between a completely lost original justice and an uncorrupted natural justice."¹⁷³ Niebuhr, perhaps unaware of the similarity of his argument to that of contemporary Anglo-Catholicism¹⁷⁴, insisted that any attempt to convey religious truth was necessarily metaphorical, because God was transcendent: "We are deceivers, yet true..." The Biblical story of the Fall was a "primitive myth". The Fall was not historical; "It does not take place in any concrete human act. It is the presupposition of such acts." Traditional insistence on the historicity of the Fall had led modern theology to disavow the doctrine altogether, replacing it with explanations of the origin of human evil in "the inertia of nature, or the hypertrophy of impulses, or... the defect of reason". Such an attempt to rid theology of "religious obscurantism" led to the assumption that reason itself would ultimately be "the guarantor of goodness"; yet human evil actually "arises from the very freedom of reason with which man is endowed."¹⁷⁵ Barthianism, too, had made the mistake of considering the state of human perfection before the Fall as historical, and so had elaborated "a doctrine of human sinfulness which approaches, and sometimes surpasses, the extremism of the historic doctrine of total depravity."¹⁷⁶ Finally, Niebuhr criticised Origen for having imported pagan elements of Platonism into Christianity in describing the Fall as an event in pre-existence which resulted in man's descent into mutability and finiteness, with sex as "the particular symbol of sin."¹⁷⁷ It is doubtful whether D.R. Davies realised that he had departed from his accustomed discipleship of Niebuhr in adopting precisely such a doctrine. He determined that the creation and man's primal sin had taken place in pre-existence, and as a result, assumed that historical existence

¹⁷³ NIEBUHR, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Vol. 1, pp. 284-285, 292. This theme is also developed in his article, 'Christian Faith and Natural Law', *Theology*, XL, No. 236, February 1940, pp. 86-94.

¹⁷⁴ See below, pp. 92-93.

¹⁷⁵ NIEBUHR, *Beyond Tragedy*, pp. 10-11. See also *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Vol. 1, p. 278: "It is obviously necessary to eliminate the literalistic illusions in the doctrine of original sin if the paradox of inevitability and responsibility is to be fully understood, for the theory of an inherited second nature is as clearly destructive of the idea of responsibility for sin as rationalistic and dualistic theories which attribute human evil to the inertia of nature." Niebuhr's critique of liberal theories on the origin of evil may have influenced *Towards the Conversion of England*, pp. 14-15.

¹⁷⁶ NIEBUHR, *Beyond Tragedy*, pp. 12-13.

¹⁷⁷ NIEBUHR, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Vol. 1, p. 183.

was the consequence of sin, and therefore that sin was "fundamental to it."¹⁷⁸ The Fall of humanity into history had been accompanied by a loss of individual self-consciousness, so that history itself was a process in which human beings had gained self-consciousness, and, indeed, this was "the only progress which History reveals."¹⁷⁹

Surveying the cultural and theological scene in the late 1930s and early 1940s, therefore, neo-orthodox writers had found deficiencies in Humanism, Utopianism and Liberalism, as well as traditional Catholicism and Protestantism, and had asserted that a dialectical theology was needed which would engage with the facts of existence. Yet the facts of existence in this period seemed to lead inexorably to despair. Neo-orthodoxy embraced this experience of despair, interpreting it as the foundation upon which true Christian faith could be built. Niebuhr asserted that optimism was more dangerous to faith than was despair¹⁸⁰. For Channing-Pearce, the "way of the Spirit" implied being "stretched out on the rack of this tough world'... the rack of its terrible tensions, its tormenting dialectic." Life was "void of mercy... there is always another turn of the screw of suffering to endure." The Bible did not offer "consolatory dope", but "a rock-like realism."¹⁸¹ He abhorred the "pseudo-Christianity" or "Christianity after the flesh" which he found so frequently in books of popular devotions, and found a radical alternative to it in the theology of Barth. "If the gospel after the flesh is right," wrote Nicodemus, "the Nazis are in the right."¹⁸² Barthianism had erred by repudiating earthly life¹⁸³, but it had been right to assert that the human spirit is "desperately wicked and doomed". *Midnight Hour* chronicled this realistic despair in agonising detail. "Nicodemus" equated his own spiritual state with Britain after the Fall of France: the war itself was "an apocalypse of this war in my soul", in which he could only confess to "defeat after defeat"¹⁸⁴. He felt that his self was "corrupt, disintegrating, dying":

¹⁷⁸ DAVIES, *The Two Humanities*, pp. 68-69. There is less evidence that Davies also inherited Origen's tendency to see sex as "the particular symbol of sin", although his work does contain statements which reveal a pessimistic view of marriage.

¹⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p. 74. See also p. 78: "History is the record of the agonizing psychological rise from dark unconsciousness to personal awareness. We must not interpret this development as an evolution in goodness, as an ascent into salvation."

¹⁸⁰ NIEBUHR, *Beyond Tragedy*, p. 115.

¹⁸¹ NICODEMUS, *Treasures of Darkness*, p. 31.

¹⁸² NICODEMUS, *Midnight Hour*, p. 55 (2nd July 1941). Pearce identified Evelyn Underhill, Oswald Chambers, Bishop Gore and Kierkegaard as writers who had typified the "religion of the Spirit" which was the necessary alternative to Christianity "after the flesh". See p. 63 (3 July 1941), and also his article 'The Two Christianities', in *Renascence*, pp. 135-142.

¹⁸³ *ibid.*, p. 57 (2nd July 1941).

¹⁸⁴ NICODEMUS, *Midnight Hour*, p. 16 (1st May 1941).

I see that Death-skull, that ghastly grin, smell that fetid stench of corruption always - always, so that every word and deed I say or do seems rank with it, so that Death grins through them all.¹⁸⁵

Without Christ, despair was all there was¹⁸⁶. Davies, too, thought that despair, such as he had experienced in Spain, was "the only possible alternative to Christian faith"¹⁸⁷. It was more dangerous still when war stopped short of this, driving "us back to our ruined hopes"¹⁸⁸. Despair must issue in repentance and recognition of the moral infirmity of the human race.¹⁸⁹ Davies found this despair of human nature lying beneath the "gaiety" of St. Francis, in the theology of Luther, in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and in Puritan theologies which had insisted that "Man is but a worm."¹⁹⁰ This "counsel of despair" must qualify one's expectations of the Church - there was nothing that the Church could do to "convict the modern world of sin and convince its mind of the truth of Christianity."¹⁹¹ For Davies and for Channing-Pearce, despair was the basis for a theology.

Despair was necessary for these writers because of the revelation of sin through the failure of the "Social Gospel"¹⁹², through war, and through the Cross. That war was the revelation of sin was also a favourite theme for Evangelicals. On Christmas Day in 1938, Chavasse reflected that instead of the chiming of bells in Bethlehem, the wireless had brought the sound of guns. He reminded the congregation of the bombing in China and Spain, symbols of human cruelty.¹⁹³ In his first sermon as Bishop of Rochester, he spoke of the brutalising effects of war¹⁹⁴.

¹⁸⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 18-19, 20, (13th May 1941).

¹⁸⁶ NICODEMUS, *Treasures of Darkness*, p. 43.

¹⁸⁷ DAVIES, *The Sin of Our Age*, p. 142.

¹⁸⁸ DAVIES, *The Two Humanities*, p. 12. He cited H.G. Wells as an example. Davies would return to this theme after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, warning that "the disintegration of human hopes" did not always issue in repentance, but "may easily result in sheer nihilism and secular despair." *Theology and the Atomic Age*, pp. 58, 59.

¹⁸⁹ DAVIES, *The Two Humanities*, p. 60. See also p 245: "despair will be the Church's ministry of repentance."

¹⁹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 179.

¹⁹¹ *ibid.*, pp. 241-242.

¹⁹² One source of Davies's despair had been the failure to abolish poverty, as a result of which the teachings of Calvin and Jonathan Edwards had seemed more realistic than his own Christian liberalism. DAVIES, *On To Orthodoxy*, (second edition), p. 44.

¹⁹³ CHAVASSE, Christmas 1938, Luke 2:7, Matt 25:35, *CMC*, box 85.

¹⁹⁴ CHAVASSE, 'A Day of Prayer', Whit Sunday, Rochester Cathedral, 12 August, 1940, *CMC*, box 84 (See also 'The Triumph of Easter', Rev 12:10, Wrotham Gap, Rochester Cathedral, 8 April 1944, *CMC*, box 86). Chavasse cited Professor Joad of the Brains Trust as an example. He also mentioned C.S. Lewis, not realising that Lewis's conversion had come much earlier. There is very little evidence that Lewis's conversion to Christianity was inspired in any way by a sense of the sinfulness of humanity; he was converted as a result of J.R.R. Tolkien's and Hugo Dyson's argument that

In 1942, he drew attention to conversions to Christianity which had occurred as a result of the discovery that "to believe in God... [is] our only hope against the sin inherent in human nature."¹⁹⁵ Such observations were, however, a dim reflection of Davies's writings on war as the revelation of sin. The history of warfare provided "added testimony to the radical evil of human nature", since it had developed from the simple expression of "brutality" to the "organised, deliberate, calculated cruelty" of modern total war¹⁹⁶. Yet war was more than a mere aberration, it was "the final term of any civilization"¹⁹⁷, the "supreme revelation of man's creative capacity"¹⁹⁸; it was "the *n*th degree of the sin and irrationality prevailing in pacific civilization", and "the bursting of the abscess in which the poisons of the body politic have been accumulating"¹⁹⁹. War, not peace, was the natural state of humanity.²⁰⁰ War had become more horrific than ever before because it had escalated with the process of human development.²⁰¹ Standing beside the owner of a house ruined in the Blitz, Davies remarked to her that "here was original sin in operation". "But surely, Mr. Davies," she replied, "you don't believe in that dreadful doctrine?" Davies answered that the ruins demanded it. War was a corrective to human pride: a call for human beings to "Down peacock's feathers."²⁰² Beyond war, the Cross was the ultimate revelation of sin. In the work of Davies, the significance of the Cross as the point at which God absorbed human sin is lost behind the sin of the crucifixion itself, so that, in a statement that was reductive even for Davies, "Atonement means that man gets a sense of guilt."²⁰³ In the light of the Cross and of war, original sin was become "a serious sociological hypothesis."²⁰⁴

Christianity was a "myth that was true". (Walter HOOPER, *C.S. Lewis: A Companion and Guide*, London, 1996, pp. 13-14.)

¹⁹⁵ CHAVASSE, 'The Coming of the Dayspring', Rochester Cathedral, 25 December 1942, CMC, box 85.

¹⁹⁶ DAVIES, *On To Orthodoxy*, (second edition), pp. 79-80.

¹⁹⁷ DAVIES, *The Two Humanities*, p. 10.

¹⁹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 40.

²⁰⁰ *ibid.*, p. 93.

²⁰¹ *ibid.*, p. 38. Davies related this to the use of atomic weapons in *Secular Illusion or Christian Realism?*, London, 1942 (2nd Edition, 1945), pp. 30, 32.

²⁰² DAVIES, *Down Peacock's Feathers*, p. 46. "Wherefore, good people, let us beware of such hypocrisy, vain-glory, and justifying of ourselves. Let us look upon our feet; and then down peacock's feathers, down proud heart, down vile clay, frail and brittle vessels." - "The Misery of Man" in the *Book of Homilies*.

²⁰³ DAVIES, *The Two Humanities*, p. 166.

²⁰⁴ DAVIES, *Down Peacock's Feathers*, p. 46.

The doctrine of original sin was implicitly accepted by most Evangelicals²⁰⁵. Chavasse made the somewhat dubious claim in 1944 that "I meet no thinking man to-day, who does not believe in original sin"²⁰⁶. He spoke in 1948 of Temple's growing understanding of the "corruption of human nature", interpreting this as a movement towards an Evangelical understanding of sin²⁰⁷. It was, however, rare for Evangelicals to match the stridency of Barth, for whom faith was a "divine crisis" in which "man is convicted again and again of his sin"²⁰⁸. One of the *Römerbrief's* distinctive "trumpet blasts" announced that "Grace is not grace, if he that receives it is not under judgement."²⁰⁹ Believing in Christ entailed recognising one's own "unfaithfulness" and ceasing to believe in oneself²¹⁰. Niebuhr was critical of Barthianism, arguing that its concentration on the sinfulness of man was excessive²¹¹. Original sin must be balanced by human freedom and responsibility; a paradox must be preserved in which "the discovery of the inevitability of sin is man's highest assertion of freedom."²¹² Niebuhr, and Davies after him, interpreted original sin as man's drive for independence and self-sufficiency²¹³. Yet Davies perhaps owed more to Barth in agreeing so wholeheartedly with the General Confession that "there is no health in us"²¹⁴. Niebuhr was concerned "to assert the continued presence in man of *justitia originalis*" in order to guard against the doctrine of total depravity²¹⁵, but as Vidler would reflect in later years, Davies had become obsessed with original sin. Channing-Pearce, exorcising his sense of self-loathing in *Midnight Hour*, also came closer to Barth than to Niebuhr. Natural virtue was "contrary to Christianity and corrupt with its own doom and death,"²¹⁶

²⁰⁵ Montague GOODMAN, 'The Wondrous Cross', *The Keswick Week*, London, 1947. See also Rev. W. Graham SCROGGIE, 'The Call and Challenge of Christ', *The Keswick Week*, London, 1946, p. 43; that "We shall never fall back on Omnipotence until we realise our own impotence."

²⁰⁶ CHAVASSE, 'The Triumph of Easter', Rev 12:10, Wrotham Gap, Rochester Cathedral, 8 April 1944, CMC, box 86.

²⁰⁷ CHAVASSE, 'William Temple's Message for To-Day' (being a part of a Cathedral lecture delivered to clergy of Rochester Diocese), 21 September 1948, CMC, box 97. Alan SUGGATE, *William Temple and Christian Social Ethics Today*, London, 1987, pp. 196ff, has demonstrated that Temple was more indebted to Niebuhr than to traditional Evangelicalism for this aspect of his theological evolution.

²⁰⁸ BARTH, *The Knowledge of God*, p. xxi.

²⁰⁹ BARTH, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 187. Compare with NICODEMUS, *Treasures of Darkness*, p. 51. See also VIDLER, *God's Judgment on Europe*, p. 70.

²¹⁰ BARTH, *The Knowledge of God*, p. xx. Emil BRUNNER, influenced by Barth, wrote that the message of redemption and reconciliation presupposed the acceptance that man had a fundamental "contradiction in his nature." (*Man in Revolt: A Christian Anthropology*, London, 1939, p. 114.)

²¹¹ NIEBUHR, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Vol. 1, p. 234.

²¹² *ibid.*, p. 279. The inevitability of sin was proven for Niebuhr by the Reformers' propensity to it. He used the example of Calvin's persecution of the Antitrinitarian, Servetus (*Beyond Tragedy*, p. 264).

²¹³ DAVIES used the same example in *The Two Humanities*, pp. 43-44.

²¹⁴ DAVIES, *The Two Humanities*, p. 52.

²¹⁵ DAVIES, *Down Peacock's Feathers*, p. viii.

²¹⁶ NIEBUHR, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Vol. 1, pp. 313-314.

²¹⁷ NICODEMUS, *Midnight Hour*, pp. 103-105 (23rd July 1941).

and art was corrupted when it was not produced to the glory of God²¹⁷. The stridency of much neo-orthodox language was derived from this emphasis on the corrupted nature of man without God. Yet Niebuhr's more balanced appraisal made the profounder contribution to English theology beyond the ranks of the neo-orthodox. Searching for a word to describe the effects of sin, Niebuhr introduced the idea of tragedy. Modern culture had lost the sense of life as tragedy, but "the basic message of the Christian faith is a message of hope in tragedy": the light had come into the world and the world had not received it. Only the recognition of this could bring about the contrition which would "open the eyes of faith".²¹⁸ Niebuhr's concept of tragedy added a note of compassion to the neo-orthodox chorus of denunciation, and it was significant that the word was not taken up by his closest followers within Anglicanism, but by Anglo-Catholics such as MacKinnon and Sayers²¹⁹.

When Niebuhr addressed the problem of "moral man and immoral society", he demonstrated the implications of original sin for Christian ethics. In 1936, perhaps with Nazism in mind, he suggested that "the evil impulses in men may be compounded in collective actions until they reach diabolical proportions."²²⁰ By the time the atomic bombs had been exploded, Chavasse was revealing Niebuhr's influence: "though we may subdue within ourselves such war-mongering sins as pride and greed and self-seeking, we can yet transfer them to the social group to which we belong, and thereby intensify them"²²¹. Niebuhr and his Anglican followers asserted that all human collectives were infected with power politics. Davies insisted that civilisation was based on power, and that therefore all civilisations were impermanent because power engendered resistance²²². Related to this theory that collectives were more sinful than individuals was the proposal that much of Jesus's moral teaching was incapable of fulfilment in a society stained with original sin. Christianity, Niebuhr argued, asserted "the relevance of an impossible

²¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 106 (23rd July 1941).

²¹⁸ NIEBUHR, *Beyond Tragedy*, pp. 18-19.

²¹⁹ DAVIES, for example, hardly uses the word at all, with the exception of his assertion that "Pacifism is not sufficiently tragic in its view of human nature." *On To Orthodoxy*, (second edition), p. 36. (For a discussion of Anglo-Catholic uses of the concept of tragedy see below, pp. 75, 113-114, 322-325.)

²²⁰ Reinhold NIEBUHR, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*, London, 1936, p. 26. See also *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Vol. 1, pp. 221-222: "the pretensions and claims of a collective or social self exceed those of the individual ego. The group is more arrogant, hypocritical, self-centred and more ruthless in the pursuit of its ends than the individual." DAVIES commented approvingly on this aspect of Niebuhr's theology in his own *Reinhold Niebuhr: Prophet from America*, pp. 38-49. See BINGHAM, *Courage to Change*, pp. 173-182; BROWN, *Niebuhr and His Age*, pp. 47ff.

²²¹ CHAVASSE, Sermon for British Legion Service, Armistice Day 1945, CMC, box 84.

²²² DAVIES, *The Two Humanities*, p. 94. See also *On To Orthodoxy*, (first edition), p. 120.

ideal." Channing-Pearce agreed, arguing that Christianity is always "a compromise, if the ethic of Christ is not to be wholly divorced from actual life,"²²³ while Davies proposed "that to love our neighbour as ourselves is not just a simple possibility for us."²²⁴ Christianity, therefore, while acting as society's conscience, must also point forward to the fulfilment of Christian principles through the Kingdom of God, present within history, but to be fulfilled outside history²²⁵. Davies avoided Utopianism by asserting that Christ's teachings could not easily be applied in society, and alleviated the consequent despair by turning to eschatology²²⁶.

Vidler exemplified the neo-orthodox emphasis on eschatology and transcendence by defining the "authentic gospel" as "a message of salvation from on high, not of inevitable progress from below."²²⁷ Such a statement illustrates the link between the denial of liberal social optimism and the notion of the radical otherness of God, derived particularly from Barth. Barth argued that God's absolute freedom and power necessitated that he "remains *hidden* from us in a way in which the most radical scepticism cannot even imagine", and therefore can only be known through his own revelation²²⁸. God was primarily a "*majestic*" personality; "He is *incomprehensibly* personal."²²⁹ Barth's love for paradox arose out of his appreciation of God as unknowable, indescribable, and yet capable of revealing himself²³⁰. Niebuhr compared the attempt of the theologian to speak about God to the depiction of three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional canvas²³¹. Their influence may be traced in the wartime works of Channing-Pearce, Davies and Vidler.

²²³ NICODEMUS, 'The Skin Game: an open letter', in *Renascence*, pp. 80-81. See NIEBUHR, *Beyond Tragedy*, pp. 184, 185.

²²⁴ *On To Orthodoxy*, (first edition), p. 46. Consequently, he argues that the use of force is sometimes necessary in the maintenance of order and the protection of others, and therefore does not constitute a compromise of Christian ethics.

²²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 75.

²²⁶ See for example, DAVIES, *Theology and the Atomic Age*, p. 62: "To the dissolving secular faith in Utopia the only effective creative answer is to be found in the Christian eschatology, which covers the vast problems both of the interpretation of history and its fulfilment".

²²⁷ VIDLER, *God's Demand and Man's Response*, p. 70. Later, Vidler applied this perception still more directly to eschatology: "According to the biblical view the *eschaton* of human history is not something which humanity can produce out of itself, as it were by internal combustion." (*God's Judgment on Europe*, p. 39.) See also his editorial for *Theology*, Vol. XXXIX, No 234, December, 1939, pp. 401-405.

²²⁸ BARTH, *The Knowledge of God*, p. xii (italics original).

²²⁹ *ibid.*, pp. xii-xiii (italics original). See BALTHASAR *The Theology of Karl Barth*, pp. 111-112.

²³⁰ Similar tendencies may be seen in BERIYAEV's insistence that "Every conception of the divine nature which is not contradictory and paradoxical is hopelessly far removed from the mysteries of the divine life" (*Freedom and the Spirit*, London, 1935, p. 72), and in Niebuhr's perception: that Christian truth was only communicable through the use of deceptive symbols (*Beyond Tragedy*, p. 3).

²³¹ *ibid.*, pp. 4-6. Relating this to eschatology, he affirmed the Last Judgment as an example of the deceptive truth of the theologian, thereby disavowing both sectarian apocalypticism and immanentist views of progress. NIEBUHR, *Beyond Tragedy*, pp. 21-24.

Channing-Pearce confessed in 1941 that he simply did not understand the modern religion of immanence. Christians were mountaineers who must scale the heights of transcendence if religion was to be reborn.²²² Knowledge of divine transcendence was the cure for the "illusion of the transcendence of man"²²³. He accepted that God was immanent in creation, rather as an artist or writer is immanent in a work of art, but God was best experienced in this way by standing in the rain on a windswept hill, not by sitting in comfortable houses²²⁴. Modern man was so insulated from the elements that he had come to assume that the doctrine of God's immanence meant that it was possible to have a "cosy matey intimacy with God", a notion absent from the Bible²²⁵. Channing-Pearce admitted that the emphasis on transcendence in *Midnight Hour* had been "rather by way of corrective than of exclusion of an immanent revelation"²²⁶, but he also defined religion as "the response of man to... [the] consciousness of catastrophe". Catastrophe was "transcendent power", the sudden irruption of God into history, "shattering the previous pattern of our lives and days."²²⁷ Davies agreed with Barth in stressing Divine transcendence as a corrective to liberal immanentism²²⁸. The advent of the atomic bomb merely served to magnify the sense of catastrophe. Rejecting the notion that Christianity should be seen as the means to save society, Davies described it as "the power of God to lift mankind into a life that transcends world and civilization altogether".²²⁹ Eschatology must be the Church's answer to the atomic bomb.

This emphasis on transcendence led neo-orthodox Anglicans to insist that preaching the Gospel was the Church's primary responsibility, and ethical considerations were secondary. Barth discouraged Britain's Christian leaders from participating in plans for post-war reconstruction²⁴⁰. Davies repeatedly stressed the

²²² NICODEMUS, *Midnight Hour*, p. 112 (26th July 1941).

²²³ *ibid.*, p. 119 (28th July 1941).

²²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 136 (14th August 1941).

²²⁵ NICODEMUS, *Treasures of Darkness*, p. 69.

²²⁶ NICODEMUS, 'Prologue', *Renascence*, pp. 14-15.

²²⁷ NICODEMUS, 'Religion and Catastrophe', *ibid.*, pp. 108, 109, 112.

²²⁸ DAVIES, *On To Orthodoxy*, (second edition), p. 168. See also p. 219: "Christian Liberalism... over-emphasised the immanence of God to such an extent, as to make Him a prisoner of His own Universe. But the forgiveness of sin is the act, not of an immanent God, but a transcendent God..." Davies's championship of Divine transcendence led him to make potentially misleading statements about the Incarnation. DAVIES, *The Two Humanities*, p. 153: "In the Man Jesus, God assumed humanity... There could be no new humanity without it. So Jesus was human, which does not mean that he was a human being", and p. 160: "In Jesus, we have not a human being, disintegrated by the fatal cleavage of sin, but God, God-man, a divinely integrated Being, undivided within Himself because He is not divided from God." Because of the transcendent nature of God the Son, "The Incarnation was itself a cross, an enduring, a suffering of defeat and limitation."

²²⁹ DAVIES, *Theology and the Atomic Age*, p. 75.

²⁴⁰ Karl BARTH, *A Letter to Great Britain from Switzerland*, London, 1941; WILKINSON, *Dissent or Conform?*, p. 202. Undated wartime notes by CHAVASSE seem to reveal the influence of the

primacy of Gospel preaching over ethical action. In 1939, the "distinctive, unique and certainly most important task of the Church" was to preach the Gospel²⁴¹; in 1947, civilisation would benefit more from the Church's fidelity to the Gospel than from "any amount of social activities directly pursued in the interest of civilization."²⁴² Social services offered by the Church must themselves be a form of "preachment" designed to bring non-Christians to repentance²⁴³. "Let but the Church be sure, dead sure, of its Gospel," wrote Davies, "Not hesitant or apologetic. But arrogant, intransigent, radiant."²⁴⁴ Davies could be all these things, but his insistence on the primacy of preaching raised more problems than it solved. It could be argued that his desire that the Church's social services should be a form of "preachment" ignored the necessity of simple Christian mercy or fellowship²⁴⁵. By contrast, Chavasse criticised his own Evangelical tradition for having lost the perspective which had caused the Evangelical Revival to be associated not only with the birth of modern missions, but also with industrial reform and the abolition of slavery.²⁴⁶

Nowhere was the impact of neo-orthodox theology on ethics more evident than in Davies's writing on bombing. Vidler had noted that "one of the conditions of totalitarian warfare is that we cannot avoid participation in it, short of committing suicide."²⁴⁷ Davies, starting from Niebuhr's argument about the immorality of collectives, suggested that the Christian ethic could not be lived completely in "an

neo-orthodox discouragement of social action: "I am somewhat sceptical as to the present tendency [sic] of the Church to concentrate upon resolutions as to the New Social Order, since this seems to me in a sense a line of least resistance. No new social order can be of the slightest use as long as the citizens who are going to live in it are themselves greedy or cowardly or faithless... the real business of the Church [is] to make Xtians." CMC, box 97.

²⁴¹ DAVIES, *On To Orthodoxy*, (second edition), p. 196. See also VIDLER, *God's Demand and Man's Response*, p. 63.

²⁴² DAVIES, *Theology and the Atomic Age*, p. 76.

²⁴³ DAVIES, *The Two Humanities*, pp. 232-233.

²⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 256. See also DAVIES, *On To Orthodoxy*, p. 195: "The Gospel to be preached to-day should have, at the very minimum, four fundamental dogmas: (a) the fact of original sin and the consequent inability of man to effect his own salvation; (b) the free gift of forgiveness of sin through the Cross and Resurrection of Christ; (c) the supernatural character of the Kingdom of God and its realisation in Heaven, for which History is a preparation; (d) the Second Coming of Christ and His final Judgment of History."

²⁴⁵ J.H. OLDHAM's editorial of the *CN-L*, No. 199, 12 January, 1944, quoted a letter from a headmistress of an evacuated girls' school, commenting on the "depressing" and "purely destructive" theology of *Down Peacock's Feathers*: "In *Down Peacock's Feathers* it seems that anything that men do for their fellows, in any field of service... will only make things worse... is there nothing we can do, except try to turn to God ourselves - and leave people in slums, and children in classes of sixty, and so on - because history proves that man's best efforts only produce the worst results?"

²⁴⁶ CHAVASSE, Whitsunday, 'The Holy Ghost and Witness', Acts 1:5, Rochester Cathedral, Tunbridge Wells, 1 June 1941, CMC, box 86. This phenomenon is noted by David BBBINGTON, 'The Decline and Resurgence of Evangelical Social Concern 1918-1980', in John WOLFFE (Ed.), *Evangelical Faith and Public Zeal: Evangelicals and Society in Britain 1780-1980*, London, 1995, pp. 175-197.

²⁴⁷ VIDLER, *God's Judgment on Europe*, pp. 98-99.

un-Christian civilisation", because "Christian ethic is personal; civilization is institutional". "In war..." he explained, "I am violating Christianity anyhow."²⁴⁸ Davies had witnessed the bombing of Durango during the Spanish Civil War, and had realised that bombs erased the distinction between "combatant and non-combatant". Blockading enemy countries was more devastating for civilians than for combatants, and so it was with bombing, where civilians had become a military target. In 1942, Davies was content merely to point out that these new factors in warfare pointed to the evil potentialities of human ingenuity²⁴⁹. In 1944, however, Hitler introduced the flying bomb, and Davies responded with an article in the *Sunday Express*, entitled 'It is Time for Reprisals!':

By using this weapon Nazi Germany has hoisted the flag of hell, and by her own deliberate act places herself outside all law... Every hour that Germany, not merely the Nazis, sends out these weapons without specific answer adds to the difficulty of creating a decent post-war world, the foundation of which will be an unmistakable realisation by all nations, but especially by Germany, that the violation of international law will be followed by swift and merciless punishment... If we compel Germany to pay ten lives for every English life that the flying bomb destroys it will stop. And the experience of terror-bombing which Germany has not yet tasted will sear the conscience of Germany for a thousand years...

Davies insisted that he was not advocating vengeance, but "an attempt to vindicate the law", and that reprisals would "do more for the re-education of the German people than all the text-books which the romantic Liberals propose to write."²⁵⁰ Archbishop Temple received several protests against Davies's article²⁵¹, and corresponded with him at length, suggesting that there was no fundamental

²⁴⁸ DAVIES, *The Two Humanities*, p. 206. The Bishop of Coventry, Mervyn Haigh, expressed a similar conviction after the bombing of Coventry and destruction of the Cathedral on the night of 14-15th November 1940 (see F.R. BARRY, *Mervyn Haigh*, London, 1964, pp. 136-139). The weight of opinion appears to have been against him at the time, and the *Church Times* itself was "dismayed and astonished" by his statement, but Bishop Headlam of Gloucester supported the possibility of reprisals in principle, without realising that it had already been applied in practice. See Andrew CHANDLER, 'The Church of England and the Obliteration Bombing of Germany in the Second World War', *English Historical Review*, 1993, pp. 926-928; WILKINSON, *Dissent or Conform?*, p. 267; and for discussions of the responses of Bell and Sayers to British bombing campaigns, see below, pp. 157-160, 254.

²⁴⁹ DAVIES, *Down Peacock's Feathers*, p. 99.

²⁵⁰ D.R. DAVIES, 'It is Time for Reprisals!', *Sunday Express*, 9 July 1944, in *WT*, Vol. 51, f. 164.

²⁵¹ For example, Lady Violet BAKER-CARTER to William Temple, 9 July 1944, *WT*, Vol. 51, f. 161: "I must confess that it horrified me that any member of the Church of England should preach such a doctrine (and from such a pulpit!)" See also W.K. Lowther CLARKE to William Temple, 28 August 1944, *ibid.*, f. 173; Cecil BELL to Temple 20 August 1944, *ibid.*, f. 172.

distinction between the flying bomb attacks and the Allied bombing of Germany. Davies replied that if the flying bomb was legitimate, then so were reprisals. The argument was lent an ironic artificiality by the fact that Davies and Temple were deceived by Allied propaganda into assuming that the R.A.F. still took great lengths to avoid civilian targets²⁵². However, the private correspondence between Davies and Temple reveals the degree to which Davies's theology led him to advocate reprisals. He hoped they would "secure the institutional embodiment of morality... by punishing the German people"; moreover reprisals could not be condemned on Christian grounds, because "On the same ground war can be condemned[,] and our whole civilization". The idea that Christianity was simply a religion of love had "perverted the New Testament Gospel of Grace in the public mind." Christianity was rather a religion of "holy love" which is "a word of judgement with its corollary in Repentance."

We are up against a gigantic illusion that it is possible to achieve Christian ethic without the primary Christian condition of repentance... My advocacy of reprisals in a desperate situation for the vindication of a morality binding on all nations is far less contradictory of a religion in which Grace comes through judgement than a good deal of what passes to-day for Christian propaganda.²⁵³

Temple attempted to soothe the protesters by saying that Davies had become "personally rattled" by the flying bombs, and that he had "allowed really vengeful feelings to get mixed up with his concern for the maintenance of some kind of law, even in warfare."²⁵⁴ Yet Temple may well have been wrong. An inherent logic linked Davies's theology with his arguments about reprisals. Here was a practical application of the neo-orthodox insistence that justice must precede mercy, that one could not experience grace unless one was under judgement. From asserting the transcendent majesty of God, Davies had turned to the R.A.F as the agents of God's wrath. The article in the *Sunday Express* was the only point at which Davies would publish his views on the ethics of bombing. Speaking at Lichfield Cathedral on the

²⁵² Temple was the victim of a stream of misinformation from the air ministry. See *WT*, Vol. 57, ff. 115, 116, 123, 135, 141, 142, 156, 158, 171, 187-189, 192-193; and CHANDLER, 'Obliteration Bombing', pp. 932-936, 944.

²⁵³ D.R. DAVIES to William Temple, 4 August 1944, *WT*, Vol. 51, ff. 167-170. Temple replied that: "our primary duty in regard to the Divine Law is to obey it rather than to enforce it... a belligerent is in a bad position to act as judge as well as executioner... I think it is right to say in general - If you use gas, so shall we. (After all, we introduced the phosphorus bomb). But to say "If you deliberately kill one innocent person we will kill ten - or even one - seems to me precisely wrong." (William TEMPLE to D.R. Davies, 7 August 1944, *ibid.*, f. 171.)

²⁵⁴ TEMPLE to Lady Violet, 13 July 1944, *WT*, Vol. 51, f. 162. TEMPLE to Lowther Clarke, 24 August 1944, f. 176.

effect on theology of the atomic bomb, he returned to his more accustomed theme, pointing out that the bomb ought to destroy faith in progress or belief in the fundamental goodness of humanity. It vindicated an eschatological Christianity²⁵⁵. He made no statement on whether the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was justified - an extraordinary omission from a clergyman who had aired his views on reprisals in a tabloid newspaper.

Chavasse's opinions on Allied bombing may usefully be contrasted with those of Davies. In 1943, he condemned the notion of reprisals, claiming that area bombing was only justified if it shortened the war and so saved more civilian lives than it sacrificed. Christianity forbade any gloating over the destruction of enemy territory, but "that cannot deter us from striking the heaviest blows possible, in order to rescue helpless Prisoners of Hope from the ruthlessness of demented savagery". The British people must "grasp the sword of deliverance... without vindictive cruelty."²⁵⁶ He protested emphatically against the use of the atomic bombs in sermons delivered in 1945. Chavasse was convinced that "Japan was finished anyway", and agreed with Archbishop Fisher that by bombing Japanese cities, the Allies had ruined the chances of forging new links between East and West²⁵⁷. He doubted whether "we are at present sufficiently mature, sufficiently grown in the grace of God, to be trusted with atomic energy."²⁵⁸ Chavasse's allusions to bombing were hardly distinguishable from those of other clergy who were neither neo-orthodox nor Evangelical. He avoided using the advent of the atomic bomb as an argument against liberal optimism, or as a reason for denouncing scientific endeavour²⁵⁹.

²⁵⁵ "The bomb that exploded over Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, effected much more than the destruction of a city. It also destroyed the easy confidence of the modern man that this world of time and space is the arena of final human destiny." DAVIES, *Theology and the Atomic Age*, p. 11. The argument was a paraphrase of NIEBUHR's opinion, expressed in 'The Religious Level of the World Crisis', *CN-L*, Supplement, No. 246, 31 October 1945: "The bomb is... a perfect symbolic refutation of everything that modern culture has believed about the character of human history, particularly about the redemptive quality of the historical process *per se*."

²⁵⁶ CHAVASSE, Zech 9:12, Rochester Cathedral and St. John, Tunbridge Wells, 3 September 1943, *CMC*, box 84.

²⁵⁷ CHAVASSE, Harvest Festival Sermon, Gal 6:7, Sherne and Strood, 23 September 1945, *CMC*, box 86. (Marked in error 1946.) He repeated this conviction in another sermon, 'Is it Peace... What Peace?', preached at the Stand-Down of Special Constables, II Kings 9:18, Maidstone, 16 September 1945, *CMC*, box 84. See GUMMER, *The Chavasse Twins*, pp. 158-159.

²⁵⁸ CHAVASSE, 'The Atomic Bomb', Matt 17:20, Stone St.; Kingsdown, 26 August 1945, *CMC*, box 84. See also 'Victory Sunday', Rochester Cathedral, June 9th 1946, *CMC*, box 84. However, he attacked the British Council of Churches' Report on *The Era of Atomic Power* (see below, Chapter 7, *passim*) as "a slightly sub-Christian document. We must see God as the Maker and Giver of Cosmic force... and receive atomic energy as His good gift for man." GUMMER, *The Chavasse Twins*, p. 172.

²⁵⁹ He did maintain that in the nineteenth century "Scientific discovery and the invention of machinery encouraged free-thinking and godless movements, which woefully succeeded in discrediting the Bible

Davies's theological writings from 1939 onwards were guided by the creed which he had published as an appendix to *On to Orthodoxy*. There was comparatively little change from the outlook expressed there to that of his Lichfield Divinity Lectures. Having established a system of orthodoxy, he merely sought to explore its implications. Channing-Pearce's writings, by contrast, revealed a religious mind constantly in flux. He went beyond neo-orthodoxy by appealing to the mystical tradition, which Niebuhr described as a heresy²⁶⁰. He saw the dictum "All of God and nothingness of ourselves" as the basis of mysticism, but condemned as heretical the Barthian assertion that "there is nothing in man which can be quickened by or respond to the grace of God", and also the Pelagian or evolutionist belief that "this original, 'paradise nature' in man is capable of its own redemption or evolution."²⁶¹ The Christian, he maintained, was constantly called upon to choose a middle way, "between every human 'Right' or 'Left', between the Way of Affirmation and the Way of Negation, between 'Yogi' and 'Commissar', between all the contraries of our existence".²⁶² It was a way of "perfect polarity", between "Rest and motion, stillness and flux" - a notion which reflected the influence of mystics such as Eckhart, and the poetry of T.S. Eliot²⁶³. The Incarnation had been its supreme reflection²⁶⁴, because it involved the action of the Eternal God inside time. Channing-Pearce was fascinated by the relationship between eternity and time and the role of the Incarnation, and saw in Genesis and Revelation "a divine eschatology...

in popular opinion", but blamed the Church for this. CHAVASSE, 'Unity and the Holy Trinity', John 17:21-22, Crockham Hill, Holy Trinity Bromley, 12 July 1942, *CMC*, box 86. The contention that Chavasse was relatively typical of Evangelicals in refusing to react against science because of the atomic bomb, is supported by the Archbishop's Report, *The Fulness of Christ*, p. 7, which sought to accept scientific study as an ally rather than an enemy to theology. Davies's work, by contrast, had always contained anti-scientific elements. See *The Sin of Our Age*, p. 15; *Theology and the Atomic Age*, p. 17. For a criticism of anti-scientific responses to the atomic bomb, see Donald MacKinnon's unpublished responses to the British Council of Churches' Report of the *Era of Atomic Power* (below, pp. 319-323), and Charles RAVEN, *The Theological Basis of Christian Pacifism*, London, 1952, pp. 4, 9-10.

²⁶⁰ NIEBUHR attacked Eckhart in particular, although his criticisms were often based on misconceptions about what he and other Catholic mystics actually taught. See *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Vol. 1, pp. 61, 62; Vol. 2, pp. 96-99, for examples. Compare with NICODEMUS, *Treasures of Darkness*, p. 80.

²⁶¹ NICODEMUS, *Midnight Hour*, p. 131 (4 August 1941).

²⁶² NICODEMUS, *Fore-Dawn*, p. 137. See also his article, Melville CHANNING-PEARCE, 'Boehme and the Ungrund', *The Church Quarterly Review*, Vol. 149 (October-December 1949), p. 15. The "Christian paradox" of Yogi and Commissar was resolved "in the eternal and catholic economy of God" (*Treasures of Darkness*, p. 27.) For a summary of the ways in which Catholic Anglicanism sought to pursue this "middle way", see below, pp. 298-300, 330-332.

²⁶³ NICODEMUS, *Midnight Hour*, p. 98 (23rd July 1941). Pearce acknowledged his "constant indebtedness" to Eliot's poetry in *Renascence*, p. 16. He also mentioned the *Cloud of Unknowing* and Ruysbroeck (*Treasures of Darkness*, pp. 74, 79), and used motifs derived from St. John of the Cross. (For a discussion of Eliot's appropriation on mysticism, see below, Chapter 4, *passim*.)

²⁶⁴ NICODEMUS, *Midnight Hour*, pp. 101-102 (23rd July 1941).

looking to an end which is also a beginning transcending the time-series". This was the source of Christian "poise and imperturbability"²⁶⁵. The emphasis on eschatology may have been in keeping with neo-orthodox language, but the notion that Genesis described an "end which is also a beginning" was Augustinian, or Eckhartian. The "interpenetration of time and eternity" was:

the Christian time, life and mind transcending truth. It is a truth which the whole Bible implies or repeats. It is a truth which, just because it transcends the limits of all human thinking, is, for man, for ever a paradox, the absurd for reason, the impossible for human will, a truth which faith alone can fathom. As truth it demands death of the understanding; as life it demands death of the life of self.²⁶⁶

Channing-Pearce had discovered that neo-orthodox and mystical language could be melded together: "transcending truth" seemed to echo Barth, "the impossible for human will" suggested Niebuhr, and "death of the life of self" was derived from St. John of the Cross. A similar drawing together of neo-orthodox and mystical language is evident in his twin assertions that "Faith has nothing to do with rational proofs and probabilities" (which might have been written by Barth) and, "Indeed God's wisdom demands the evacuation of man's wisdom" (which echoed Eliot and the mystics).²⁶⁷ At other points, Channing-Pearce drew upon the language of the Catholic mystics to describe the state of purgation, thereby adding a further dimension to neo-orthodox language about the sinfulness of man:

those plagues may be for us a purgation dearly desired, penitential fires and trials such as those which the souls in Dante's Purgatorio so passionately embraced, till the Christian craves for suffering not less, but more, searching and scarifying, fashioning from soiled souls spirits fit for God's glory.²⁶⁸

Perhaps it was this genuinely creative use of the language of mysticism which led Anglo-Catholics such as Talbot to see the writings of "Nicodemus" as an "apologia for Anglicanism". Such an assessment may seem surprising when one

²⁶⁵ NICODEMUS, *Treasures of Darkness*, pp. 39-40. See also pp. 113-114: "The 'Now' of the Bible is the night of our nature. It is in an 'Everlasting Now' that its Word is uttered - timelessly. It is in this 'Now' of God that the Passion of Christ flowers in a terrible beauty in the midst of our time - the blood-red Rose of the Cross."

²⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p. 41.

²⁶⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 54, 55.

²⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p. 53.

considers that *Midnight Hour* had portrayed the Church of England as "a dead Church... it cleaves to the security and comfort of its coherence with a corrupt order of society which is itself moribund, the self-centred individualism and Mammon-worship of nineteenth-century civilization." Yet Channing-Pearce was drawn back to the Church because of "an ever growing sense of the value of tradition and rootedness", and a conviction that the Church community was the Christian rebuttal of the "irresistible collectivism of modern life"²⁶⁹. Anglicanism also "best enshrines the poet's vision of the Christ who was the Prince of poets", and it encouraged him that poets such as Eliot and Charles Williams had aligned themselves with the Church. He hoped for a renewal of the characteristic seventeenth century Anglican "blend of priest and poet", and envisaged himself as a country priest and poet "in a simple ministry among simple folk and elemental and sacramental facts". This would not be "escapism", but a deliberate act of detachment from "our modern mechanized existence"²⁷⁰. The modern generation was in a state of "spiritual exile", constantly attempting to "explore strange lands", when the English countryside and the English religious tradition were conveyors of a truth that "no foreigner can find".²⁷¹ Channing-Pearce was, at bottom, not typically neo-orthodox, but typically Anglican, endeavouring like the Doctrine Commission to bring apparently irreconcilable traditions into synthesis, bringing a poetic gift to theology, and appealing to Anglicanism itself as an aspect of "Deep England"²⁷².

Neo-orthodoxy was undoubtedly the theological expression of a wider cultural phenomenon. Wilkinson suggests that the late 1930s saw "a general shift among intellectuals from progressivism towards a more sombre view of the Christian condition."²⁷³ Davies wrote excitedly that "behind the confusion and doubt of our time, there is a trend of thought... which will lead inevitably to Christian faith", singling out Middleton Murry as an example of such a conversion, and Aldous Huxley as one destined for an "essentially orthodox Christian faith."²⁷⁴ Channing-Pearce rejected the notion that Barth was a "major prophet" on the grounds that "it is

²⁶⁹ NICODEMUS, *Midnight Hour*, p. 154-157 (30th September 1941). This was the controversial passage printed in *CN-L*.

²⁷⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 85, 86 (17th July 1941).

²⁷¹ NICODEMUS, 'Tradition', in *Renascence*, pp. 36-37.

²⁷² For a discussion of "Deep England", see Angus CALDER, *The Myth of the Blitz*, London, 1991, pp. 108-208.

²⁷³ WILKINSON, *Dissent or Conform?*, p. 193, 196-200. He lists P.T. Forsyth, G.K. Chesterton, Evelyn Waugh, T.S. Eliot, C.H. Smyth and Graham Greene as writers who criticised liberal optimism in the 1930s, and cites WAUGH's *Vile Bodies*, (1930), ORWELL's *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* (1936) and *Coming Up for Air* (June 1939), 'Inside the Whale' (1940), W.H. AUDEN's 'September 1, 1939), and ELIOT's *After Strange Gods* (1934), and the conversion of C.E.M. Joad as examples of the retreat from "liberal optimism".

²⁷⁴ DAVIES, *On To Orthodoxy*, (first edition), p. 8.

clear that the trend towards transcendentalism, which Barth so vehemently voiced, has been for some time past and is to-day manifest in a score of directions where the impact of Barthian theology can hardly be suspected." The surrealists exhibited such a trend in seeking "the expression through sense of something beyond sense." Channing-Pearce had been impressed by a painting of *The Nativity* by Miss Nadia Benois, which portrayed the birth of Christ in terms of "transcendent reality" by setting the Nativity scene itself "In a nook in a riven and wildly contorted mountain-side, cupped in an unearthly light of eclipse." Benois had portrayed "a world beyond a world, a rhythm which is neither strophe nor anti-strophe of our mortal music, but catastrophe, a transcendental reality breaking in upon, running counter to, the rhythm of our life". Her picture would make an admirable frontispiece for Barth's *Römerbrief*, but she was unlikely to have read it. Eliot and Yeats were cited as examples of this wider cultural preoccupation with catastrophe, and Nazism and Communism, Channing-Pearce argued, were "profoundly apocalyptic and catastrophic in tendency."²⁷⁵

It is certainly possible to add to Channing-Pearce's list of art-works that apparently shared common cultural ground with neo-orthodoxy. Francis Bacon's modernist *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion* (1944) [Plate 1] exhibited a concern with the portrayal of human degradation and decay, and Michael Ayton's *The Captive Seven* (1949-50) with its personifications of the seven deadly sins, was symptomatic of a tendency in neo-romantic art towards depicting self-inflicted squalor and repulsiveness. More striking still was Robert Henderson Blyth's *In the Image of Man* (1945-1946) [Plate 2], clearly influenced by the surrealism of Salvador Dali, in which a hollow effigy of Christ crucified stands, with its head and arms blown off, amid the wreckage of a bombed town. Beyond the town, a road flanked by blasted trees leads into an archetypal English countryside which shows no other signs of devastation. At the foot of the effigy is a jumble of bedsteads, perambulators, household furniture and broken classical sculptures. Here was an image borne out of the cultural climate of which neo-orthodoxy was a part. Neo-orthodox theology had been a symptom, rather than the cause, of a tendency to emphasise transcendence and catastrophe, and the doctrine of original sin had provided a theological explanation for this sense of crisis. Yet the fact that neo-orthodoxy could be identified with a wider cultural trend also implied the dilution of its absolute claims. It had criticised liberalism for its alignment with secular culture, Catholicism for the supposed naiveté of its ecclesiology, and traditional

²⁷⁵ M. CHANING-PEARCE, 'Karl Barth as a Post-War Prophet', *Hibbert Journal*, XXXV (1936-1937), pp. 365-369.

Protestantism for its unholy alliance with Capitalism. By charging its alternatives with uncritical acceptance of secular cultural assumptions, it opened itself to a similar charge: it too was culturally conditioned. If neo-orthodoxy alone was aloof from the disease of secularism, why did Davies, when advocating reprisals, sound so much like Bomber Harris?

Protestant neo-orthodoxy rose to prominence in England in the mid-1930s, attracted a great deal of attention and, because of the comparative sophistication of its arguments and the stridency of some of its exponents, largely eclipsed the theological influence of Evangelicalism. Yet Evangelicalism condemned most of the things that neo-orthodoxy condemned, and clung to the doctrine of original sin with similar tenacity. Moreover, the Evangelical Report on Catholicity demonstrated that if Henson's criticisms of Evangelicalism were pertinent in 1944, they were less so in 1950, when its authors could reject fundamentalism, stress the value of Catholic-Protestant dialogue, and argue for the importance of the episcopate. Evangelicalism would survive to witness the decline of neo-orthodox theology after the war. Vidler, increasingly worried by Davies's obsession with original sin, turned to the theology of F.D. Maurice, who "challenged the notion that the Gospel must be proclaimed and accepted as bad news *before* it can be proclaimed as good news."²⁷⁶ His *Mission addresses at the University of Cambridge, Good News for Mankind* (1947), were enough to convince the die-hard liberal, Charles Raven, that he ought to be considered for a Cambridge professorship²⁷⁷. Davies's writing frenzy petered out with the end of the 1940s. He had been at his best when recycling Niebuhr's theology, although he had occasionally failed to understand it, and had left much of real value in Niebuhr's work untouched. He had been at his worst when applying his theology to the ethics of bombing, and largely failed to reconcile his social conscience with a creed which asserted that schemes for social renewal were doomed to failure. "Nicodemus", who was, like Vidler, a barometer of the cultural climate, published another journal in 1950, under the title *Fore-Dawn*. In it he described another trip to Salisbury and the Downs, where "man and his traces do not impose themselves or deface nature"²⁷⁸. Rather than returning to Old Sarum, that symbol of a crumbling civilisation, he visited "a little church hidden away in one of the innumerable secluded coigns of this country - Ogbourne St. Andrew":

²⁷⁶ VIDLER, *20th Century Defenders of the Faith*, p. 100.

²⁷⁷ WILKINSON, *Dissent or Conform?*, p. 215; A.R. VIDLER, *Scenes from a Clerical Life*, London, 1977, pp. 122-130; John BOWDEN, *Karl Barth*, p. 106.

²⁷⁸ NICODEMUS, *Fore-Dawn*, p. 27.

For there the sacred circle of the churchyard, its *temenos*, encloses a round barrow at least three milleniums [sic] old, relic of a pre-Christian faith, and the church itself rests on Sarsen stones taken from its fanes. And it seems very fitting that it should be so. What spirit infused, as that primordial faith believed, into these sacred stones, still permeates the Christian cult which has so naturally absorbed it? In that happy, time-hallowed confluence of faith and history, lies something of Wiltshire's peculiar charm, its *curiosa felicitas*.²⁷⁹

Gone were the sense of spiritual crisis, the fascination with death, and the morbid expressions of self-loathing. With Nazism defeated, "Nicodemus" now suggested that a religion of immanence would be more accessible to modern minds. The influence of Barth and Niebuhr was hardly detectable; but he continued to believe that: "To the life of earth, to the life of spirit - it is to these, it seems, that a true wisdom bids disintegrated modern man to return, to bathe in the wells of origin."²⁸⁰ "Deep England" had proven more resilient for Channing-Pearce than had neo-orthodoxy. His work remained idiosyncratic and eclectic, tendencies which led him to draw not on neo-orthodoxy, but on Catholic mysticism, for a solution to the catastrophic situation which neo-orthodoxy had revealed. He had, however, remained staunchly Protestant. The Anglo-Catholic E.L. Mascall, criticised him for doing "all his existential thinking on his own", and thereby failing to identify "the Jesus of History with the Christ of Faith".

The Catholic Christian, on the other hand, does his existential thinking as a member of the Body, and to him the Jesus of History is a figure of the present day. And when we remember that Sir Edwyn Hoskyns has irrefragably demonstrated that the Christ of Faith is integral to the earliest Christian tradition, may we not see in the fact of the church just that link which Mr. Channing Pearce needs to make his arguments complete?²⁸¹

It is to that Catholic tradition within Anglicanism, and the manner in which it responded to the theological and cultural climate of 1937 to 1949, with its rival claims of transcendence and immanence, neo-orthodoxy, Evangelicalism and Liberalism, redemptionism and incarnationism, that we must now turn.

²⁷⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

²⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p. 118.

²⁸¹ E.L. MASCALL, Review of Melville CHANNING-PEARCE, *Religion and Reality*, in *Theology*, XXXV (July-December 1937), p. 382.

Chapter

2

"Signposts" and "Malvern 1941":

Donald MacKinnon, the "Younger" Anglo-Catholics and the "Fate of Modern Culture"

In 1940, that trenchant critic of "Anglo-Catholics", Bishop Henson, admitted that, among the clergy at least, Catholics were "prevailing"¹, although he insisted that their doctrine and practice "are so far out of accord with the main stream of English Christianity that the average English man is perplexed and offended, never illuminated and assisted, by them."² In 1945, he continued to regard the "rapid advance" of Anglo-Catholicism with "dislike and apprehension", mitigated only by his "even deeper fear" of developments in liberal Protestantism which he stigmatised as "anti-Christian"³. Retired to the parish of Hintlesham, Henson was appalled by the vicar, Mouldsdales, who gradually introduced Catholic elements into the liturgy, purchased a "sacring bell," and referred to Mary as "Queen of Heaven". Mouldsdales repelled Henson, who criticised everything from his sermons and his theology, to the way he cleared his throat⁴. Yet Mouldsdales himself was dying, and represented, as indeed did Henson, a passing breed of Victorian clergyman. The other vocal episcopal crusader against Anglo-Catholicism, Bishop Barnes of Birmingham, was hardly a likely ally for Henson in anything other than his inherent Victorianism⁵, while other liberal Protestants, such as H.D.A. Major and Charles Raven, Henson

¹ Anglo-Catholic ascendancy had been tacitly accepted by Archbishop Davidson because no other party of the Church was in a position to assume a leading role; Lang gave it episcopal sanction. During his thirteen years at Canterbury, he elicited general acceptance of Catholic liturgical practices whilst avoiding such divisions as those over reservation of the Sacrament and the revised Prayer Book in the 1920s. (J.G. LOCKHART, *Cosmo Gordon Lang*, London, 1949, p. 213.) Temple continued to accept Anglo-Catholic liturgical practices. Adrian HASTINGS, *A History of English Christianity, 1920-1985*, London, 1986, pp. 75, 79, 197-198, 441, sees the formation of the "Parish and People" movement in 1949, chaired by Henry de Candolle, as the point at which such developments were finally and officially affirmed.

² *HHHJ*, 1 July 1940 (Vol. 79, p. 105).

³ *HHHJ*, 24 July 1945 (Vol. 93, p. 91).

⁴ *HHHJ*, 8 March 1942 (Vol. 85, p. 120) and 17 May, 1942; (Vol. 85, p. 249.) See also 1st January 1942, describing an 8:30am Holy Communion service: "The 'Black Out' compelled an absence of light in the Church which was almost uncanny. It 'threw up' the Altar lights into an abnormal prominence. The cumbrous figure of the Celebrant, clothed in his Papistical vestments as it moved about in the shadows, marking his awkward motions in the rapping of his stick suggested rather some Pagan mystery than a Christian service." (Vol. 85, p. 1.)

⁵ HASTINGS, *English Christianity*, pp. 202-204, and see p. 251 for a discussion of the Victorianism of Henson, Lang, Winnington-Ingram (London) and Headlam (Gloucester). Henson's attitude to Barnes may be gleaned from an incident while the former was chairing a committee meeting on the Revised Prayer Book. Barnes, running late, found nowhere to sit. Henson remarked, "Oh, there you are, Barnes, at last, but I can't see a chair for you. Well, the only thing for you to do is to anticipate the inevitable decision of the Church, and sit on the fire." (Page of anecdotes about Henson in an uncatalogued box of papers, n.d., *HHHS*.)

regarded either as non-Christians or as simply mischievous. A further source of his dislike of Catholics was his perception that they intended "Romanizing" the Church of England and trampling in strange vestments upon the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer. Some indeed did. For example, the centenary of the Oxford Movement in 1933 saw the publication of *The English Missal*, combining parts of the Book of Common Prayer with passages from the Roman liturgy. However, there was also a long tradition of "Prayer Book Catholicism"⁶, consciously tracing its lineage to the Tractarians, and a newer, distinctively Anglican adaptation of the Roman Catholic Liturgical Movement was gaining momentum in the late 1930s.⁷

There were other sources of Catholic vitality. The entrenchment of popular Anglo-Catholic devotion, epitomised by the rebuilding in the 1930s of the Marian shrine at Walsingham⁸, was paralleled by the broader consolidation of Catholic intellectual culture. Catholic communities boasted scholars such as the Biblical theologian Lionel Thornton, of the Community of the Resurrection at Mirfield, the liturgiologist A.G. Hebert, of the Society of the Sacred Mission at Kelham⁹, and the eccentric Anglican Benedictine Gregory Dix, of Nashdom Abbey¹⁰. Among the bishops, Catholicism was represented by Kenneth Kirk, Bishop of Oxford from 1937¹¹. Cyril Foster Garbett, Bishop of Winchester from 1932 until his translation to York in 1942, did not accept the Anglo-Catholic label but was deeply Catholic in his liturgical preferences and personal habits¹². Others such as Bell of Chichester, while

⁶ See BELL, Vol. 137, 'Liturgy 1930-1958' for papers relating to the *English Missal*. Norman Powell Williams told Bell (16 August - year not given) he would have protested in the *Church Times* about the re-issue of the *English Missal*, but: "The people responsible for this fatuity are not so much malevolent disloyalists as good-natured but extremely silly folk... to attack them dialectically, therefore, would be like attacking a butterfly with a sledge-hammer." (f. 102.) For Prayer Book Catholicism, see Sheridan GILLEY, 'Prayer Book Catholicism', in Margot JOHNSON (Ed.), *Cranmer: A Living Influence for 500 Years: A collection of essays by writers associated with Durham*, Durham, 1990, pp. 167-189; W.S.F. PICKERING, *Anglo-Catholicism: a Study in Religious Ambiguity*, London, 1991, pp. 36-37, 40.

⁷ Alan WILKINSON, *The Community of the Resurrection: A Centenary History*, London, 1992, p. 185.

⁸ The cult of our Lady of Walsingham attracted an estimated 80,000 visitors in 1938. In 1939, there were 200 priest associates, and 6,000 people attended the Whit Monday Pilgrimage. Rare in wartime, pilgrimages regained similar vigour after 1945. See Francis PENHALE, *Catholics in Crisis*, Oxford, 1986, pp. 108-111.

⁹ See Alistair MASON, *SSM: History of the Society of the Sacred Mission*, Norwich, 1993, pp. 162-188.

¹⁰ Brief pen-portraits of these three priests are supplied by E.L. MASCALL, *Saraband: the Memoirs of E.L. Mascal*, Herefordshire, 1992, pp. 151-176. See also Simon BAILEY, *A Tactful God*, Herefordshire, 1995.

¹¹ Eric Waldram KEMP, *The Life and Letters of Kenneth Escott Kirk, Bishop of Oxford 1937-1954*, London, 1959.

¹² Charles SMYTH, *Cyril Foster Garbett: Archbishop of York*, London, 1959. For Garbett, the Church of England was "the historic Catholic Church of this land, rejecting the claims of the Pope, and appealing to Scripture and the teaching of the ancient fathers for the justification of its faith..." Cyril GARBETT, *The Claims of the Church of England*, London, 1947, p. 7.

refusing to countenance the divisiveness that frequently followed the more extreme Catholic innovations¹³, were nevertheless more closely aligned with Catholicism than with liberalism or Evangelicalism. Anglican Catholicism also had well-established forums for theological and cultural discussion, such as the Christendom Group¹⁴, formed in the 1920s to explore "Christian sociology", which criticised contemporary culture and economics through its journal, *Christendom*¹⁵, edited by the layman Maurice Reckitt. Meanwhile, a younger generation of Catholic theologians and priests, all under forty, including A.M. Ramsey, E.L. Mascall, J.V.L. Casserley, G.B. Bentley, Patrick McLaughlin and D.G. Peck¹⁶, still more expressive of the vitality of Catholicism, brought new vigour to the Group. Apart from Ramsey, whose *The Gospel and the Catholic Church* strongly influenced the others, these priests would all write for the *Signposts* series, published monthly throughout 1940. These were paperbacks recommending Catholic tradition as "a signpost warning *Homo sapiens* of the precipice that lies ahead and directing him back to the high road of human fulfilment"¹⁷. On their covers, the crucified Christ and the Heavenly City tower over a tangle of bombs, guns, banknotes and mechanised men [Plate 3]; another Catholic innovation, the Dacre Press, brainchild of Berta Travers, published them¹⁸. This revitalised Catholic clerical enclave was joined by what Hastings has called "a new professional lay appropriation of Christian belief at a very high level of intellectual expertise", exemplified by Donald MacKinnon, H.A. Hodges, and T.S. Eliot¹⁹. MacKinnon, who contributed two *Signposts* and wrote occasionally for *Christendom*, would make a highly significant contribution: to the dismay of older Christendom Group members, he persuaded Catholic Anglicans to

¹³ See Bell's report on a Conference at St. Martin's Vicarage, Brighton, on 3 December, 1930, BELL, Vol. 136, 'Liturgy: Reservation, 1930-1938', f. 1, and see ff. 5, 11 ff. 288ff. See also his Charge to the Chichester Diocese, *Common Order in Christ's Church*, published approvingly by the *Church Times* on 2 July 1937, and reported in the *Anglican Guardian*, 9 July, 1937.

¹⁴ For a comprehensive history of the Christendom Group, see Peter MAYHEW, 'The Christendom Group: a History and an Assessment', B.Litt. Thesis, Oxford University, 1977. See also PICKERING, *Anglo-Catholicism*, p. 133.

¹⁵ *Christendom* was first published in 1931.

¹⁶ See John S. PEART-BINNS, *Maurice B. Reckitt: A Life*, Basingstoke, 1988, p. 131. D.G. Peck's father, W.G. Peck, was also a member of the Christendom Group, and spoke at the Malvern Conference.

¹⁷ Dust-jacket of the *Signposts* series, London, 1940. The cover was criticised in the review of CASSERLEY's *The Fate of Modern Culture in Christendom*, X, No. 37, March 1940, p. 79: "The cover is scarcely more successful... than the majority of such 'symbolic' representations; the Heavenly City looks like a cross between a blancmange and the Empire State Building... associations which suggest neither stability nor the Beatific Vision." The cover succeeded, however, in depicting the main concerns of the Christendom Group in one simple and memorable composition.

¹⁸ Berta Travers was the widow of Canon Duncan Travers of the Universities Mission to Central Africa. She formed links with the Benedictine nuns at West Malling, Kent, who influenced Mascall. MASCALL, *Saraband*, p. 154.

¹⁹ HASTINGS, *English Christianity*, pp. 299-300.

take seriously the challenge of Barthianism, and without embracing absolute pacifism, insisted on its moral validity²⁰.

The Christendom Group had its reputation boosted within Anglicanism when Temple, as Archbishop of York in 1941, offered the platform of the Malvern Conference to several of its members. Temple - labelled the "Red Archbishop" by the staunch Tory Henson because of his Labour sympathies²¹ - thus affirmed that Christian Socialism in both its left- and right-wing political forms²² was still largely the province of Catholic Anglicans²³. The Conference, proposed by P.T.R. Kirk, director of the Industrial Christian Fellowship, aimed to provide Anglicans with an official outlet for their views on reconstruction. The ensuing *Malvern Declaration*, a monument to Temple's determination to extract consensus out of cacophony²⁴, asserted the right of the Church to speak on social questions, attributed the modern obsession with economics to "the pervasive influence of human sin", admitted that the visible Church did not exhibit the "life of true community" except in the Eucharist, and argued that rights to private property which impeded social justice "should be over-ridden"²⁵: all, with the exception of the latter, recurring themes in

²⁰ For a recent theological appraisal of Barthian influences on MacKinnon, see R.H. ROBERTS, 'Theological rhetoric and moral passion in the light of MacKinnon's "Barth"', in Kenneth SURIN (Ed.), *Christ, Ethics and Tragedy: Essays in Honour of Donald MacKinnon*, Cambridge, 1989, 1-14. MacKinnon's views on pacifism are discussed in the light of more recent theology in John MILBANK, 'Between Purgation and Illumination: a critique of the theology of right', *ibid.*, pp. 190-191.

²¹ F.A. IREMONGER, *William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury: His Life and Letters*, London, 1948, pp. 332-333.

²² Christian adaptations of left-wing socialism were advanced at Malvern by Acland and Ingram. A more conservative socialism, critical of both left and right-wing politics, was espoused by Reckitt, Demant and W.R. and D.G. Peck. See PEART-BINNS, *Maurice B. Reckitt*, p. 140; MAYHEW, 'Christendom Group', pp. iii, iv, 139.

²³ See Alan WILKINSON, *Dissent or Conform? War, Peace and the English Churches 1900-1945*, London, 1986, p. 217; Patrick LOGAN, 'The Ghost of "Economic Man": Malvern's Unfinished Business', *Crucible*, April 1991, pp. 71-79, July 1991, pp. 132-142. MacKinnon's involvement in the Christendom Group is discussed by P.G. WIGNALL, 'D.M. MacKinnon: An Introduction to his Early Theological Writings', in Stephen SYKES and Derek HOLMES (Eds.), *New Studies in Theology*, I, London 1980, p. 77, and MAYHEW, 'Christendom Group', pp. 134, 164-165, 199.

²⁴ The *Malvern Declaration* of 1941, (reprinted 1991, Ed. David ARTHUR), drafted by Temple on the last evening of the Conference, was intended to represent its common mind, but T.S. ELIOT objected to his speech being bound in the same volume with it (Letter to Temple, *WT*, Vol. 139, f. 219), and A.R. VIDLER "question[ed] the moral or intellectual right of any conference of that kind to publish conclusions." (Letter to Temple, *WT*, Vol. 139, f. 184; and see Temple's unrepentant reply, f. 189.) In the event, the Declaration was published separately from the Conference papers. See also PEART-BINNS, *Maurice B. Reckitt*, pp. 141-142, MAYHEW, 'Christendom Group', pp. v, 174-175.

²⁵ *Malvern Declaration*, Resolutions 1-3 (right to speak), 7 (economics), 10 (community) and 16 (private property) The last was a diluted version of Sir Richard Acland's assertion that a true Christian social ethic demanded "Common ownership of property". See David ARTHUR, 'The *Malvern Declaration* of 1941: Commentary', 1991, p. 2.

wartime Catholic discourse. Of its eleven speakers, only three were clergy; the remainder included MacKinnon²⁶, who was to speak to the question:

"Do the Church's gospel, creeds and sacraments contain guidance for man in the organization of his natural activity regarding his home and family, and the political and economic realities of his nature? If so, in what main respects does that guidance differ from the general modern assumptions?"²⁷

The younger generation of Catholics grew increasingly influential during the crisis of 1940-1941, and the Anglo-Catholic Congress of 1948 demonstrated the degree to which their theology had affected Catholic attitudes in general²⁸. None of these individuals and movements exhibited the turgidity which repelled Henson in Mouldsdale, but he would hardly have approved their tendencies towards religious orthodoxy and comparative political radicalism. More significantly, many of them thrived on the atmosphere which was so congenial to Protestant neo-orthodoxy, even sharing a number of concerns and critiques with it, but were clearly both inheritors and critics of the tradition of *Essays Catholic and Critical*, the 1926 symposium which had purportedly championed "liberal Catholicism"²⁹.

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In 1938, Donald MacKinnon, then twenty-five, a lay philosopher from Oxford University, already renowned among students for conducting tutorials from his bath³⁰, wrote his debut article for *Christendom*. It demonstrated both the strength of

²⁶ Clergy: Temple, V.A. Demant and W.G. Peck. Lay: MacKinnon, Maurice Reckitt, Dorothy L. Sayers, H.A. Hodges, Sir Richard Acland, Kenneth Ingram, John Middleton Murry, T.S. Eliot. Reckitt was absent, and his speech was read by Temple. Hodges's address was not reproduced in printed form.

²⁷ Questions for MacKinnon's speech, 'Revelation and Social Justice', ARCHBISHOP OF YORK'S CONFERENCE, *Malvern 1941: The Life of the Church and the Order of Society*, London, 1941, p. 79. MacKinnon's second question was: "How are the answers given to these questions related to the doctrines of Creation, Incarnation, Redemption and Grace?"

²⁸ PICKERING, *Anglo-Catholicism*, pp. 48-57. The previous Congress, held in 1933, attracted 70,000 enrolments; a Congress planned for 1940 was cancelled because of the war. See also Kenneth HYLSON-SMITH, *High Churchmanship in the Church of England from the Sixteenth Century to the late Twentieth Century*, Edinburgh, 1993, pp. 255-260; Stuart MEWS, 'Religious Life Between the Wars, 1920-1940', in Sheridan GILLEY and W.J. SHEILS (Eds.), *A History of Religion in Britain: Practice and Belief from Pre-Roman Times to the Present*, Oxford, 1994, p. 450; Geoffrey ROWELL, *The Vision Glorious: Themes and Personalities of the Catholic Revival in Anglicanism*, Oxford, 1991, pp. 245-247.

²⁹ E.G. SELWYN (Ed), *Essays Catholic and Critical*, (1st Edition 1926), London, 1929.

³⁰ MacKinnon was born in Oban on August 27, 1913, had been educated at Winchester and New College, Oxford, and had then taught Moral Philosophy, as an assistant to Professor A.E. Taylor, at the University of Edinburgh from 1936-1937. Other positions held in the period were: Fellow and

his conviction that a Catholic ecclesiology implied a suffering Church, and his willingness to provoke controversy: "If the Church is the mystical Christ, its throne today is assuredly Calvary." He poured scorn on the Spanish Church, the ally of Franco, "prepared... to acquiesce in the massacre of men, women and children in order to preserve its power to administer the sacraments".³¹ In 1939, he wrote twice more in leading Anglican journals of the prophetic function of the Church. In June, he warned readers of *Christendom* that the issue of pacifist protest "must remain an open question." He recognised that under some conditions the Christian's duty might be "to defend the nation-state... but there is never an obligation to do so by co-operation in the aerial bombardment of centres of civilian population." Such actions were tantamount to "the mortal sin of murder."³² Another opportunity to air these views was offered by Vidler's *Theology* editorial for October, 1939, which insisted that "The devilry of Hitlerism does not automatically transform us into angels of light and prophets of the Lord," and showed clearly how far the neo-orthodox preoccupation with original sin was influencing him in the early months of the war:

The Church best serves the nation not by uncritically endorsing the pure idealism of its professed war aims, but by proclaiming the Word of God, which shows even the noblest human purposes to be shot through with sin. The Church best serves the nation not by seeking to keep up the nation's morale, but by humbling its pride... Christians are therefore called to careful and critical thought, to see the present European catastrophe in the perspective of Christendom's apostasy... We anticipated that on the outbreak of war our Government would at once be driven to exploit more fully the techniques which have given the totalitarian states their efficacy and have heightened their demonic character. The prophecy that in war every state

Tutor at Keble College, Oxford (1936-1937), Director of Special Courses in Philosophy for R.N. and R.A.F. cadets, Oxford (1942-1945), Lecturer in Philosophy at Balliol College (1945-1947), Wilde Lecturer in Natural and Comparative Religion, Oxford, (1945-1947). In 1947, he became Regius Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Aberdeen, where he remained until 1960. He died on March 2, 1994. On his eccentricities, see the obituary in *The Times*, March 4, 1994, and Hugo Meynell's comments in the *Tablet*, 12 March, 1994, p. 232: "no one... could possibly forget the chewed razorblades, or the trail of stubby pencils with absurdly elongated leads..."

³¹ D.M. MACKINNON, 'Recall - To What?', *Christendom*, VIII, No. 29, March 1938, pp. 48-56. MacKinnon returned to the theme of the Spanish War in 'And the Son of Man that Thou Visitest Him', *Christendom*, VIII, No. 32, December 1938, p. 271.

³² D.M. MACKINNON, 'The Task of the Christendom Group in Time of War', *Christendom*, IX, No. 34, June 1939, pp. 140, 201, 206. In a 'Survey of Devotional Books' in *Theology*, XLV, No. 266, August 1942, MacKinnon observed: "it seems very hard to understand what personal relation looks like concretized in the bombing of Rostock and Cologne." He criticised "Dr. Oldham's delicate evasions on such points in the *Christian News-Letter*", and asked, "are we to find the Christian mind only when it turns to face the wall?" See Oldham's comments in *CN-L* on May 8 1940 (No. 28), 4 December 1940 (No. 58), 2 April 1941 (No. 75), October 15 1941 (No. 103), 13 May 1942 (No. 133), 19 August 1942 (No. 147), and 5 May 1943 (No. 181).

would be bound to go totalitarian is being accomplished under our eyes.... It will be folly to ignore the sinister possibilities latent in this centralization of power.³³

A vigorous correspondence ensued, published under the succinct title "Ecclesiastical transcendentalism"³⁴. Oliver Quick³⁵ was horrified that the "duties of justice and truthfulness, as they have been commonly understood by civilized man, are now repudiated by the most powerful leaders of European life and thought." How was the Church to respond? It could "teach and uphold the moral law as well as its own gospel", or, as Vidler seemed to recommend, "confine itself to the gospel, while it acquiesces or even joins in the discrediting of the moral law":

Now is it really desirable that the Church, which is surely called to lead men not only in faith but also in morals, should forsake the moral point of view altogether and confine itself to that of the gospel? What would be the consequences of its doing so in England to-day? It would certainly cease (as you are so eager that it should cease) to support the morale of the nation. It would... be doing its best, in the strictest sense of the word, to demoralize it.

Quick feared that this would lead to the conclusion that war suspended morality. The Church must guard against this, but a Church following Vidler's advice would lead the nation into a pit of despair.³⁶

MacKinnon responded to Quick; he now felt that England's declaration of war was justified, but denied that the Church should accept "the superficial analysis of the European tragedy, accepted in official quarters, with its truly terrifying ignorance of the spiritual issues of the conflict". Prophecy was its first duty. He also suspected that Quick's "extreme moralism" revealed a "Kantian bias":

Whereas surely the Christian Church has claimed that it is only through the grace of God, and its fruit of forgiveness of sin and of supernatural life, that the first step can be taken towards that renewal of the natural which is social revolution... If there are those who in the present situation

³³ A.R. VIDLER, 'Editorial', *Theology*, XXXIX, No. 232, October 1939, pp. 241-246. A brief discussion of the controversy in *Theology* is also given by WIGNALL, 'D. M. MacKinnon', pp. 83-84.

³⁴ First into the lists was the Bishop of Coventry, Mervyn HAIGH, who criticised Vidler's portrayal of the blind patriotism of British Church leaders in the First World War as stereotypical and unfair. Letter to the Editor, *Theology*, XXXIX, No. 233, November 1939, pp. 373-374.

³⁵ Regius Professor of Divinity, Oxford University.

³⁶ Oliver C. QUICK, Letter to the Editor, *Theology*, XXXIX, No. 233, November 1939, pp. 375-377.

claim that we must take that theology seriously, it is because they are profoundly uncertain whether through war can be found any cure for the evils of Europe. (Of the kind of methods modern warfare inevitably employs strong things have been said by theologians)... Is not, perhaps, [the Church's]... rôle to-day to seek to detach itself as far as possible from the conflict, looking both to things eternal and to a future which, if in the darkness its ministry has only been of prophecy, reconciliation and compassion, it may have some share in reshaping?³⁷

Here was a classic statement of the attitude of the younger school of Catholics to the ethical dilemmas of total war³⁸. Vidler, in typical neo-orthodox style, had seemed to discourage the Church's moral mission. Quick's response, that of a Catholic who did not accept the new "theology of crisis", demanded that the Church support British morale, implying that the aims of the Church in time of total war were those of the State. MacKinnon rejected both positions, insisting instead upon the prophetic role of the Church. Christology was being linked with ecclesiology: the Church must be a "remnant" as Christ was a remnant. Here was a "middle way" between despairing withdrawal and pragmatism: a refusal to accept that the Church was bound to support the wartime actions of the State, a recognition that the "peace of Christ" entailed commitment to constant moral conflict. It eschewed the optimism of liberalism, the pessimism of neo-orthodoxy, and the bland erastianism which prompted MacKinnon's most corrosive criticisms of the Anglican establishment. Here, in the early months of the war, MacKinnon enunciated a Catholic realism which would be profoundly influential in Anglican theology and ministry in the years that followed³⁹.

In 1940, with war now less an academic, and more a present reality, MacKinnon revived these themes. Christian theology must always be "a *theologia crucis*, a theology of the Cross", revealing "God as the hero of the story of his own

³⁷ D.M. MACKINNON, Letter to the Editor, *Theology*, XXXIX, No. 234, December 1939, pp. 452-455 (Parentheses MacKinnon's). Quick replied in *Theology*, XL, No. 235, January 1940, pp. 49-50: "It was as far as possible from my intention to deny prophetic vocation in the Church... [but] in a juster order of society the Church would have a better chance of leading men to true repentance." Other correspondents were H.C.L. HEYWOOD (XL, No. 236, February 1940, p. 131), and Montgomery BELGION (XL, No. 236, February 1940, p. 132). Quick replied to these later letters, published in No. 237, March 1940, pp. 218-219: "it is the function of a truly evangelical Church to wash the disciples' feet, not its own hands."

³⁸ Many of its concerns were echoed in an article by R.A. EDWARDS, Vicar of Wisborough Green, Sussex, "The Perplexities of the Church in War-Time" *Hibbert Journal*, XXXVIII, 1939, pp. 187-195. See also E.L. MASCALL, 'The Christian and the Next War', *Theology*, XXXVIII, January-June 1939, pp. 53-58. Some Anglo-Catholic writers continued to espouse pacifism. For example, Evelyn UNDERHILL wrote a pacifist pamphlet in 1940, 'The Church and War', *EU*, 4/14.

³⁹ WIGNALL, 'D.M. MacKinnon', p. 75.

rejection". MacKinnon wrote passionately, in painfully graphic language, on the tragedy of the crucifixion. Like Niebuhr, he insisted that it was humanity's rejection of God which made it so tragic:

For to accept him, man must first learn to see his cultural achievement as it is, to set no store by the multiplicity of his spiritual exercises, and to acknowledge both the finitude and positive unreliability of his intelligence... He must see that his very futility ministers to the glory of God, and is, as it were, an instrument whereby his purposes are accomplished.⁴⁰

This might have come from an uncritical Barthian or Niebuhrian, but for its final clause, which left room for a Catholic interpretation of the Church. It appeared in the second *Signpost*, and would be followed in 1941 by MacKinnon's appearance at the Malvern Conference, where he and Dorothy L. Sayers⁴¹ took the platform to speak about the paradox of the impotence and the divine calling of the Church⁴².

These writings and utterances, fearlessly denouncing the Church's failure to embody Catholic Christianity, may aptly be described as prophetic, but did not arise from a theological vacuum. MacKinnon repeatedly acknowledged his indebtedness to E.C. Hoskyns⁴³, whose article on 'Christ and the Synoptic Gospels', published in 1926 in the symposium, *Essays Catholic and Critical*, opened with the most frequently quoted encapsulation of twentieth-century Anglo-Catholic ecclesiology:

For the Catholic Christian "*Quid vobis videtur de Ecclesia, What think ye of the Church?*" is not merely as pertinent a question as "*Quid vobis videtur de Christo, What think ye of the Christ?*" it is but the same question differently formulated.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ D.M. MACKINNON, *God the Living and the True*, (Signposts No. 2, 1940), pp. 22-23.

⁴¹ See below, pp. 259, 261-262, 267-268.

⁴² For a discussion of H.A. Hodges' treatment of this paradox, see below, pp. 290-291.

⁴³ See, for example, D.M. MACKINNON, *The Church of God*, (Signposts No. 7, 1940), p. 9. MacKinnon regarded this book as a comment on the assertion of Hoskyns quoted above (p. 76). WIGNALL, 'D.M. MacKinnon', pp. 84-85, rightly points out MacKinnon's indebtedness to Hoskyns, and also demonstrates that the influence of Barth on MacKinnon's work was always "mediated by Hoskyns".

⁴⁴ Edwyn Clement HOSKYNs, 'The Christ of the Synoptic Gospels', *Essays Catholic and Critical*, London, 1929, p. 153. For further discussions of *Essays Catholic and Critical* see Roger LLOYD, *The Church of England, 1900-1965*, London, 1966, pp. 273ff; PENHALE, *Catholics in Crisis*, pp. 37 ff., and HYLSON-SMITH, *High Churchmanship*, pp. 261-264. Lloyd discusses Hoskyns's work in particular, viewing it as a decisive attack on a decaying liberalism.

Hoskyns promoted a re-invigorated Catholic orthodoxy, confident enough of the truth of Christian revelation to court Biblical criticism. The volume inherited the tradition of *Lux Mundi*⁴⁵: in its format, its partial acceptance of liberal incarnationalism, and its promotion of a developing tradition as a corrective to Biblical literalism. Yet if it shared with *Lux Mundi* a conviction that theologians had nothing to fear from modern scientific and critical methods, it affirmed Catholic orthodoxy more confidently than the earlier symposium. Most of its contributors agreed that Catholic theology must always be a synthesis, whether of Greek, Hebrew and Latin traditions, or of orthodox Catholicism and some of the emphases of Protestantism. Hoskyns typified the latter synthesis; it was he who would translate Barth's *Römerbrief* in the 1930s, thus baptising the new "Biblical theology" in a Catholic font⁴⁶. The product of this preoccupation with achieving a balance between the liberal Catholic tradition and aspects of the Protestant neo-orthodoxy of Barth, Brunner and Niebuhr, was by the late 1930s being characterised as a wholly new development. Rarely before had a theological generation-gap seemed so pronounced. Ramsey, a former student of Hoskyns⁴⁷, personified the younger group. *The Gospel and the Catholic Church* provided a basis for later Catholic approaches to ecumenism by interpreting Catholic ecclesiology not in "archaeological", but in "evangelical" terms⁴⁸. If Protestants could be persuaded that Episcopacy embodied truths about the Gospel, reunion might be possible. He wholeheartedly accepted Hoskyns's assertion that the Church was an extension of the Incarnation, but Ramsey's discussion is dominated by its redemptive aspect. The answer to "*Quid vobis videtur de Ecclesia?*" must be that the Church is charged with living out the Passion of Christ through its institutional framework:

What, then, is the relation between the Gospel and "Catholicism"? It seems impossible to understand them separately. For we cannot appeal back to the authority of

⁴⁵ Charles GORE (Ed.), *Lux Mundi: A Series of Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation*, London, 1891. See ROWELL, *Vision Glorious*, pp. 220-229; Aidan NICHOLS, *The Panther and the Hind: A Theological History of Anglicanism*, Edinburgh, 1993, pp. 130ff.

⁴⁶ R.C.D. JASPER, *The Development of the Anglican Liturgy 1662-1980*, London, 1989, pp. 162-163; Richard H. ROBERTS, *A Theology on its Way?: Essays on Karl Barth*, Edinburgh, 1991, p. 106. Hoskyns thought Barth "quite right about man, but quite wrong about God". Edwyn HOSKYNs and F.N. DAVEY, *Crucifixion: Resurrection: the pattern of the theology and ethics of the New Testament*, London, 1981, p. 59, and see Andrew CHANDLER, *Brethren in Adversity: Bishop George Bell, the Church of England and the Crisis of German Protestantism, 1933-1939*, London, 1997, p. 10.

⁴⁷ Owen CHADWICK, *Michael Ramsey: A Life*, Oxford, 1990, pp. 28-29. For a more detailed discussion of Hoskyns's influence on Ramsey, see John M. COURT, 'Michael Ramsey and Biblical Theology', in Robin GILL and Lorna KENDALL (Eds.), *Michael Ramsey as Theologian*, London, 1995, pp. 82-98.

⁴⁸ For a recognition, by a Reformed theologian, of the ecumenical value of the ecclesiologies of Ramsey and MacKinnon, see Daniel T. JENKINS, *The Nature of Catholicity*, London, 1942, p. 13.

Jesus Christ without being led to face the Church and its outward marks... This dying and rising means the one Body; we know Christ through dying in its one life, and the marks of the Church help us to die by pointing us to the universal family whose membership is death and life in Christ.⁴⁹

MacKinnon's excision of the layers of platitude which obscured the implications of Catholic ecclesiology, with its absolute demand of personal sacrifice, was thus made possible by the prior publication of Hoskyns's and Ramsey's explorations of the Church as extension of the Incarnation. Yet if Hoskyns had been the first link in the causal chain which led MacKinnon to Malvern, MacKinnon lacked his naiveté about human nature. Hoskyns had invited the German New Testament scholar Gerhard Kittel to lecture in Cambridge in 1937, but had already died by the time Kittel stood at the lectern wearing his Nazi insignia⁵⁰. Nevertheless, MacKinnon carried Hoskyns's ecclesiological arguments to their logical conclusion. His theology was a carefully considered synthesis of Catholicism with neo-orthodoxy, in which human sinfulness and the divine nature of the Church were taken equally seriously⁵¹. MacKinnon and his fellow *Signposts* writers answered the question, "*Quid vobis videtur de Ecclesia?*" by asserting that the Church, like the Christ, must be both prophetic and willing to accept martyrdom in the midst of a culture in an advanced stage of decay, an assertion consistent with the general atmosphere of foreboding during the Phoney War when MacKinnon wrote his *Signposts*⁵². After Dunkirk and the Blitz, twin catastrophes which many assumed would culminate in Nazi invasion, it was expressed still more urgently in the positive practical demands of Malvern 1941.

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⁴⁹ Arthur Michael RAMSEY, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, London, 1936, p. 65. See also HYLSON-SMITH, *High Churchmanship*, pp. 264-268; ROWELL, *Vision Glorious*, pp. 232-237.

⁵⁰ HASTINGS, *English Christianity*, pp. 322. Kittel was Professor of New Testament at the University of Tübingen. He originated the phrase "the scandal of particularity", a favourite of both Hoskyns and MacKinnon, but his theology was strongly anti-Semitic. MacKinnon's later reflections on the New-Testament origins of anti-Semitism may to some extent reflect his reaction to Kittel, with the benefit of hindsight offered by the Holocaust.

⁵¹ See also J.V.L. CASSERLEY, *The Fate of Modern Culture*, (*Signposts* No. 1, 1940) pp. 83-84.

⁵² See, for example, the sermon preached by Dom Bernard CLEMENTS in All Saints' Margaret Street on the 'National Day of Prayer' on October 1, 1939, reminding his listeners "that in an extreme case not only severe set-backs but even final defeat would never prove that there was not a God or that we were not right in our present course of action. Otherwise you get away from Christ crucified... and back to the old tribal god again." *A Monk in Margaret Street*, London, 1941, p. 127.

Essays Catholic and Critical had presented an interpretation of the Catholic tradition which stressed the strengths and opportunities of the Anglican Church. It was not so much that Catholicism aimed to give "a final and exclusive expression of the truth," its editor E.G. Selwyn explained, as "that it represents the best expression at present available, in thought, worship, and life, of the principles necessary to an ultimate synthesis." Selwyn hoped to promote sympathy between the expressions of Catholicism to be found in the Roman, Eastern and Anglican Churches. This was "the historic task of Anglican theology," a mandate which would echo repeatedly in the ecumenical initiatives of Catholic Anglicans in coming years. Significantly, it was couched in terms which, for all the emphasis on the word "critical", suggested that "Catholicism" and "orthodoxy" were mutually dependent. "Catholic" churches were united in their claim to give "to the institutional element in Christianity a place not less fundamental than that given to its mystical and intellectual elements". This institutional aspect, expressed through creeds, sacraments, ministry, liturgy and ceremonial, provided "the structure and arteries of the *Corpus Christi*, guaranteeing to us the concrete reality and convenience of the social organism which derives its life from the incarnate Lord, now both ascended and indwelling."⁵³ In conjunction with this emphasis on the institutional element of Catholicism, the symposium, as Hastings puts it, "gave back to the Church of England a viable theology of the supernatural"⁵⁴. This was the burden of Hoskyns's essay, which argued from the standpoint of modern Biblical criticism that the supernatural and Christological passages of the synoptic Gospels were not later Pauline accretions, as liberal scholars had suggested, but "primitive and original", deriving directly from Jesus⁵⁵. It is not difficult, therefore, to understand why Hoskyns translated Barth's *Römerbrief* in the 1930s, thus profoundly influencing the growth of the new "Biblical theology" in Britain, both in its neo-orthodox Protestant forms, and in the form of Hoskyns's own Catholic tradition.

So influential was *Essays Catholic and Critical* on the development of Anglo-Catholic theology, that when, early in 1940, the journal *Theology* carried a series of articles on the widening gulf between the "older" and the "younger" theologians, a central issue was whether the *Essays* were more representative of the former or the

⁵³ Edward Gordon SELWYN, 'Preface to the Third Edition', *Essays Catholic and Critical*, pp. vii, xxvi, viii-ix.

⁵⁴ HASTINGS, *English Christianity*, p. 234.

⁵⁵ HOSKYNs, 'The Christ of the Synoptic Gospels', pp. 168-169. Hoskyns's influence was enhanced still further by the posthumous publication of his commentary on *The Fourth Gospel*, (Edited by Francis Noel DAVEY), London, 1940 (2 Volumes). Another essayist found that the Oxford Movement possessed more in common with Keswick than with liberalism, because both of the former stressed the supernatural element, albeit in very different ways. (J.K. MOZLEY, 'Grace and Freedom', *Essays Catholic and Critical*, p. 235.)

latter. It may appear a somewhat abstruse question for theologians to have been discussing during the winter of 1939-1940, but the debate had been sparked by an article by William Temple⁵⁶ which suggested, as Selwyn put it, that "the philosophical expression which he and his fellow-workers in Christian Platonism have given to the Christian faith, though still formally valid, is not spiritually or emotionally satisfying to the rising generation."⁵⁷ This struck at the heart of the Anglican Church's ministry in wartime. Mascall, a young, celibate priest, Thomist scholar and member of the Oratory of the Good Shepherd, observed that "whereas it is usually the old who are theologically conservative and the young who are inclined to kick over the traces of orthodoxy, to-day the reverse is the case". The Protestant liberalism of the Barnes-Major school was intellectually moribund, and had left behind it a swathe of "doctrinal chaos". *Essays Catholic and Critical*, by contrast, had represented liberal Catholicism which, Mascall submitted, had attempted to "rehabilitate orthodoxy... *de novo* upon the basis of contemporary science and philosophy", rather than by building upon "traditional theology". Mascall saw Catholic "Liberalism" as "a temporary divergence from the main stream of Anglicanism... lacking continuity with the past". This was probably unfair, but in other ways Mascall represented accurately the state of Anglican theology at the outset of the war. Hoskyns's translation of the *Römerbrief* had spawned a breed of "biblical theologians" intent on heralding "a Return to Dogma" based not on contemporary secular methods, but on the conviction that the Faith was "revealed by God in Christ" and relevant to contemporary concerns. Yet Mascall suggested that the *Römerbrief* had been too influential. The exponents of "biblical theology" had more affinities with German Protestantism than with Anglicanism: they emphasised Judgment and Redemption rather than such traditional Anglican concerns as the theology of Creation and Incarnation⁵⁸. However, a fourth group of theologians, in contrast to "Modernists", "Liberals", "neo-Calvinists" or "neo-Lutherans", sought to promote a return to dogma in Catholic terms:

What they are primarily concerned with is not scholasticism, but dogmatic theology, and they would maintain that the great system of dogmatic theology which the Church of England inherited from the Middle Ages,

⁵⁶ William TEMPLE (Archbishop of York), 'Theology To-day', *Theology*, XXXIX, Nov 1939, No 233, pp. 326-333.

⁵⁷ E.G. SELWYN, 'The Outlook for English Theology', *Theology*, XL, No. 235, January 1940, p. 6.

⁵⁸ *Catholicity: A Study in the Conflict of Christian Traditions in the West, being a Report presented to His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury*, London, 1947, would also criticise the tendency the "preach Redemption *in vacuo*, without the doctrine of creation as its ground-work... The main burden of our Report is that the problem of re-union is that of recovery of the 'wholeness' of Tradition." (pp. 16-17.)

which was unbroken until the arrival of Hanoverian latitudinarianism, and which reappeared in a rather attenuated and one-sided form in the Tractarians, is the proper sphere of thought in which an Anglican should move. It would appear to be valuable to be capable of harmonizing whatever is of permanent value in liberalism - namely, its stress on the rights of reason - with the *givenness* so characteristic of the biblical school. Nor are there lacking younger theologians who believe that the biblical and systematic approaches are not incompatible with but complementary to one another, and that one of the great needs of modern biblical theology is that it should be thought out in Catholic and not in Barthian terms.

Mascall hoped that Anglicanism would integrate the younger theologians' tendencies towards biblical and systematic approaches, if only to ensure that Anglicanism would have its own unique theology.⁵⁹

When Selwyn responded in defence of *Essays Catholic and Critical*, he agreed that a "return to dogma" was desirable, but warned against "Infallibilism, whether in its Barthian or its Roman Catholic form". He argued that political totalitarianism was likely to provoke a totalitarian reaction in a spiritual form. Selwyn's argument was itself thoroughly Catholic: the validity of reason must be recognised alongside that of revelation, and "reason is bound to question; it asks for credentials, and claims to relate the truths given by religion to the rest of experience and knowledge." Yet science was "ethically neutral", incapable of providing the basis for a stable society. "Christian civilization" must draw on its synthetic heritage derived from Graeco-Roman civilisation and Judeo-Christian religion. Moreover, "theology will serve our generation precisely in the measure in which it represents this wholeness of outlook."⁶⁰ Here was a broad-ranging cultural agenda for Anglo-Catholicism, expressed at the beginning of the war by the editor of *Essays Catholic and Critical*, which sympathised with the desire of the younger theologians for a "return to dogma", and insisted on the synthetic nature of Catholicism.

For many Catholics, however, it remained questionable whether the kind of cultural synthesis sought by "Liberal Catholics" in the 1920s was possible or even desirable in the 1940s. It was now impossible to use the word "Christendom" in any

⁵⁹ E.L. MASCALL, O.G.S., 'The Future of Anglican Theology', *Theology*, XXXIX, No. 234, December 1939, pp. 406-412, and see MAYHEW, 'Christendom Group', pp. 135-136.

⁶⁰ E.G. SELWYN, 'The Outlook for English Theology', *Theology*, XL, No. 235, January 1940, pp. 6-14.

but the most theoretical terms. MacKinnon felt that he was speaking for his generation when he announced at Malvern in 1941:

I cannot believe that we have in Europe at present anything standing in a near intimate relation to visible, historic Christendom than that in which a more or less completely decomposed corpse is to the living human body with which it is biologically continuous.⁶¹

It was pointless to speak of cultural synthesis if modern culture was in a state of collapse. In 1940, Casserley employed the same arguments and metaphors to dismiss the claims of Marxism "to explain the decay and death of cultures."⁶² Such language had much in common with Protestant neo-orthodoxy, as did MacKinnon's assertion in his first *Signpost*, that "Around us, furnishing the centre of our natural life, is an elaborate social structure that is the fruit of human apostasy."⁶³ Society needed repentance, *metanoia*. In his second *Signpost*, he reflected on the "ceaseless oscillation between an archaic individualism and a subhuman collectivism", which revealed the "perversion of the natural order". The rebirth of Christendom depended upon Christians realising that "the victory that overcomes the world is faith"⁶⁴.

This condemnation of modern culture in conjunction with biblical paraphrases, reminiscent of Davies or "Nicodemus", and characteristic of MacKinnon's Catholic apologetics in the 1940s, was reflected in more muted form by other Catholics less candidly indebted to Barth. Christendom Group members often drew from the same linguistic well as the neo-orthodox, particularly in criticising the increasing mechanisation of English society and the perverse economic priorities underpinning it.⁶⁵ At Malvern, the problem of the imminent collapse of a decaying Christendom was taken up with renewed urgency after the fall of France and the Blitz by Demant. He used the traditional liberal Catholic language of cultural synthesis to demonstrate the seriousness of a situation in which the "aims of European civilization", derived from the "impregnation of the Graeco-Roman world by the Christian dogma and spirit", had at last come into conflict. European civilisation represented "the one great historic experiment in growing a Christian culture", and if that died, no

⁶¹ D.M. MACKINNON, 'Revelation and Social Justice', ARCHBISHOP OF YORK'S CONFERENCE, *Malvern, 1941*, pp. 100-101.

⁶² J.V.L. CASSERLEY, *Providence and History*, (Signposts No. 11, 1940), p. 66.

⁶³ MACKINNON, *God the Living and the True*, pp. 24-25.

⁶⁴ MACKINNON, *The Church of God*, pp. 97-98.

⁶⁵ This was true of D.G. Peck's *Catholic Design for Society*, (Signposts No. 10, 1940), Reckitt and Casserley's *The Vocation of England*, London, 1941, and most of the contributions to the Malvern Conference.

Christendom would arise elsewhere. Like "Nicodemus", Demant doubted the resilience among Britons of so-called "vestigial Christianity". The Church must kindle "dogmatic convictions" in the individual Christian, capable of "putting power behind the values in which he residually believes."⁶⁶

Reckitt added that war had been the inevitable result of a secularist society. This was thriving economically on war, flouting natural and divine law. The only solution was "conversion"⁶⁷. This was reminiscent of Davies's assertion that war was "the final term of any civilization"⁶⁸, except that only modern culture, not human culture as a whole, was being condemned. Yet both identified the Renaissance as the point at which culture had gone wrong. W.G. Peck described modern man as a "divided personality". Before secular humanism, mediaeval Christianity had taught that economic ends were subordinated to spiritual. All economic activities were intended "for the satisfaction of the needs of man considered as a creature intended for the vision of God". Modern society had forgotten this "sacramental meaning" of economics, and the Church must therefore reassert its mediaeval priorities⁶⁹. To Demant, the English tendency to absolutise economics was a disease which had "all but destroyed our own political freedom, debauched our culture and religion and stultified genuine economic activity itself." A regained Christendom must overthrow "Trader Man", and radically reform or abolish most modern financial institutions. The dominance of "Trader Man" was a form of "economic totalitarianism", incompatible with a Christian social order⁷⁰.

⁶⁶ V.A. DEMANT, 'Christian Strategy', *Malvern 1941*, pp. 125-126. Others were still more critical of the assumption that British people were still motivated by a latent or vestigial Christianity. G.B. BENTLEY observed that: "the belief still lingers that, though John Bull may have dispensed with the metaphysical subtleties of Christian dogma, he at least has a working knowledge of Christian morals. Yet in reality his ignorance of the latter is profound." *Catholic Design for Living*, (Signposts No. 9, 1940), p. 9. Bentley cited observations by Dorothy L. Sayers as support for this argument. For a discussion of Sayers's estimate of popular attitudes to Christianity, see below, pp. 224-229.

⁶⁷ Maurice B. RECKITT, 'War: the Upshot of "Peace"', *Malvern, 1941*, pp. 52-53, complained that Christians had forgotten that "any religious basis for the unity of Europe had ever existed". He concluded that "the attitude of religion to international issues has scarcely succeeded so far in becoming religious at all." (*ibid.*, pp. 50-51.)

⁶⁸ DAVIES, *The Two Humanities*, p. 10.

⁶⁹ W.G. PECK, 'The Essential Nature of the Problem', *Malvern, 1941*, pp. 23-24. Linked with this was his son's insistence, influenced by R.H. Tawney, that "The whole trend of traditional Catholic teaching is that work is a means to an end and that end is the virtuous life... [whereas in the modern world] Any diminution of work is regarded with horror as a social catastrophe. The *reductio ad absurdum* of this was achieved by the official of the undertakers' union who declared mournfully that trade had been bad that year, but that he looked forward to brighter times in the year to come." (*Catholic Design for Society*, pp. 74-75, 80.)

⁷⁰ DEMANT, 'Christian Strategy', *Malvern, 1941*, p. 136, 138, 139. The relationship between Demant's speech and Peter Drucker's *The End of Economic Man: the Origins of Totalitarianism*, London, 1939 is explored in Patrick LOGAN, 'The Ghost of "Economic Man"', p. 73. CASSERLEY criticised the "leisured class" which had arisen as a result of the supremacy of economic priorities, and asserted that "the mind and soul of the Church are on the side of the workers." (*Providence and*

The restoration of Christian economics must reassert "man's organic dependence upon the earth", an issue of particular significance at a time when German U-boats were intent on starving Britain into submission:

The earth upon which we live is being drained of its power to support plant, animal and human life, by the breaking of its vital reproductive cycle under the spur of capitalist aggressiveness... mankind... will soon perish unless it devotes its enhanced powers to respectful culture of the earth and nurture of populations to tend it.. Humanist man has treated the earth just as he has behaved towards Almighty God; he has lived on it without recognizing his dependence; he has used the life it has given him to turn against it in aggressive self-dependence and exploitation; and he turns to it conscience-stricken in emergencies for a quick recovery from calamities.⁷¹

Industry, W.G. Peck added, no longer addressed human needs; the struggle for economic power had deprived it of "sacramental dignity". The result was unemployment, war, the "degradation of public taste", and "the upsetting of the healthy balance between town and country"⁷². Neo-orthodox, Evangelical and Catholic writers were thus united in blaming secularisation and humanism for environmental degradation, totalitarianism and total war⁷³. The Christendom Group affirmed in 1941 that "social health" depended on rediscovering "the rhythm of organic life"⁷⁴: this resonated with the general romantic, pastoralist yearnings of wartime culture⁷⁵, but also affirmed, with MacKinnon and the neo-orthodox, the theological emphasis on the dependence of humanity upon God.

History, pp. 70-71.) For another discussion of Marx's social theory see W.G. PECK, 'The Essential Nature of the Problem', *Malvern, 1941*, p. 25.

⁷¹ DEMANT, 'Christian Strategy', *Malvern, 1941*, p. 136. See also D.G. PECK, *Catholic Design for Society*, pp. 51-53.

⁷² W.G. PECK, 'The Essential Nature of the Problem', pp. 29-31 (Peck's italics).

⁷³ D.G. PECK, *Catholic Design for Society*, pp. 60-73; E.L. MASCALL, *Man: His Origin and Destiny*, (Signposts No. 3, 1940), pp. 13-14. DEMANT, 'Christian Strategy', pp. 144-145, 141-142, argued that to condemn modern economics because of the ways in which it benefited from war was not necessarily to align oneself with appeasement, since it had been a "pre-Capitalist element in the English" which had determined to resist Hitler. Demant's criticisms of appeasement are a significant exception to HYLSON-SMITH's generalisation that "there was never... a wide-ranging, intense and passionate anti-Nazi, pro-British sentiment among Anglo-Catholics as a whole." (*High Churchmanship*, p. 251.)

⁷⁴ "There is," said DEMANT, "a profound religious side to the need for recovering a respectful attitude to the earth... Matter has a right to moral and spiritual usage. If it is exploited it soon reminds us that we are its dependents." ('Christian Strategy', p. 146-147.)

⁷⁵ See Angus CALDER, *The Myth of the Blitz*, London, 1991, pp. 12-13, 184-194. Such sentiments had their origins in the romantic anti-industrialism typified in the nineteenth century by William Morris, but also evident in the Christian Socialism of F.D. Maurice and Charles Kingsley, as

For younger Catholics and neo-orthodox Protestants alike, theological liberalism was a capitulation to the demands of humanism⁷⁶. Like Niebuhr and Davies, Gilbert Shaw, in 1939, had criticised Renaissance humanism because "it lacked a theological centre which alone could preserve the synthesis of man with man." However, Shaw's analysis took a distinctively Catholic turn by stressing the conflict between individualism and collectivism. As humanism alienated the individual from society, counterfeit collectives had arisen in protest, supplanting the Church, "the one society which has the supreme message of collective living". These new collectivisms were now set to destroy civilisation.⁷⁷ Two years later, with Nazi collectivism armed and triumphant across the English Channel, MacKinnon advanced a similar argument. Any attempt to relate Christian revelation to social justice, which might otherwise remain the domain of secular rationalists, must deal first with the "problem of the machine". MacKinnon cited two examples of "savage protest" against mechanisation: D.H. Lawrence's rebellion against "the mechanization of the sexual act" and "the Nazi revolution which by compelling us to remember that despair is a potent, political cause-factor has driven us to enquire more deeply the human causes of that despair". Liberal humanism thus led, as neo-orthodoxy also claimed, to nihilism and despair⁷⁸.

A. Herbert Rees expressed the same concern in his *Signpost*: only Christian belief could alleviate the despair which led to totalitarianism, but liberal theology had deprived the people of "the Christian conception of God."⁷⁹ This problem, of how to counteract despair and nihilism, pervaded MacKinnon's work throughout the war. It

documented by Mark GIROUARD, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman*, London, 1981, p. 132.

⁷⁶ The *Catholicity* report typified this tendency by attacking "the fallacy that Liberalism is 'broad-minded' and 'tolerant', and can therefore claim to provide the atmosphere of charity in which Christian re-union can come about... Liberalism is fiercely intolerant... [We cannot] take the common and popular sentiments of Liberalism as a kind of norm of Christian broadmindedness wherein we can all 'get together'." (pp. 28-32.)

⁷⁷ Gilbert SHAW, 'Prayer and Theology', *Theology*, XXXVIII, No. 228, June 1939, p. 419. Similar concerns were raised by D.R. BLACKMAN, 'Man, Mankind, and God', in *The Parish Communion*, pp. 34-36. He differentiated magic from religion" (p. 38), because magic attempts to gain spiritual benefits on an individual, rather than a corporate, level. Similar arguments were advanced by Evelyn Underhill (see below, p. 207).

⁷⁸ MACKINNON, 'Revelation and Social Justice', *Malvern, 1941*, pp. 94-96. See also CASSERLEY, *Fate of Modern Culture*, pp. 62-75.

⁷⁹ A. Herbert REES, *The Faith in England*, (*Signposts* No. 12, 1940), p. 179. A.C. Don drew on this theme in sermons as early as 1936, observing that man had "reduced himself to a mere cog in a gigantic machine which... threatens to grind him to powder". The result was "hopelessness and despair". The travails of modern culture were "precisely what a Christian might expect" given the doctrine of original sin, but Christ could redeem human nature. (Address at consecration in St. Paul's Cathedral of Archdeacon Prestige and Rev. J.L.C. Horstead, 2 Tim 1:6, 24 June 1936, *DONS*, M.S. 1969, pp. 1-4.)

appeared in 1940, in *God the Living and the True*, where he suggested that "the triumph of the forces of nihilism and unreason" was rooted in a "bankrupt" rationalism. True reason must be regained by "a confession of our present derangement"; the Church must induce "the dementia which leads to salvation" before it could experience divine mercy.⁸⁰ It reappeared at Malvern, where he stressed the validity of Middleton Murry's "overwhelming impulse to withdraw" from modern society⁸¹, and again in 1946, in his fear that the atomic bomb would induce nihilism, rather than the despair that leads to Christian faith⁸².

If writers such as MacKinnon, Casserley and Rees concurred with neo-orthodoxy about the state of modern culture, they proposed in 1940 a distinctively Catholic approach to the problem of nihilism and totalitarian collectivism. They suggested that only the Gospel as revealed and embodied in the Church could show the world to be intelligible⁸³. Casserley proposed a Christian historiography, arguing that international events had induced "a numbing sense of helplessness" which must be counteracted by "the Christian conviction that history... embodies a purpose, expresses a meaning and steadfastly pursues a given direction," that it was "the stream of events which fill up the blank spaces of time intervening between three fixed points": the Creation, the Incarnation, and the Second Coming, intersections of eternity with time. Echoing St. Augustine's *City of God*, he insisted that there were two cities, two histories: "the history of the wanderings of fallen man, a violent narrative full of the clash between an innate nobility and an acquired corruption, and the history of human redemption." Nihilism and fatalism could only be effectively counteracted by the Church, the living expression of the invasion of history by metahistory⁸⁴. For Rees, too, it was only "Catholic belief, Catholic worship, Catholic unity" which could save those fleeing a collapsing civilisation from taking refuge in a

⁸⁰ MACKINNON, *God the Living and the True*, pp. 13-15.

⁸¹ "For I confess, I do not know where or how to begin the work of ordering the chaos which is beneath the semblance of modern order. ...until we are possessed and purified by the tranquillity of order we can do nothing of any real avail. And, alas, I know I am not possessed and fulfilled by that tranquillity." Murry felt that a "Christian society" could not be realised for "generations and even centuries to come..." J. Middleton MURRY, 'The Leadership of the Church', *Malvern, 1941*, pp. 188, 195-196. For a further discussion of Murry's sense of despair, see below, p. 299.

⁸² See below, p. 322.

⁸³ See, for example MACKINNON, *God the Living and the True*, p. 85: "It may be that at moments in the history of the world it is not merely a greater fullness of understanding that we can hope for from the mercy of God, revealed in history, but rather a restoration of our sense that the world is, in principle, intelligible at all..."

⁸⁴ CASSERLEY, *Providence and History*, pp. 11, 12-13, 17, 19. The contrast between Christian and Hellenic philosophies of history suggests the influence of Niebuhr, but Niebuhr could not have assented to his ecclesiological conclusion.

totalitarian state⁸⁵. MacKinnon commented ironically on the concern expressed by the English public at the death of Pius XI:

after generations in which the distinction of the Church and the world has been a natural scandal to the educated, men and women are suddenly aware again of that distinction as the sole ground of hope in a world increasingly at the mercy of impersonal forces they cannot control. The fact is that to men and women, groaning in the agony of an unintelligible passion, the Church of God suddenly again stands for something. And that something we may describe as the final and absolute revelation of Almighty God, given in the Word made flesh... We see the popular expression of the collapse of that philosophy which distinguished the liberal optimism of the past hundred years in this tentative acknowledgement of the Church as a transcendent society. It may well be that it is through the *fact* of the Church that the men and women of this age will come to understand the Gospel.⁸⁶

Neo-orthodox Protestants were reaching similar conclusions about the fate of modern culture, but their insistence on the "bankruptcy of humanism" led them to distrust collectives and doubt the effectiveness of Christian attempts to secure social justice. The younger Catholics, by contrast, sought the remedy for a disintegrating Christendom in the Church itself, understood as an extension of the Incarnation. They shared the neo-orthodox language, but their ecclesiology was consistent with that of *Essays Catholic and Critical*.

Their critique of liberal theology was also avowedly derived from Hoskyns. MacKinnon felt that Hoskyns's work had "undermined the very foundations of the Liberal building", so that immanentism and Christianity were now "rival dogmas". He agreed with the Roman Catholic historian, Christopher Dawson, that it was inconsistent to see the logical outcome of Tractarianism in immanentist liberal Catholicism, since "to the Tractarian, the Gospel is the Word, the very utterance of God, addressed to man in his extremity, and it is the function of the Church to attest that Gospel", whereas the liberal would reject such a Gospel "for it ruthlessly presents man as incapable of saving himself"⁸⁷. MacKinnon stigmatised liberalism for its acceptance of "the immanentist pre-judgement... the refusal to admit the possibility that the world in which we find ourselves does not carry its significance in

⁸⁵ REES, *The Faith in England*, pp. 184-185.

⁸⁶ MACKINNON, *The Church of God*, p.13.

⁸⁷ *ibid.*, p. 87.

itself." Liberalism left no room for the revelation of a transcendent God. The roots of MacKinnon's repudiation of liberalism lay in his philosophical objections to Kantian relativism. This, he argued, had encouraged people to "regard the world as of human making... [so that] We can only understand an object as existing if it is some relation to ourselves." MacKinnon agreed with Hulme that this was a form of romanticism which prevented people from even considering "the possibility of the divine invader *ab extra*". Moreover, such assumptions gravely limited the response to Hitlerism, to which "the naturalist can offer no solution save by a war that must only create other problems in its turn without resolving those which it has undertaken to resolve," for the revelation of a demonic power such as that embodied by Hitlerism was no more intelligible to an immanentist faith than was the revelation of a transcendent God. When applied to theology, the "immanentist pre-judgement" had been expressed in the self-defeating liberal attempt "to bring the episode of Christ within the history of human achievement".⁸⁸ Modern culture had lost sight of human finitude, because "we cannot conceive even that we are creatures, called out of nothingness, by a Love ever diffusive of itself." MacKinnon rejected the Barthian assertion that this was due to the ascendancy of Hellenism over Hebraism; "It is rather the fruit of a preoccupation with the temporal, historical series that refuses to take account even of the possibility of meta-history over against it." Liberalism had thus deprived the Gospel of its "catastrophic suggestion"; Christ was revered not as judge, but as a hero, and progressive optimism was perpetuated by the publication of *Songs of Praise*, "an indication of spiritual sterility."⁸⁹

MacKinnon's onslaught during the Phoney War owed much to Barth, mediated by Hoskyns. Sentences such as, "There can be no way from man to God unless there has been first set in the wilderness a way from God to man," might easily have been penned by a Barthian, with their "confession of failure" on the part of humanity and their affirmation of divine grace and transcendence.⁹⁰ However, such typical features of MacKinnon's wartime work were also attempts to reassert the "primitive Catholic Gospel", which he felt had been misrepresented between the wars by theological liberals, when they "suggested that... the central emphasis of Protestantism rested on the Atonement... [and] that of Catholicism rested on the

⁸⁸ MACKINNON, *God the Living and the True*, pp. 36n, 37, 40. For a further critique of Kant by a *Signposts* writer see CASSERLEY, *Fate of Modern Culture*, pp. 37-38.

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 38-39. *Songs of Praise*, first published in 1925, appeared in an enlarged edition in 1932. MacKinnon objected to the replacement of the redemptive message of traditional hymnody with expressions of "sickly sentimentality", expressing particular disapproval of Frank Fletcher's song (No. 611), "O Son of man, our hero strong and tender".

⁹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 21. See Richard H. ROBERTS, 'Theological Rhetoric and Moral Passion in the Light of MacKinnon's 'Barth'', in his *A Theology on its Way? Essays on Karl Barth*, Edinburgh, 1991, p. 159.

Incarnation." MacKinnon called the Gospel "a thing of terror", not out of deference for Kierkegaard, but because of the "catastrophic" nature of "the primitive narrative of St. Mark"⁹¹. MacKinnon's indebtedness to, and divergence from, Barthianism is best illustrated by his discussion of the relationship between reason and revelation. The first *Signpost* was Casserley's *The Fate of Modern Culture*, an apologia for Catholic philosophy. The second was MacKinnon's own *God the Living and the True*, which insisted on "the primacy for the Christian of revelation"⁹², yet upheld the Catholic conviction that "faith is not contrary to reason", and that reason could demonstrate the existence of God. This did not mean, however, that faith merely supplemented reason:

Grace does not simply perfect nature; rather, its fruit is the restoration of a nature often so wounded that we can only say of it that there is no wholeness in it... Apart from faith, reason finds it impossible to remain true to itself.⁹³

MacKinnon therefore criticised the Barthians' opposing of faith to reason⁹⁴, but insisted that the Catholic philosopher must agree with them on "the primacy of the Biblical revelation". The Incarnation must be recognised as "a breach with continuity", signified by the Virgin Birth, compelling us to "revise our frame of reference... [and] share his own eternal beatitude through our participation in his death". Yet if MacKinnon agreed with Barth here, he described the impact of the revelation of God in Christ on the mind of the Christian in the language of Catholic mysticism⁹⁵. The Incarnation was "an event in time that is the fruit of the intersection of time by eternity", and the Church, as the mystical body of Christ, was therefore required "to be his instrument for the extension of that irruptive and disruptive activity that was his coming." MacKinnon blended this mystical element with quotations from Kierkegaard, who had described the Incarnation as "God's attack upon man", and then echoed Hoskyns, expressing the hope that "the Church at this

⁹¹ MACKINNON, *The Church of God*, p. 26. From these beginnings, MacKinnon moved in the following years towards valuing the concept of "tragedy", both in the interpretation of the Gospels and in the application of Christianity to modern conditions. This aspect of MacKinnon's development is discussed in more detail below, pp. 322ff. See WIGNALL, 'D.M. MacKinnon', pp. 80ff, for another discussion of MacKinnon's response to Barth and Brunner and the debate about natural theology.

⁹² MACKINNON, *God the Living and the True*, pp. 17-18.

⁹³ *ibid.*, pp. 11-13. An influential wartime defense of the Thomist view of the relationship between reason and revelation was E.L. MASCALL's *He Who Is: A Study in Traditional Theism*, London, 1943. Mascall held that "the human mind can, from consideration of finite beings, arrive, without appeal to 'religious experience' or 'revelation,' at a sure knowledge of the existence of a God whose primary character is that of self-existent Being." (p. ix.)

⁹⁴ MACKINNON, *God the Living and the True*, pp. 48-50.

⁹⁵ On the relationship between Barthian and mystical language in the wartime poetry of T.S. Eliot, see below, pp. 196-199.

present hour will be so sure an instrument of... [God's] purposes that she will embody his attack upon Europe in 1940."⁹⁶ The result is strikingly similar to the contemporary writings of Channing-Pearce, illustrating how far the discourse between neo-orthodoxy and Catholicism had by 1940 produced a shared language. Yet just as Channing-Pearce's writing remained distinctively Protestant, MacKinnon's remained distinctively Catholic.

The effects of this discourse between Catholic traditionalism and Protestant neo-orthodoxy may be traced further to Casserley's *Signposts* and, significantly, to Temple's opening address at Malvern. For Casserley, Christian philosophy brought faith and reason together: "reason [incorporat[i]ng] faith... in a creative synthesis... faith renewing reason by bringing it into contact with the Eternal Reason which is its archetype"⁹⁷. Temple reminded his audience at Malvern of how the Reformers had rejected "the great mediaeval synthesis", and highlighted the ambivalent position of Anglicans who, as heirs both of Catholic tradition and of the Reformation, must decide whether to follow the Reformers' rejection of Natural Theology, and then relate that decision to the current struggle for human rights and social justice. The Reformers had so emphasised the Fall and original sin, that human reason was deemed "incapable of apprehending any divine truth":

If we adopt that position there is not much more to be said. It leads straight to the complete separation of the spheres of Church and State on which Lutheranism, and Luther in his prevailing mood, insist... If indeed the State invades the life of the Church, then the Church must protest and resist; but otherwise the Church has no right to approve or disapprove the action of the State. It is easy to see how Luther paved the way for Hitler....

Temple anticipated that his audience would reject the Lutheran view, and affirm that "there is a truth about the political and social life of man which is at once divine in essence (for man is God's creature) and apprehensible by reason", but he also believed that in approaching social problems, Anglicans must look beyond the scholastics, and beyond Maritain, who had no "adequate appreciation of the hideous power of sin". Temple had been reading Niebuhr's *Christianity and Power Politics*,

⁹⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 51-54. E.L. MASCALL, *The God-Man*, (*Signposts* No. 5, 1940), pp. 23-51; 79ff. See also P. McLAUGHLIN, *The Necessity of Worship*, (*Signposts* No 8, 1940), p. 79: "We shall never understand the significance of worship - indeed, we shall never understand the significance of the Church or even the meaning of the Christian religion - if we do not recognise the Church as our Lord Jesus Christ still living and working in this world amongst us. The very term, 'the Mystical Body', signifies as much."

⁹⁷ CASSERLEY, *Providence and History*, p. 10.

and found evidence in it of "a deeply Christian mind grappling with the realities of to-day... [because] Niebuhr's whole mind is possessed of the sense of that aboriginal sin of man which consists in putting himself in the centre where God alone ought to be"⁹⁸. The future leader of the Anglican Church thus hoped that traditional Catholic acceptance of Natural Theology could be combined with neo-orthodox realism about the effects of sin and the dynamics of power politics, producing a distinctive Anglican witness on "the order of society". Meanwhile, Casserley's viewpoint had been characterised by a reviewer in *Theology* as embodying precisely this balance, with its appreciation of "the futility of all attempts to extricate contemporary culture from within civilization itself", and its insistence that war aims could make sense only in the context of "a faith that is beyond culture"⁹⁹.

Catholics, therefore, commonly stressed the doctrine of original sin, whilst rejecting Protestant doctrines of total depravity. For Casserley, the doctrines of the Fall and original sin explained the predominance of conflict, repression and revolution in human history. These were occasioned by a "disintegrating force" which eluded definition by psychologists; man appears throughout history as "the destroyer of his own creations", bent upon self-satisfaction, yet incapable of achieving it. Individual sins were to be explained by the Fall; however, Catholic faith must also insist that humans were made in the divine image, and the doctrine of total depravity, with its insistence that the Fall destroyed man's "divinely created nature", was heretical. Casserley counteracted the Lutheran doctrine by appealing to Irenaeus's distinction between *imago* and *similitudo*. The Fall left humanity "corrupt and fallible", but human nature retained its "essential constituents", which were merely "forced into the service of purposes which they are ill-designed to carry out."¹⁰⁰ Civilisation reflected the creative capacity derived by humans from God, but original sin brought it to nothing¹⁰¹. Temple's conviction that the Reformers' rejection of natural theology had led to ambivalence about the social role of the

⁹⁸ William TEMPLE. 'The Chairman's Opening Address', *Malvern*, pp. 11-15. For a more detailed discussion of Temple's response to Niebuhr, see Alan SUGGATE, 'William Temple and the Challenge of Reinhold Niebuhr', *Theology*, November, 1981; and his *William Temple and Christian Social Ethics Today*, London, 1987.

⁹⁹ F.L. CROSS, 'Surveys (A) Philosophy', *Theology*, XL, No. 239, May 1940, p. 375.

¹⁰⁰ CASSERLEY, *Providence and History*, pp. 96-97, 100-101, 105-108. For Casserley's defense of Irenaeus's position against Bruner's criticisms, see p. 108. For further examples of the rejection of the doctrine of total depravity by the *Signposts* writers, see BENTLEY, *Catholic Design for Living*, p. 46; MASCALL, *Man: His Origin and Destiny*, pp. 90-96. The influence of MARITAIN's *True Humanism*, London, 1938, pp. 9-10, is reflected in these statements.

¹⁰¹ CASSERLEY, *Providence and History*, pp. 105-108. D.G. PECK, *Catholic Design for Society*, pp. 22-23, also wrote in some detail about the social dimension of original sin, arguing that the Catholic doctrine of original sin is "a social concept". He contrasted this with the Evangelical stress on the "individual character of sin".

Church, hampering its resistance to Nazism, was matched by Rees's assertion that the doctrines of total depravity and bondage of the will made Protestantism "the ready tool of secular despotisms"¹⁰². This criticism of Protestant doctrine was common in the Catholic discourse of the period, finding further expression in the socialist Kenneth Ingram's assertion at Malvern that neo-orthodox despair about human nature hampered Christian social action and denied the validity of Christ's prayer, "Thy will be done on earth"¹⁰³.

Barth's teaching on sin and the Fall profoundly affected MacKinnon, who told the Malvern Conference that Barth's "signal service" to theology had been his insistence that "comprehension of God as creator is posterior to, and to some extent, determined by our knowledge of Him as Redeemer." MacKinnon saw "great insight" in Barth's paradox that religion itself was "an ultimate form of sin". Catholic theology had rejected the equation of sin and evil, asserting that the consequences of Adam's act of sin were no arbitrary punishment, but the inevitable result of his choice. It could also accept the Barthian notion that sin is the religious act of "a spiritual Titan... the blurring of the line which divides God from man, in the treatment of God as object or even as tool, rather than as the subject on whose good pleasure we must always wait." Man is "a creature who is conscious of his creaturehood... poised over an abyss, incapable of maintaining his balance" without external aid:

The image is inadequate, but what I am striving to convey is the sheer "questionableness" (the term is Barthian, I know, but the use, I hope, not un-Catholic) of things human. Man must be supported of God, or else plunge into the abyss. "Natural man" in the sense in which theologians have dared to write of him, is an abstraction. Man must either respond to the invitation of God to communion with himself, or else lose himself in the abyss.

¹⁰² REES, *The Faith in England*, pp. 160-161. The immediate examples cited by Rees were Luther's decision to side with the German princes against the peasants, and the "repressive and authoritarian" polity of Calvin's Geneva.

¹⁰³ Kenneth INGRAM, 'Practical Questions II', *Malvern, 1941*, pp. 175-176. In 1945, Maurice RECKITT continued to defend the Christendom Group against the charge of Utopianism (Introduction, *Prospect for Christendom: Essays in Catholic Social Reconstruction*, London, 1945, p. 9.) The main challenger of such views was Niebuhr, who rejected the doctrine of total depravity, but maintained that the teachings of Christ represented an "impossible ideal" in the midst of the power politics of modern collectives. For two Catholic responses to Niebuhr, see BENTLEY, *Catholic Design for Living*, pp. 121-122, and the Victor WHITE, O.P., Letter to the Editor, *Theology*, XL, No. 238, April 1940, pp. 292-293. Some of Niebuhr's arguments had been anticipated by Edward John BICKNELL, 'Sin and the Fall' in *Essays Catholic and Critical*, p. 207.

It was undoubtedly one of the most remarkable extended metaphors to come from a philosopher who was fond of imagery even in his more restrained moments¹⁰⁴. "In the abyss," MacKinnon explained, "man is not man."

For he is no longer poised over the abyss, his feet are on firm ground. At the cost of the highest, natural dignity of his manhood, he has found security - in the literal sense of se-curitas, apartness from care. It is not for man as man to stand on firm ground; it is for him to know his existence as utterly questionable, and to adhere to the grace of God.

The warning against choosing security rather than dignity and dependence on God would often recur in MacKinnon's work; indeed, it was fundamental to his conception of the Church as a prophetic community. However, as a result of the Fall, man "has made a 'world' for himself," in the sense employed by St. John, and rather than expelling God from it, has made him "its sanction, the guarantee of its achievement, the satisfaction of its longings". This was the God of idealist philosophy, God as perceived by fallen humanity, and, worse still, the God of those theologians whose "lust after synthesis" led them to become "spiritual Titans", convinced that "the limits of our understanding are coterminous with the limits of reality"¹⁰⁵. Here was one point at which MacKinnon felt that older theologians had misjudged the younger ones, whose "mistrust of synthesis" was not a repudiation of the doctrine of creation, but the product of a heightened reverence for it¹⁰⁶.

The younger Catholics increasingly recognised a certain degree of common ground between Thomist "reverent agnosticism" and Barthian transcendentalism, and that this shared preoccupation with the supernatural nature of God was opposed to the anthropocentrism of more liberal theologies. In *Essays Catholic and Critical*, the ineffable nature of God had been used as a defense of critical approaches to the scriptures and the creeds. Selwyn had insisted that "Catholic theologians allow for a symbolic and figurative element in the Creeds," since symbolism was inherent in any attempt to communicate the divine. In his article on the Resurrection, he added that theological inquiry must ultimately be "arrested in a reverent agnosticism."¹⁰⁷ Thornton had warned that any words used in trying to describe God must be

¹⁰⁴ The image reappeared in his article, 'The Tomb Was Empty', *CN-L*, No. 258, April 1946, pp. 9, 12.

¹⁰⁵ This was also the God of H.A. Hodges' "Christian Racket" (see below, pp. 301-303).

¹⁰⁶ MACKINNON, 'Revelation and Social Justice', *Malvern, 1941*, pp. 91-93.

¹⁰⁷ Edward Gordon SELWYN, 'Preface to the Third Edition', *Essays Catholic and Critical*, p. xiv, and 'The Resurrection', p. 312. Selwyn believed that this "reverent agnosticism" required theologians to affirm "a number of occurrences or experiences which the saints do not hesitate to describe as 'miracles'."

"inadequate" and "anthropomorphic... relating God either by affirmation or negation to human experience." God could be described by means of negation, using adjectives such as "ineffable" or "inscrutable" to signify "God's greatness and our smallness", by describing him as immanent in his creation and revealed in the Incarnation, or by the contrasts signified by the words "holiness", "righteousness" or "goodness"¹⁰⁸. Ramsey had revived this theme in *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*:

... the Church can never be said to have apprehended the truth. Rather is the Truth the divine action which apprehends the Church. Dimly it understands what it teaches. For the more the Church learns of God, the more it is aware of the incomprehensible mystery of His being, in creation and in transcendence and on the Cross... Ineffable, therefore, is the revelation of God, which creates and which uses the teaching Church. Human language can never express it. Yet the Church, like its Lord, must partly commit it to human speech and thought, and is indeed commissioned to do this in every age and civilization.¹⁰⁹

During the late 1930s and early 1940s, such convictions were recycled for the assault on liberalism. An extreme example of the assumptions that Catholics were attacking can be seen in the popular liberal apologetics of "John Hadham", a pseudonym for James Parkes. Parkes, an army chaplain during the First World War, had witnessed the effects of shell-shock on a young subaltern. Parkes was immediately alongside the stricken victim, but had felt the presence of God calming and protecting him. "And if it be asked why he [God] did not help the other man," he told his readers in 1940, "the answer is prosaic but adequate. There wasn't time. He couldn't even have saved a bishop in the circumstances."¹¹⁰ Hadham's God presumably suffered from perpetual exhaustion in wartime; this was precisely the kind of construction that MacKinnon attacked in his *Signposts* and at Malvern. MacKinnon agreed with the Thomists and Barthians that in the years since Kant, "apologetic has become the mistress, and not the handmaid, of theology". Liberalism and Modernism had no doubt sincerely desired to present Christianity to a rapidly secularising society, but Modernist apologists had compromised the Gospel by extolling the virtues of human

¹⁰⁸ Lionel S. THORNTON, 'The Christian Conception of God', *Essays Catholic and Critical*, pp. 126, 131.

¹⁰⁹ RAMSEY, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, p. 126-127.

¹¹⁰ John HADHAM, *God in a World at War*, Harmondsworth, 1940, pp. 60-61.

achievement whilst ignoring human failings¹¹¹. The state of national emergency left MacKinnon sounding still more "aggressively Thomist" in his address at Malvern. Liberalism had forced Catholicism and Protestant neo-orthodoxy into alliance:

For the Thomist, agnosticism whether of the type of Mansel or Barth is a lesser error than that of the facile anthropomorphism of liberal Protestants of the Barnes-Major school. The *via negativa* inevitably precedes the *via eminentiae* in the ordered process of our thought of God. Only thus can worse than Kantian antinomies be avoided. We can and must affirm a radical discontinuity between God and man.¹¹²

Catholic tradition, however, had a means of making affirmations about God which had been either neglected or rejected by neo-orthodox and liberals alike¹¹³. Catholic applications of the mystical tradition flourished in the 1930s and 1940s, through the poetry of T.S. Eliot, the sermons of E.K. Talbot, and the discussions on contemplation and purgation offered by Bentley's *Signpost, Catholic Design for Living*¹¹⁴. The most influential Anglo-Catholic work on the subject, however, was Evelyn Underhill's *Mysticism*, first published in 1911, which had run to fourteen editions by 1942. For Underhill, the mystic was an adventurer on the quest for the "Absolute", not content with philosophical speculation, but determined to experience the divine. Great mystics possessed "the power of knowing by communion the temporal and eternal, immanent and transcendent aspects of reality". The mystic perceives God as remote, but also has a "clear intuition of an intimate, adorable Somewhat, championing him." The mystic could experience the Absolute as

¹¹¹ MACKINNON, *God the Living and the True*, pp. 29, 34-35. See also pp. 70-73: "It would seem that the gibbet of Calvary testifies to the end of time to the very idolatry of human search for God; that the choice between faith... and reason was absolute... none who cherish the classical tradition of Catholic theology can regret the harshness with which that great teacher, Dr Karl Barth, has posed that opposition... But must we admit this choice is inescapable?... I have said above that man's highest intuition is his awareness of his own finitude... And the corollary of this discernment is the recognition that we do not know what God is; we know only what he is not and what relation everything else has with him. We cannot deny that this particular metaphysical assertion is vested with the ethical character of genuine humility..."

¹¹² MACKINNON, 'Revelation and Social Justice', *Malvern, 1941*, pp. 85-86 (quotations from other languages were not italicised in this volume). See WIGNALL, 'D.M. MacKinnon', p. 75.

¹¹³ Melville Channing-Pearce is a significant exception. See above, pp. 23, 38, 61.

¹¹⁴ On Eliot, see below, Chapter 4, *passim*. Talbot spoke regularly on themes such as "spiritual inwardness" and detachment. See, for example, his addresses before the Swanwick Conference in June 1937, *JKT*, (7/5/3). Compare with BENTLEY, *Catholic Design for Living*, pp. 79-81, 113-114. Another popular work on mysticism was the Roman Catholic Rosalind MURRAY's *The Good Pagan's Failure*, London, 1939. See also Guy KENDALL's review of this work in the *Hibbert Journal*, XXXVII, 1939, p. 653.

"Transcendent Personality."¹¹⁵ In 1930, Underhill found that Barth and Otto, the renewed interest in Thomist philosophy, and the development of "critical realism", with its emphasis on the duality in human experience of the supernatural and the natural, had created an environment in which supernatural, mystical experience could flourish. The chief enemy to the spiritual life of the mystic was no longer scientific determinism, but "a shallow doctrine of immanence unbalanced by any adequate sense of transcendence"¹¹⁶. Here were the ingredients for a loose alliance against the anthropomorphic, immanentist assumptions of liberalism: the mystical emphasis on supernatural experience, represented by Underhill, and the blend of realism, Thomism and Catholic tradition offered by MacKinnon and other younger Catholics, united with Barthian Protestantism in their emphasis on divine transcendence. Combined with redemptionist motifs, this loose alliance developed a language strikingly effective in time of war. It is evident in Bentley's discussion of purgation. Unlike the non-Christian moralist,

The Christian,... having no confidence in his will-power apart from grace, does not wish to be master of his fate and captain of his soul; that office he leaves to Christ. In fact, mortification in a Christian sense is an act of Christ in the Christian rather than of the Christian himself. It is the realization of union with Christ who fasted in the wilderness and died upon the cross.¹¹⁷

In Bentley's moral theology, the prime emphases of Barth and of traditional Catholicism were often seamlessly interwoven; the fruits of such a synthesis may be seen in Eliot's *Four Quartets*¹¹⁸.

These attempts by younger Catholics to harmonise traditional Catholicism with some of the emphases of neo-orthodoxy were not an admission that Protestantism had discovered truths unknown to Catholics: neo-orthodoxy was merely creating the conditions for a revival of "primitive Catholicism"¹¹⁹; other aspects of Protestant

¹¹⁵ Evelyn UNDERHILL, *Mysticism: The Development of Humankind's Spiritual Consciousness*, London, 1942, pp. 36-43. See also Robert SENCOURT, 'What is Mysticism?', *Hibbert Journal*, XLIII, 1944, p. 44: "It is that sense of the Divine so direct and so immediate that it transcends all work of words, images, reason and deliberate attention.", and Laird Wingate SNELL, 'My Mystical Experience', *ibid.*, pp. 149-156.

¹¹⁶ UNDERHILL, Preface to the Twelfth Edition, *Mysticism*, pp. vii-viii. T.S. ELIOT also described the revival in Thomist philosophy as having counterparts in Barth and Kierkegaard. (Cancelled British Council Lecture for delivery in Italy, 'Types of English Religious Verse', 1939, TSE, M.S.: 'Essays, Addresses and Verses [c.1930] - 1955', f. 20.)

¹¹⁷ BENTLEY, *Catholic Design for Living*, p. 114.

¹¹⁸ See below, Chapter 4, *passim*.

¹¹⁹ The *Catholicity* report later adopted the phrase "primitive Catholicism", pointing to the "wholeness" of the primitive Catholic Church, safeguarded by the fulfilment of the Old Testament in

teaching and worship were rigorously criticised. Ramsey felt in 1936 that Protestantism had encouraged a "misplaced emphasis on feeling": the "experience of justification" was confused with the "comfort of 'feeling justified'"¹²⁰. In 1940, Casserley called justification by faith a "terrible heresy" which "freed politics and economics from any kind of religious and ethical discipline and led to that rejection of the whole conception of natural law characteristic of German jurisprudence."¹²¹ T.M. Parker felt that the repulsiveness of the Reformers' doctrines of the atonement accounted for the tendency of liberal Protestants to reject sacrificial views of the atonement in favour of exemplarism¹²². Demant entertained similar doubts about Barth's claim that he was teaching a "Theologie des Korrektivs", and quoted Kierkegaard's summation of Luther: "A corrective made into a norm, the whole is *eo ipso* confusing... things get worse with every generation, until in the end the corrective produces the exact opposite of what was originally intended."¹²³ If, as Ramsey maintained, orthodox Protestants joined Catholics in maintaining a supernatural witness in a secular world, one crucial issue still demanded resolution:

It may be urged that, as the Reformers failed to sustain their supernatural message through their failure to see the structure of the Church as a part of that message, so also the neo-Reformers may fail unless they work out a fuller doctrine of the Church.¹²⁴

Ramsey was instrumental in awakening the conviction that any movement towards Christian unity must ultimately grapple with Catholic claims about the Church. Catholicism and Evangelicalism were not to be reconciled in Anglicanism "by a great feat of compromise"; they were two sides of the same coin, since Catholic ecclesiology was part of the Church's Gospel. Selwyn had seen Anglo-Catholicism

the New, the visible Church, the apostolate, the Christian rite of Initiation, and the Eucharist (pp. 12-14).

¹²⁰ RAMSEY, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, pp. 199-200. Ramsey's argument was indebted to Newman's *Lectures on Justification*. His critique, already implicit at the beginning of the war, was made explicit by A.G. HEBERT, in bringing his assessment of Protestant contributions before the Archbishop's Commission on Catholicity. 'Orthodox Protestantism' (April 1946), for the Archbishop's Commission on Catholicity, L.S. THORNTON Papers (2/15), Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, ff. 1-5. Hebert's memorandum was the draft for Chapter III of the *Catholicity* report, pp. 20-28.

¹²¹ CASSERLEY, *Providence and History*, pp. 82-83.

¹²² T.M. PARKER, *The Re-Creation of Man*, (Signposts No. 6, 1940), pp. 78-79.

¹²³ V.A. DEMANT, Letter to the Editor, responding to Daniel Jenkins's article, 'Mr Demant and Karl Barth', *Theology*, XL, No. 235, January 1940, p. 52. See the similar argument of REES, *The Faith in England*, pp. 11-13. "Protestantism must be explained, not in terms of deliberate heresy, but in terms of outraged prophecy. It is half of Christianity - faith without works, the redemption without the supernatural solidarity of the redeemed in the Mystical Body, the invisibility of the Church without its visibility...."

¹²⁴ RAMSEY, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, p. 203.

as having a unique opportunity to mediate between other forms of Catholicism; Ramsey was more ambitious, encouraging Catholics to replace their traditional obsessions with Church government with "the organic, corporate idea of the Body in life and worship." Unity must come through the Liturgy, because the Liturgy "utters the truth of the Corpus Christi"¹²⁵. The convictions about the Church expressed by Hoskyns in *Essays Catholic and Critical*, and the institutional aspects of Catholic order which such convictions implied, must be made intelligible to Evangelical Anglicans through a distinctively "evangelical" teaching of Catholic order. Catholics emphasised the Church's divine nature, historic order and continuity, and therefore appeared legalistic to Evangelicals. Evangelicals appealed directly to the Gospel, provoking charges of individualism from Catholics. Ramsey suggested that Catholic Anglicans should teach that the structure of the Church was itself a revelation of the Gospel, and therefore must be maintained in any movement towards Christian unity. His assertion that "The structure of Catholicism is an utterance of the Gospel"¹²⁶ was reiterated in 1940 by MacKinnon, who argued that disputes about ecclesiology "are at bottom disputes concerning the very nature of the Gospel." By explicitly linking the Gospel with the apostolicity of the Church, MacKinnon effectively expressed this evangelical teaching of Catholic order in a single sentence:

If the Church is to be understood as sent by the Son, even as he was sent by the Father, we are indeed faced in the Church with the power of God unto salvation.

Like Ramsey, MacKinnon linked the institutional order of the Church with the Gospel, adding that this "power of God" was the source of "the victory over the evil powers" won by Christ.¹²⁷ Such a proclamation might have resonated with wartime secular propaganda, but for the omnipresent recognition in MacKinnon's writing of the disgraceful conditions under which that victory had been won.

¹²⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 208, 175, 177. Rowan WILLIAMS, 'Theology and the Churches', in Robin GILL and Lorna KENDALL (eds.), *Michael Ramsey as Theologian*, London, 1995, has conveniently summarised Ramsey's teaching as "essentially the vision of the Church as 'epiphany'" of "God's action, especially God's action in the paschal events". (pp. 13, 15.) The argument was repeated in a *Signpost* by Patrick McLAUGHLIN, *The Necessity of Worship*, p. 83: (see also pp. 86, 107.) The Anglo-Catholic Congress continued to emphasise the importance of the claims of Catholic ecclesiology to the unity of the Church a decade after Ramsey's book was published. Gregory DIX, (Prior of Nashdom), 'The Ministry', *Report of the Sixth Anglo-Catholic Congress. Subject: The Church*, London, July, 1948, pp. 80-85; K.D. MACKENZIE, 'The Ministry', *ibid.*, pp. 98-99, 100.

¹²⁶ RAMSEY, *Gospel and the Catholic Church*, pp. 7-8, 54. Alfred Edward John RAWLINSON, 'Authority as a Ground of Belief', *Essays Catholic and Critical*, p. 88, had paved the way for this with his argument that "There is ideally no opposition or antithesis between 'Catholic' and 'Evangelical.'" (p. 89.)

¹²⁷ MACKINNON, *The Church of God*, pp. 11, 37. The Greek word for "sent" is *apostolos*. This theme was expanded by A.G. HEBERT, *The Form of the Church*, London, 1944, pp. 106ff.

Catholic teaching about the expression of the Gospel through Church order focused on three elements: Church dogma as embodied in the scriptures and creeds, the episcopacy and the sacraments¹²⁸. For MacKinnon, such an insistence on the institution and its activities was a necessary corrective for the Gnostic elements in the liberalism of the Modern Churchmen's Union which saw them as impediments to "pure spiritual religion"¹²⁹. So-called "liberal Catholicism" had rejected this approach; indeed, Catholic statements on the scriptures and the creeds were remarkably consistent, from *Essays Catholic and Critical* to the Anglo-Catholic Congress in 1948. The 1926 symposium affirmed that the New Testament provided "a standard by which the Catholicism of succeeding generations must be tested"¹³⁰. As the scriptures could be interpreted in many different ways¹³¹, they must be supplemented with the creeds and authoritative statements of the Church¹³². In 1940, MacKinnon reiterated that Church dogma was "safeguarding the Gospel from the distortions to which it is liable at the hand of successive generations of irresponsible speculative theologians."¹³³ Bentley insisted that in moral theology, too, scripture and reason must interact¹³⁴. In 1948, Ramsey rejected both the claims of extreme liberalism and theories about the inerrancy of the Bible. The new Biblical theology had acquired a "lop-sidedness" in its attempts to repudiate liberalism; only Catholic tradition could restore balance to the interpretation of scripture¹³⁵. Also in 1948, Selwyn scorned the notion that reducing the dogmatic assertiveness of the creeds would create a "broader platform" for Christian reunion. This was tantamount to saying, he quipped, "that whereas hitherto the Church has provided a bridge for

¹²⁸ RAMSEY, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, pp. 63-64, also stressed the inter-relatedness of these three aspects of the Church's structure. See also HEBERT, *The Form of the Church*, p. 36.

¹²⁹ MACKINNON, *The Church of God*, pp. 47-49. The lineage of MacKinnon's condemnation of liberalism as Gnostic in tendency can also be traced to *Essays Catholic and Critical*. Compare Alfred Edward TAYLOR, 'The Vindication of Religion', *Essays Catholic and Critical*, pp. 69-70, with MACKINNON, *God the Living and the True*, p. 30.

¹³⁰ HOSKYNS, 'The Christ of the Synoptic Gospels', p. 178.

¹³¹ Wilfred L. KNOX, 'The Authority of the Church', *Essays Catholic and Critical*, p. 100. G.B. BENTLEY'S *The Resurrection of the Bible*, (Signposts No. 4, 1940), accepts a modified doctrine of scriptural "inerrancy" (p. 92). It is doubtful whether other authors of the *Signposts* series, let alone those of *Essays Catholic and Critical*, could have accepted this. More typical of Catholic Anglicans was HEBERT'S *The Form of the Church*, pp. 37ff.

¹³² Alfred Edward John RAWLINSON, 'Authority as a Ground of Belief', *ibid.*, p. 90-91: "...it is a priori probable that the wisdom of the community will be superior to that of the individual..." Selwyn defended the creeds as "safeguards of the worship of Christ" in response to criticisms of them by the liberal Congregationalist, C.J. Cadoux. ('Preface to the Third Edition', *Essays Catholic and Critical*, pp. xiii-xiv.)

¹³³ MACKINNON, *The Church of God*, p. 60 (pp. 64-66.)

¹³⁴ BENTLEY, *Catholic Design for Living*, pp. 58-59.

¹³⁵ A.M. RAMSEY, 'The Bible', *Sixth Anglo-Catholic Congress*, pp. 6-9. See also F.W. GREEN, (Vice-Dean of Norwich Cathedral), *ibid.*, pp. 10, 15-17: "the antithesis 'scripture and tradition' is seen to be a false one, for both are needed if we are to attain to the wholeness of a true Catholicity."

those making the hazardous passage between time and eternity, now you are somehow going to get more people across on a plank."¹³⁶ Such statements in peacetime retained the determined grittiness which had made them so appealing in the crisis of 1940-41, when Catholic dogma was being presented as the antithesis of Nazi dogma.

If Catholics were intent on preserving the doctrinal traditions of the Church as passed down through the scriptures, creeds and formularies, they were also convinced that these traditions must be preserved institutionally through the historic episcopate. Rawlinson's contribution to *Essays Catholic and Critical* had provided much of the rationale, arguing that "the Church possesses a legitimate claim upon the allegiance of its members", that it exercised a "teaching and pastoral authority" based on love and integrity¹³⁷. Ramsey added in 1936 that "the Episcopate is of the *esse* of the universal Church"; it was the expression of the unity of the Body of Christ which was necessary for "the growth of all Christians into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"¹³⁸. MacKinnon, in his *Signpost* on the claims of the Church, asserted that bishops represented an extension of the apostolate of Jesus: they were, therefore, the verification that the Church had been sent by God¹³⁹. Such preoccupations must be understood in the context of the typical Anglo-Catholic concern about the continuity of the Church of England with its Catholic roots. Since the developing Catholic tradition was perceived to be the source of authority and a safeguard against subjectivism, many younger Catholics tried to demonstrate that it had survived unbroken throughout the Reformation and the Puritan ascendancy. Such was the mandate of the *Signpost* for December 1940, in which Rees attempted to trace this historical continuity, and to disentangle "the authentic Christian and Catholic tradition from the mass of contradictory beliefs which at one time or

¹³⁶ E.G. SELWYN, (Dean of Winchester), 'The Creeds', *ibid.*, pp. 41-48. T.M. PARKER, librarian of Pusey House, added dryly that, "To object to the Church's standards of belief is like objecting to the fact that a vertebrate animal possesses a backbone." 'The Creeds', *ibid.*, pp. 65-74. See also Frederick HOOD, (Principal, Pusey House), 'The Creeds': "The articles of the creed are luminous sign-posts showing us the road along which we are to walk" (pp. 50-57); and Augustine MORRIS, (Abbot of Nashdom), 'The Creeds' (pp. 58-63.) Similar convictions were expressed by Eliot in 'The Report of the Lambeth Conference Criticised', *Guardian*, 1 January 1949 (*TSE*, MS.: 'Essays, Addresses and Verses 1939-1956, f. 11). The employment of organic metaphors in the portrayal of Church *organism*, such as that used by Parker, is noted by F.W. DILLISTONE, *Charles Raven: Naturalist, Historian, Theologian*, London, 1975, p. 279: "whereas the Catholic looked at an organism and saw its bony structure, Charles the liberal looked at it and saw its amazingly dynamic sensitivity and adaptability to new conditions."

¹³⁷ RAWLINSON, 'Authority as a Ground of Belief', p. 89.

¹³⁸ RAMSEY, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, pp. 84-85, 162-164.

¹³⁹ MACKINNON, *The Church of God*, pp. 35-36. The most thorough wartime publication on Catholic Anglican doctrines of Episcopacy was the symposium edited by K.E. KIRK, *The Apostolic Ministry: Essays on the History and Doctrine of Episcopacy*, London, 1946, which contained essays by Casserley, Farrer and Hebert.

another assumed the name of Christianity." The Church of England began, he emphasised, not in the Reformation, but with Augustine's mission in 597. The Reformation originated in a political quarrel, upon which doctrinal considerations were imposed later. It had forced Catholics to choose between the conflicting claims of the Papacy and the national Church. The dissolution of the monasteries had been a "crime"¹⁴⁰. Rees went to considerable trouble, and occasionally stretched credibility, in striving to demonstrate that Cranmer and Latimer's *King's Book* of 1543 was an exposition of purely Catholic doctrine, and to interpret the Homilies and Articles of Religion in a Catholic sense. He insisted that in the Tudor period, the new Prayer Book was seen by most churchgoers as preserving the traditional liturgy. The Catholic revival had merely reinvigorated "the true uninterrupted tradition which the Church of this country shares in common with the rest of the Catholic Church."¹⁴¹ Rees's arguments typified the stock assumptions - one might almost say the accepted mythology - of wartime Anglo-Catholicism, about its institutional continuity.¹⁴²

It is not surprising that Catholic emotions ran deep in defense of episcopacy¹⁴³, but, as MacKinnon realised, such emotions were occasionally expressed in counter-productive ways. The most extreme example was the resistance by several leading Catholics, throughout the 1940s, to the proposed Anglican participation in the Church of South India¹⁴⁴, which formed in 1947¹⁴⁵. The Churches in South India had

¹⁴⁰ REES, *The Faith in England*, pp. 21, 14-15, 60-61. Rees was a minor Canon of St. Paul's.

¹⁴¹ *ibid.*, pp. 62, 77-78, 84-85, 177-178. Similar arguments were advanced by the archdeacon of Chichester (Bell's examining chaplain), C.P.S. CLARKE, *The Via Media: A Vindication of the Faith and Order of the Church of England*, London, 1937, p. 75. The opposite view of the Prayer Book was presented by the Evangelical D.E.W. HARRISON, *The Book of Common Prayer*, London, 1946.

¹⁴² For a critique of Rees's book "with, to say the least of it, its highly original interpretation of English Church history", see Daniel JENKINS, 'A Map of Theology To-Day', *CN-L*, Supplement, No. 232, 18 April 1945. Jenkins also noticed "a definite hardening in the position of certain Anglo-Catholics", exemplified by their resistance to South India, but specifically excluded MacKinnon and H.A. Hodges from his criticisms. However, the Anglo-Catholic Congress in 1948 would itself be interpreted as a "vindication of the claim of the Catholic movement to be a true expression of the essential character of the Church of England." Harold RILEY, 'Introduction', *Sixth Anglo-Catholic Congress*, p. xi. See also *Catholicity*, pp. 49-51.

¹⁴³ See, for example, A.C. DON'S confession, in a sermon commemorating the tercentenary of the signing of the Solemn League and Covenant in St. Margaret's Church, that he could not sympathise with the signatories of the League, "who... by confusing Episcopacy with Popery, severed for a while the link that binds the Church of England to the Catholic Church of all ages." Address given at the Tercentenary of the Signing of the Solemn League and Covenant in St Margaret's Church September 25 1643-1943, 3 October 1943, *DONS*, M.S. 1969, pp. 88-89.

¹⁴⁴ A proposal for the Scheme was issued in 1929, and a second edition in 1932. A thoroughly revised (7th) edition, incorporating amendments made up to October 1941, brought the issue onto centre-stage in the 1940s: *Proposed Scheme of Union including Draft Basis of Union for adoption by the uniting Churches, Draft Constitution of the united Church, and other documents prepared by the Joint Committee of the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon, the South India United Church and the South India Provincial Synod of the Methodist Church, Madras, 1943.*

found western denominational divisions of little practical import there, where vast regions were commonly covered by only one church, whether Catholic or Protestant. Supporters of the scheme, in proposing to recognise leaders of the Indian free churches as Bishops, and to accept priests who had not been episcopally ordained, claimed that "the difference between an Episcopalian and a Presbyterian Christian pales into insignificance by comparison with the difference between one who worships Christ and one who worships a cow."¹⁴⁶ Self-styled "Anglo-Papalists" were indignant and threatened schism, but while MacKinnon agreed that parts of the scheme "do touch the very nature of the Gospel", he criticised the "intransigence" of those resisting it, reminding them of the indebtedness - so evident in his own work - of Catholic Anglicans to Protestant theologians¹⁴⁷. Later, he described the manner in which the union was resisted as "utterly deplorable"¹⁴⁸. Rawlinson of Derby and Bell of Chichester, two of the strongest Anglican advocates of episcopacy, actively supported the union, and in 1943 Ramsey refused to join a deputation to Bishop Garbett because its leaders were taking "an impossibly rigid line"¹⁴⁹. The extremism of the response to South India should not be allowed to obscure the real significance of the concern of Catholic Anglicans for episcopacy, which was to be given cohesive expression in the Commission on Catholicity which reported to Archbishop Fisher in 1946. Convinced that the Church, as the preserver of Catholic truth, must not compromise with modern cultural assumptions, its members explored both the

¹⁴⁵ Dom Gregory Dix, an Anglo-Papalist, was the leading participant in the resistance against the Church of South India, threatening to break away from the established Church to form a "Continuing" Church of England. See BAILEY, *A Tactful God*, pp. 120-133. Other vocal critics included Bishop Kirk of Oxford, L.S. Thornton, and other members of the Community of the Resurrection. See L.S. THORNTON, *The Judgment of Scripture: A Biblical Torch Turned on the South India Scheme*, Westminster, 1945. An excerpt is in *LST* (2:3/9), ff. 2-3. Similar arguments had been advanced in 'The South Indian Scheme: Important Catholic Manifesto', *Church Times*, 6 September, 1929.

¹⁴⁶ A.E.J. RAWLINSON, *The Church of South India*, Lichfield Cathedral Divinity Lectures, London, 1950, p. 14. R.C.D. JASPER, *The Development of the Anglican Liturgy 1662-1980*, London, 1989, pp. 201ff.

¹⁴⁷ D.M. MACKINNON, 'Some Questions for Anglicans', *Christendom*, XIII, No. 52, December 1943, pp. 108-110. He also pointed out the inconsistency of a movement which could condemn the South India Scheme, and yet "welcome, in the most self-consciously Anglo-Catholic of pulpits, a man who, like the present Dean of St. Paul's [Matthews], has explicitly repudiated in his public writings the Christian doctrine of God."

¹⁴⁸ See Donald M. MACKINNON, 'Oliver Chase Quick as a Theologian', *Theology*, XCVI, No. 770, March/April, 1993, p. 107, and Paul LUCAS, 'Oliver Quick', *Theology*, XCVI, No. 769, January/February, 1993, p. 13. MacKinnon lamented that such energy was expended on so divisive an issue at a time when the horrors of the holocaust were being revealed. See also WIGNALL, 'D.M. MacKinnon', p. 88.

¹⁴⁹ WILKINSON, *Community of the Resurrection*, p. 261, regards the resistance to the C.S.I., and the backpedalling that followed its inauguration in 1947, as "the greatest débacle in the history of Anglo-Catholicism", an opinion corroborated by PICKERING, *Anglo-Catholicism*, pp. 259ff. The opposite opinion is offered by Ivan CLUTTERBUCK, *Marginal Catholics. Anglo-Catholicism: a Further Chapter of Modern Church History*, Herefordshire, 1993, pp. 133-135. Papers on Bell's support of the scheme are in *BELL*, Vol. 176.

ecumenical and the dogmatic implications of the word "Catholicity", concluding that:

It is for those who at present are without certain elements in Catholic faith and order to receive them, not as bare expedients for unity, but in the conviction that they are true. It is for those who at present possess these elements of Catholic faith and order, to let their use of them be criticised and corrected in the light of primitive standards, and in the light of truths to which Christians of other traditions have borne witness in separation.¹⁵⁰

If episcopacy was an expression of a Church order radically at variance with the development of modern culture, so were the sacraments, with their vigorous implied critique of the assumptions of modern society. This conviction, implicit in MacKinnon's treatment of them in 1940, would be explicit in Mascall's contribution to the 1948 Anglo-Catholic Congress¹⁵¹. Mascall refuted the notion that their main purpose was "the spiritual edification of the individual recipient". Rather, they were intended to "vivify and unify... the mystical Body of the whole Christ, made up of Head and members in one organic and coherent pattern of life," and were therefore a corrective to modern forms of individualism and collectivism:

The fact that in the sacraments man finds his deepest needs and aspirations satisfied in the context of a social gathering does, indeed, remind us that the true pattern of human living is neither that unrestricted struggle of individual men which has been the curse of capitalist industrialism, nor yet that submergence of the individual in the collective which has been so glaringly destructive of human freedom in the totalitarian states. It sets before us a picture of society in which both the personal and the social aspects of human nature are united in an ordered harmony of authority and freedom.

¹⁵⁰ *Catholicity*, p. 55. Catholics were commonly presumed to be hankering after mediaevalism, but in reality they were concerned with "the Church as the Divine Society (it is here that e.g. Apostolic Succession comes in) as against the idea that the Church is simply to be part of a modern society." Minutes of the meeting on April 22-24 [1946] at Springfield, St. Mary, Oxford, of the Archbishop's Commission on Catholicity, *LST* (2:15), ff. 8-12. This was also the line of argument taken by T.S. Eliot, in a memorandum read before the Archbishop's Commission on Catholicity in 1946. For the full text of this, see Appendix 3, below, pp. 353-358.

¹⁵¹ Mascall's observations followed an address by R.C. MORTIMER, (Regius Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology, Oxford), outlining the traditional Catholic teaching that the sacraments were not mere symbols, but "effectual signs". 'The Sacraments', *Sixth Anglo-Catholic Congress*, pp. 117-125. This was a reiteration of similar statements by Norman Powell WILLIAMS, 'The Origin of the Sacraments' (p. 371) and Will SPENS, 'The Eucharist' (p. 429), in *Essays Catholic and Critical*. ROWELL, *Vision Glorious*, pp. 231-232.

These social implications were, however, incidental to their concern with "the maintenance of the Church's life as the worshipping Body of Christ, the new creation, the family of God... the restored human race."¹⁵²

Mascall's assertion that the sacraments point to the "harmony of authority and freedom" offered by the Church, was the fruit of a concern, raised by *Essays Catholic and Critical*, which had since gained new relevance. This was the conviction that the authority of Church tradition was not oracular nor infallible, but expressed the common mind of the Church. Truth and freedom were mutually dependent. Rawlinson had argued in 1926 that the rejection of the oracular authority of the Pope must be followed by a similar rejection of oracular conceptions of the scriptures and the creeds, because authority was not self-verifying:

The true authority is that which is able to flourish and to maintain itself, not simply under a *régime* of intellectual repression, but in an atmosphere of intellectual and religious freedom.¹⁵³

In 1926, the issue had been the validity of critical and scientific methods in the study of religion: Catholic theologians working in the tradition of *Essays Catholic and Critical* were convinced that "the two terms Catholic and critical represent principles, habits, and tempers of the religious mind which only reach their maturity in combination."¹⁵⁴ If its claims were true, Catholicism had nothing to fear, and everything to gain, from freedom of scholarly enquiry¹⁵⁵. By the mid-1930s this insistence on the interdependence of truth and freedom had gained a more urgent significance. For Ramsey in 1936, Catholicism was the road to intellectual liberty:

¹⁵² E.L. MASCALL, (Lecturer in Theology, Christ Church, Oxford), 'The Sacraments', *Sixth Anglo-Catholic Congress*, pp. 138-147. See also G.B. BENTLEY, (Priest Vicar of Lincoln Cathedral), 'The Sacraments', pp. 157-158. For an earlier treatment of the subject, see CLARKE, *The Via Media*, pp. 81ff.

¹⁵³ RAWLINSON, 'Authority as a Ground of Belief', pp. 94-95. The same ideas were reiterated by CLARKE, *The Via Media*, pp. 15-73, and the review of this book (by "D.C.D.") in the *Church Quarterly Review*, Vol. 125, October-December 1937, p. 156: "The authority of the *via media* cannot be an oracular or autocratic authority... [It is] an authority resting on the Scriptures, considered, not as petrified oracles, but as historical documents... Secondly upon the tradition of the Church... the experience of a living and growing organism." On the authority of the Pope, see *Catholicity*, pp. 32-41.

¹⁵⁴ SELWYN, 'Preface to the First Edition', *Essays Catholic and Critical*, pp. xxvii-xxviii.

¹⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p. xii: "What we wish to emphasise is the fact that scientific truth of every kind is engaged in a perpetual warfare with error... Some words of Karl Barth are in point here: 'What the people want to find out and thoroughly understand is, *Is it true?*...'; See also RAWLINSON, 'Authority as a Ground of Belief' pp. 95-96. Such arguments were taken as normative by Cyril GARBETT, *The Claims of the Church of England*, p. 45.

the reception of the sacraments and the recital of the creeds taught the Christian that Catholic obedience deferred not to a hierarchy or a movement, but to Christ. Catholic order was not "a hierarchical tyranny", but the bearer of a Gospel enjoining fearless and liberated thought:

For "all things were made by Him," and all honest endeavour in science, in philosophy, in art, in history, manifests the Spirit of God. But the key to these mysteries of nature and of man is the Word-made-flesh. Hither alone the Church shall point; and here men shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make them free.¹⁵⁶

The emphasis on truth and freedom had begun as a plea for intellectual honesty amongst Catholic scholars; it was with this "Catholic and critical" tradition that George Bell, Dorothy L. Sayers and others would meet the rise of the propaganda machines not only of the continental dictatorships, but also of embattled Britain itself.¹⁵⁷

This insistence that the Church was sent as a collective, united in the one act of Christ, was characteristic of Catholic witness in the 1930s and 1940s. Ramsey saw the Church's role as a community of faith within the context of the Crucifixion. Christ was the Messiah; as his own people had rejected him, "in the isolation of Calvary Jesus alone is Israel". At the scene of his desolation on the Cross, "Jesus Christ, in His solitary obedience, is the Church."¹⁵⁸ Hence, anyone converting to Christ becomes one with the Israel of God. Therefore, Christianity is the antithesis of individualism, and justification by faith is a corporate experience, because Christ and his people were one¹⁵⁹. MacKinnon similarly insisted in 1940 that membership

¹⁵⁶ RAMSEY, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, p. 135. See CASSERLEY, *Fate of Modern Culture*, pp. 85-97.

¹⁵⁷ In 1948, the Anglo-Catholic Congress reflected this development by choosing to focus on ecclesiology, affirming that the "fundamental problem of the day" was "how to live in community with freedom and enrichment of personality." Harold RILEY, (Secretary of the Church Union), 'Introduction', *Sixth Anglo-Catholic Congress*, p. ix.

¹⁵⁸ RAMSEY, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, p. 21. See also CASSERLEY, *Providence and History*, pp. 110-111: "the Redeemer of men is the Redeemer of their age-long history as well as the redeemer of their individual biographies". The link between this reasoning and the theology of the Eucharist was made by Austin FARRER, 'Eucharist and the Church in the New Testament', *The Parish Communion*, pp. 80-81, and, in the same volume, by Gregory DIX, 'The Idea of the Church in the Primitive Liturgies', p. 98.

¹⁵⁹ RAMSEY, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, pp. 36-38. Ramsey added that Anglicanism could learn from Eastern Orthodoxy that the Church was "an organism whose members are one with Christ who is its essence". (p. 147.) For a more detailed discussion of his relations with Eastern Orthodoxy, see A.M. ALLCHIN, 'Michael Ramsey and the Orthodox Tradition', in Robin GILL and KENDALL (Eds.), *Michael Ramsey*, pp. 47-62. The concept of the Church as the Israel of God

of the Church involved "participation in the death of Christ". The Church was "the extension of the Incarnation", called upon "to manifest the very mystery of the flesh of Jesus". For him, however, its situation entailed a daunting paradox, because of its absolute dependence on his solitary, obedient and agonising sacrifice¹⁶⁰. Indeed, the Church, while identified with the Incarnation, was subject to contradiction, failure and humiliation; its task was seemingly impossible. Christ's death and resurrection, "God's mightiest act", had been occasioned by human wickedness. Christianity was not a pathway to "spiritual achievement"; indeed, to portray it as such was to "mutilate its cardinal article of faith". Echoing Barth, MacKinnon insisted that Christ's coming had been "the condemnation of religion", but added the very Catholic assertion that "The daily celebration of the Holy Eucharist is the Church's 'No' to all man-centred religious activity."¹⁶¹ Membership of the Church was fraught with tension, since it implied participation by sinners in the conflict between divine and Satanic powers¹⁶². By 1941, MacKinnon had realised the implications:

The Gethsemane of the prophetic spirit is undoubtedly the place where ... [one] sees the necessity of the visible Church as the guarantee of the absolute finality of God's self-revelation of Christ. "Father, if it be possible, let this Church pass from me."

MacKinnon recommended that apologists "openly admit that the Church is a question and a scandal". Malvern asserted the right of the Church to deduce a social agenda from its dogmas, but MacKinnon reminded his audience that "the ethic of churchly life is of necessity an interims-ethik"¹⁶³, that its efforts at social reform, however essential in the light of the Gospel, were certain to be transitory and fraught with failure and frustration.

This position shared the neo-orthodox preoccupation with the debilitating effects of original sin upon collectives, but despite its bleakness, was no counsel of despair. It attempted to add balance to the social theory of the Christendom Group

united in the Body of Christ was also discussed by A.G. HEBERT, 'The Parish Communion in its Spiritual Aspect', in *The Parish Communion*, pp. 9, 16.

¹⁶⁰ MACKINNON, *The Church of God*, p. 22.

¹⁶¹ MACKINNON, *God the Living and the True*, pp. 16-17, 31, ROBERTS, 'Theological Rhetoric', p. 162. For a discussion of the idea of "humiliation" in Ramsey's theology, and a recognition of its effect on MacKinnon, see WILLIAMS, 'Theology and the Churches', pp. 11, 22-25.

¹⁶² MACKINNON, *The Church of God*, p. 91.

¹⁶³ MACKINNON, 'Revelation and Social Justice', *Malvern, 1941*, pp. 99-100. This perception was echoed in Resolution 14 of the *Malvern Declaration*.

by incorporating parts of Barthian thought within a Catholic framework¹⁶⁴. While writers like D.R. Davies obscured the Church's social and cultural effectiveness behind a barrage of supernaturalism and eschatology, MacKinnon wanted the Church's consciousness of its own frustration to increase its capacity for social action. He wanted the Church to fulfil its prophetic vocation, identifying itself with Christ both in his witness and in his death and humiliation. This raised a number of problems for an Established Church. The Gospels portrayed Christ acting as a prophet and, as a consequence, being executed at the instigation of the "Church", and under the jurisdiction of the State, of his day. In the Church of England of the 1930s and 1940s, the rejection of the revised Prayer Book by the House of Commons in 1928 was far from forgotten¹⁶⁵, and several Church leaders openly urged disestablishment. Even clerics whose ministries lay at the interface between Church and State, such as Don, insisted that "one of the only safeguards against the tyranny of the State... is the existence & [sic] the witness of an independent Church, basing its claim to liberty on its duty in the last resort to obey God rather than man."¹⁶⁶ In wartime, as the State became increasingly centralised and powerful, the problem of Establishment arose in a new form. There were two polarised responses to this, both intended to preserve the prophetic witness of the Church. The first was that of Henson of Durham, who championed disestablishment. Henson was politically shrewd: he realised that the rejection of the Prayer Book, far from preserving the more Protestant elements of the Book of Common Prayer, had merely opened the gates for "Anglo-Catholic lawlessness"¹⁶⁷. The second was that of Bell of Chichester, who saw Establishment as an opportunity to criticise the government from within¹⁶⁸. Both, however, accepted that the Church must never become

¹⁶⁴ WIGNALL, 'D.M. MacKinnon', pp. 90, 92, sees MacKinnon's contribution at Malvern as a fundamental departure from the assumptions of the Christendom Group, because of his emphasis on the Passion and the necessity of the purgation of the Church.

¹⁶⁵ For a detailed discussion of the rejection of the 1928 Prayer Book, see JASPER, *Anglican Liturgy*, pp. 113-161.

¹⁶⁶ A.C. DON, Sermon in Westminster Abbey, 14 January 1945, on the anniversary of Archbishop Laud's death on the scaffold on tower hill, *DONS*, M.S. 1969, pp. 93-101. Don preached on "Laud's liturgy" (the Scottish Book of Common Prayer of 1637), which had been rejected because of fears of "Popery", and suggested that the 1928 Prayer Book had been rejected for similar reasons. Don concluded that while Laud's liturgy had been an attempt to drive the Anglican Church down the *via media*, Laud had been mistaken in his autocratic attempt to force the liturgy upon the Church.

¹⁶⁷ Henson criticised Establishment frequently in his Journal. See, for example, March 13, 1937: (Vol. 69, p. 81.) Headlam of Gloucester also insisted "that a Church, if it is to accomplish its work properly, should have full spiritual freedom", but dissociated himself from the "exaggerated view of... the Bishop of Durham." *Church Quarterly Review*, Vol. 123, October-December 1936, pp. 15, 17-18.

¹⁶⁸ Bell's position took advantage of the paradox described by HASTINGS, *English Christianity, 1920-1985*, p. 114: "The Anglo-Catholic movement would have fared less well in a non-Erastian Church. Politically the Church of England was very unfree, but intellectually at least it was probably the freest Church in Christendom." See below Chapter 3, *passim*, and p. 271.

subordinate to the State. In Catholic circles, one of the manifestations of this concern was devotion to St. Thomas of Canterbury. Becket's martyrdom, Rees explained in 1940, ensured that "Plantagenet tyranny and misrule... [would be unable to destroy the Church's] right to be governed by the common law of the Catholic Church and to share its freedom". As a result, "The Anglican Church is never more true to herself and to the tradition which this Realm has received than when she asserts her freedom from secular control and her common heritage with the rest of the Catholic Church". The freedom of the Church of England, indeed, was a guarantor of the political freedom of the people¹⁶⁹.

Demant developed these issues further at Malvern, using mediaeval examples to criticise the relationship between the modern Church and State. He argued that the autonomy of secular and spiritual spheres in mediaeval Europe was "the very stuff of freedom", which had been dissolved in Europe by Lutheran theology, with its contrasts between grace and law. The destruction of this fundamental duality in the mediaeval conception of authority, had been achieved in England by the execution of Thomas More¹⁷⁰. The resulting "complex of king-church-parliament-nation... succeeded in secularizing the Holy Ghost". The Church had been manoeuvred into taking the social order as given, and so limiting itself to trying to amend individual lives within it, or of acting as "the commissioned moral invigorator of national causes". In the crisis of 1941, as the Church urgently reconsidered its social role, Demant counseled it to reassert its former separateness. His assessment of the social role of the Church drew various Catholic concerns together: the desire for a synthesis, based on a medieval model, incorporating the emphasis on grace and the supernatural derived from "Biblical theology" with the traditional Catholic emphasis on Natural Law; the preoccupation with the freedom of the Church; and the conviction that Catholic dogma was a corrective to totalitarian tendencies in society¹⁷¹. In response to the suspension of the machinery of democracy under Churchill's coalition, MacKinnon insisted that the Catholic agenda revealed the conflict between the Church and the encroaching wartime state. "The idea of a national Church," he declared, "is now perhaps more hopelessly discredited than ever

¹⁶⁹ REES, *The Faith in England*, pp. 25, 26-27.

¹⁷⁰ V.A. DEMANT, 'Christian Strategy', *Malvern, 1941*, pp. 128-129: even the Puritan Revolution and the rise of Nonconformity had been a "protest against incipient totalitarianism".

¹⁷¹ DEMANT, 'Christian Strategy', *Malvern, 1941*, pp. 129-132. "In its next phase Christianity will be compelled... to develop a theology of the Natural Law of human living with discernments that only the theology of grace can give, and use its findings for a definitely sociological set of judgments." His prediction of an Erastian paganism anticipated H.A. Hodges' notion of the "Christian Racket". See below, pp. 301ff.

before, except of course among those who have a vested interest in the preservation of the Anglican status-quo."¹⁷²

How, then, was the Church to identify itself with the death and humiliation of Christ as the starting point for its prophetic dissent against anti-Christian developments in modern culture? The immediate reaction of the younger Catholics was that if "the full theology of grace" was to be recovered, it would be through the Eucharist and liturgical Christian living¹⁷³. In 1937, a collection of essays edited by A.G. Hebert, *The Parish Communion*, had depicted the Eucharist as central to parish life, the means by which the Church, rooted in the Bible, takes its stand against the "World"¹⁷⁴. MacKinnon took up this theme in 1940, when the possibility of a Nazi victory made discussion of the persecuted Church a more emotive issue. The centurion had recognised Christ's divinity as "he hung lifeless and pitiful on the Cross", and the Church must acknowledge that the kingdom of God was not the place "where, in the pomp of outward circumstance, lip-service is paid to the Church by the great ones of this world, but where, amid mockery, contempt, anguish and loneliness, the Body of Christ dying unto the world reveals by its very incognito that it is alive unto God." It was the liturgy, in which the "formal oblation" of Christ's Passion was made, which proclaimed this fact¹⁷⁵. Liturgical worship was also recommended by Catholic scholars because it expressed the common life. Rees, noting the collectivist tendency of the times, asserted that, "There is only one 'collectivity'... that can absorb all that is in man without draining him of his vitality;

¹⁷² MACKINNON, 'Revelation and Social Justice', pp. 115-116 (end-note).

¹⁷³ RAMSEY, (*The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, p. 39), reminded his readers in 1936 that while the Church had a "heavenly status", this was revealed through "a sovereignty of dying and risen life", and "its power is known in humiliation." See also p. 198.

¹⁷⁴ A.G. HEBERT (Ed.), *The Parish Communion*, London, 1937. (The book is discussed in detail by LLOYD, *Church of England*, pp. 286-289, and see Alan M. SUGGATE, 'The Christian Churches in England Since 1945: Ecumenism and Social Concern', in Sheridan GILLEY and W.J. SHEILS (Eds.), *A History of Religion in Britain*, p. 470.) Hebert hoped that reintroducing the Parish Communion service would help "heal our party divisions." (pp. 6-7.) See also Frank BISHOP, 'Anglican Worship', *Theology*, XXXIV, 1937, pp. 263-271. In Anglo-Catholic churches, the influence of the Roman Catholic liturgical movement saw a shift of emphasis away from the 11 am "High Mass", at which only the celebrant communicated, and the 9 am Holy Communion, to a service uniting the two. Timing was significant because fasting communion was taken as a "rule", only to be broken in exceptional circumstances. See *The Parish Communion*, pp. 11-13; 23-29.

¹⁷⁵ MACKINNON, *The Church of God*, p. 38. "The rite is first and foremost a sacrifice, and we must agree... in affirming simply that what is offered is the Body and Blood of Christ... Each celebration of the Eucharist sets before us sacramentally the bloody act of Calvary." (p. 70.) The sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist had been discussed in some detail by Will SPENS, 'The Eucharist', *Essays Catholic and Critical*, p. 436. See also John O. COBHAM, 'The Sacrifice of the New Covenant', in *The Parish Communion*, p. 59; E.L. MASCALL, 'Worship and Life: A Theological Summary', *Theology*, XL, No. 238, April 1940, pp. 288-289: On the relationship between the Body as expressed through Church and Eucharist, see Charles H. SMYTH, 'The Church in the World', *The Parish Communion*, pp. 303-308.

one which does not feed upon its members, but is itself the source of their life, for it is no other than the Body of the God-Man"¹⁷⁶. Bentley applied this notion of the Church as the Mystical Body to the subject of prayer, claiming that it was a collective, liturgical experience before it was private, because "a Christian shares in the prayer of Christ and his body wherever he prays". Consequently, the prayers of German and British Christians were united, as were those of members of different denominations, and of the departed saints¹⁷⁷. Moreover, he added, "all prayer is Eucharistic". The Eucharist was "the divinely appointed manifestation on earth of the sacrifice which is eternally offered in heaven; and when the Church celebrates it, she participates, body and soul, in that sacrifice." It was the point at which material things were "taken up into Christ... [and] supernaturally perfected". In praying, Bentley argued, Christians participate in Christ's own prayer, which is efficacious because of "the offering of his blood", and "the appointed means of participation in Christ's sacrifice is the Eucharist."¹⁷⁸

The emphasis on the "taking up" at the Eucharist of material things into Christ was a conscious reversal of the argument of what MacKinnon called "facile natural sacramentalism, which would wish to see in the natural creation, as it is, a sacrament of the divine handiwork." This failed to appreciate that Christ's coming had been a "crisis"; that "the Kingdom of God could only be revealed, in the midst of... [the human situation], on the gibbet of a criminal." This revelation was celebrated in the Eucharist. "[T]he hope of inanimate creation" was therefore based on the resurrection of Christ, and the doctrine of the Real Presence in the Eucharist prefigured the redemption of nature:

When the bread and wine are brought to the Christian altar, and become by consecration the Body and Blood of Christ, we see in their transformation the type and renewal of the natural order. In the Eucharist we see the things of inanimate nature in a new context, used in fact as instruments of a divine movement towards man, and of a human movement towards God which is made possible by that his own previous approach. There what is profane

¹⁷⁶ REES, *The Faith in England*, p. 183.

¹⁷⁷ BENTLEY, *Catholic Design for Living*, pp. 68-72. Therefore, Bentley argued, "To pray for the departed, to ask the intercession of the saints, are not popish superstitions, but necessary elements of fully Christian prayer." C. Patrick HANKEY, 'Liturgy and Personal Devotion', *The Parish Communion*, pp. 147ff, follows the same line of argument.

¹⁷⁸ BENTLEY, *Catholic Design for Living*, p. 75. PECK, *Catholic Design for Society*, added: "In the great sacrament of the Holy Communion we see set forth the principle of a right use of earthly things and the divine-human communion achieved therein. It is the pattern of life, the design of society." See also MASCALL, *The God-Man*, p. 87. A full discussion of the liturgical background to the eucharistic sacrifice was given by P. McLAUGHLIN, *The Necessity of Worship*, pp. 41ff.

and earthly is set apart... taken from its setting in disordered nature, and given a new setting in the world of the Gospel... the consecration of the Eucharist is the archetype of the transformation of the whole natural order.¹⁷⁹

MacKinnon criticised attempts to explain Eucharistic theology in terms of "a universal, sacramental principle of which individual, sacramental rites are the embodiments." Rather, the Eucharist uncompromisingly asserted the particularity of Christ's historical existence and death. It was "the gift of the flesh of Jesus", and until this was realised, it was impossible to appreciate the Catholic doctrine of the Church¹⁸⁰. For Mascall, too, the Church could not be understood apart from the Eucharist, for "the Body which appears sacramentally on our altars is the same Body which is at work mystically in the world of which we are members", and it was this which made a Christian's whole life liturgical. However, the "Sacramental Body" was perfect in a way in which the "Mystical Body" was not, for it revealed Christ's sinlessness, while the Church was "maimed and undeveloped" because of the sin of its members. Hence the need for regular celebrations of the Eucharist, whereby the Church is "repeatedly brought into relation with that glorified natural Body which is its archetype"¹⁸¹. MacKinnon explained at Malvern that liturgy was the means by which the Church helped the people "to regain a sense of the tension between the Kingdom of Grace and the kingdom of the world in... day to day life"¹⁸². It must highlight the paradox that the Church was both the Body of the perfect Christ, and a collective of sinful individuals. Christian life was characterised by the stress caused by "The tug of the world upon the individual member of Christ's Body". It was this tension which would enkindle the prophetic witness of the Church:

The peace of God does not fill us with Stoic tranquillity. It thrusts upon us ultimate questions, and shows us that our answers to them are fraught with final import not for ourselves only but for others.¹⁸³

MacKinnon's refusal to speak of the Eucharist in generalised, sacramentalist terms was linked with a desire to stress both the particularity and the eternal nature of

¹⁷⁹ MACKINNON, *The Church of God*, pp. 72-74. See also MACKINNON, 'The Tomb Was Empty', p. 10.

¹⁸⁰ MACKINNON, *The Church of God*, pp. 67-69.

¹⁸¹ E.L. MASCALL, 'Worship and Life: A Theological Summary', *Theology*, XL, No. 238, April 1940, pp. 289-290.

¹⁸² "If we must pray publicly for victory, the fifty-first psalm (Miserere), seems admirably suited." MACKINNON, 'Revelation and Social Justice', pp. 109-110.

¹⁸³ MACKINNON, *The Church of God*, pp. 78-79.

Christ's life and death. The Eucharist, like the Incarnation, was construed by Catholics as "the breaking into history of something eternal, beyond history, inapprehensible in terms of history alone"¹⁸⁴. MacKinnon wrote in 1940 of the invasion of history by "meta-history"¹⁸⁵; he quoted approvingly Hoskyns's description of the Incarnation as "a dagger thrust into the heart of the world"¹⁸⁶ and T.S. Eliot's *The Rock*:

Then came, at a predetermined moment, a moment in time and of time,

A moment not out of time, but in time, in what we call history: transecting, bisecting the world of time, a moment in time but not like a moment of time,

A moment in time but time was made through that moment: for without the meaning there is no time, and that moment of time gave the meaning.

At this point of intersection between time and the timeless, however, Christ, the creative Word itself, was disclosed "stripped naked and hanged upon a Cross." The particularity of Christ's earthly existence was "a scandal to those who seek in the particular only a universal significance," made still more scandalous by his deliberate decision to reveal himself through a criminal's death¹⁸⁷. St. John's assertion that "the Word became flesh" was no mere philosophical speculation; it drew attention to the most important aspect of Christ's particularity - His mortality - and was therefore an "affirmation of man's redemption."¹⁸⁸ The crucifix had become respectable because of its familiarity¹⁸⁹, and MacKinnon warned that another familiar symbol, the Catholic practice of genuflecting at the Incarnatus, was more than simply a means of paying "knee-service" to old traditions: it was an acknowledgement of the historicity of Christ's coming and death¹⁹⁰. The Catholic reverence for Mary, too, must be based

¹⁸⁴ RAMSEY, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, p. 107. WIGNALL, 'D.M. MacKinnon', p. 86.

¹⁸⁵ MACKINNON, *God the Living and the True*, p. 15.

¹⁸⁶ MACKINNON, *The Church of God*, pp. 17-19.

¹⁸⁷ MACKINNON, *God the Living and the True*, pp. 64, 67. "We can never start upon our journey till, with the centurion, we have said of that figure on the gibbet, scarred, hideous and filthy, 'Truly, this is the Son of God'." (pp. 82-83.) D.G. PECK would argue in *Living Worship*, London, 1944, that the Ritual, Ceremonial and Symbolic aspects of the liturgy also expressed this particularity, and "to attempt to worship outside the complex of earthly existence... is to cultivate a split personality, a disease which may, and perhaps has, become endemic in our civilization." (p. 23.)

¹⁸⁸ MACKINNON, *The Church of God*, pp. 17-19.

¹⁸⁹ Compare with WILLIAMS, *Descent of the Dove*, pp. 75-76: "The jewelled crosses hid one thing only - they hid the indecency. But original crucifixion was precisely indecent. The images we still retain conceal - perhaps necessarily - the same thing: they preserve pain but they lack obscenity."

¹⁹⁰ D.M. MACKINNON, "Flesh and Blood hath not revealed it unto thee", *Theology*, XL, No. 240, June 1940, pp. 426-431. In order to see the significance of that death, the Christian must "be mastered by its triviality, its sorry cheapness... Christ redeems us because he comes so close that almost he passes unnoticed." MACKINNON, 'The Sacraments', *Sixth Anglo-Catholic Congress*, pp. 130-137.

on recognition of the particularity of her decision to submit herself, as representing Israel, to the divine will. Nor should the narratives of the Nativity be ransacked to discover "some universal truth that they embody. They are themselves in their particularity the act of God, whence alone our redemption and adoption as sons of God depend."¹⁹¹

MacKinnon's writings of 1939-41, like those of other Catholics of this period, frequently criticised the liberal idealist tendency to derive a "Platonist metaphysic" from the Gospels. E.K. Talbot, broadcasting on Christmas Day, 1939, insisted, "Christianity is not a symbolic representation of moral & spiritual truths: it is the unveiling of God by a divine action."¹⁹² If all of this was true of the Incarnation, it followed that the "scandal of particularity" must also apply to the Church. Redemption, MacKinnon wrote, must be worked out in history, so that "In the imperfection of the members the glory of the Head struggles to disclose itself."¹⁹³ He saw the tendency to replace the Gospel with a philosophy as a perennial temptation for the Christian intellectual. The "return to dogma" by younger Catholics was, he argued, "an act of humility", rather than a reactionary impulse, because it recognised that the Gospel itself depended on historical particularities, on the institutional Church and the apostolic succession¹⁹⁴. The Church's "exterior framework... [was] the poor man's protection against the tyranny of the wise who would rob him of the heritage of the Gospel."¹⁹⁵ The reasons for this insistence on the concrete particularity of Catholic dogmas concerning Christ and the Church he explained in detail at Malvern, insisting that the Church had no claim to a voice on issues of social justice if its dogmas expressed mere attitudes, on a par with pompous clerical endorsements of the war as a crusade.¹⁹⁶ Christian dogma could only have sociological importance if its statements about Christ and the Church were as

¹⁹¹ D.M. MACKINNON, 'Some Reflections for Passiontide, 1939', *Theology*, XXXVIII, No. 226, April 1939, pp. 255-256. The 1940s saw a revival of interest in Marian themes and their relation to Incarnational theology, exemplified by Douglas EDWARDS, *The Virgin Birth in History and Faith*, London, 1943, and E.L. MASCALL (Ed.) *The Mother of God: A Symposium*, London, 1949.

¹⁹² E.K. TALBOT, 'Christmas Day Broadcast', 1939, TALBOT Papers, Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, (7.3/16), f. 2. See also his notes for a Conference with local Non-Conformist Ministers, 1944, (7.5/4), and MACKINNON, *The Church of God*, p. 42.

¹⁹³ MACKINNON, 'Some Reflections for Passiontide, 1939', p. 257. See also MACKINNON, *The Church of God*, pp. 17-19: "between the mystery of the Incarnation and the mystery of the Church there is an analogy. Reflection on the mystery of one may well serve to illuminate the mystery of the other."

¹⁹⁴ MACKINNON, *The Church of God*, pp. 49-51. See also pp. 62-63. These insistences of MacKinnon's would be connected with *Essays Catholic and Critical* by A.G. HEBERT, (Society of the Sacred Mission), 'The Bible', *Sixth Anglo-Catholic Congress*, pp. 20, 24, 29.

¹⁹⁵ MACKINNON, *The Church of God*, pp. 51-55.

¹⁹⁶ In very different ways, Henson and Winnington-Ingram both used this word. It is impossible ascertain whether or not MacKinnon had either of them in mind.

empirical as the sentence, "The cause of his death was arsenical poisoning"¹⁹⁷. MacKinnon criticised the Utopian element in the Church's discourse on reconstruction, preferring "a theology of crisis" which would refuse to accept that the Incarnation was the mere "disclosing of certain universal cosmical principles". The "Incarnationalist" argument that "the world cannot be such a bad place after all if it could provide a setting... for the Incarnation", was nothing but "a blasphemous piece of impertinence" which ignored the main implication of the Gospel narratives:

If the Church is indeed the extension of the Incarnation, we must find the pattern of the achievement in that of her master.¹⁹⁸

To be true to the dogma of the Incarnation as revealed in the Gospels, the Church must accept crucifixion: the pursuit of a prophetic course which might lead to disgrace or martyrdom. MacKinnon did not amplify the theme¹⁹⁹, but in 1941, martyrdom might take the form of death or torture at the hands of a Nazi victor; it might equally take the less drastic form of public obloquy, or more insidiously, loss of ecclesiastical preferment, as a result of protests about the conduct of the war²⁰⁰.

In highlighting this prophetic function of the Church, the younger Catholics emphasised soteriology. The Cross was presented as the revelation of man's tragedy and cultural impotence, and the Church was encouraged to preach that the Cross was the condemnation of human institutions. Catholics were finding in their own tradition themes similar to those raised by Niebuhr²⁰¹. Like him, MacKinnon criticised "Incarnationalist" theology for its failure to plumb the "depths of human tragedy", and the war itself was construed as "revealing to us the bankruptcy of our every achievement apart from the impact of his grace". The assumptions of liberalism were belied by the revelation in the Cross that, "It is through man's cruelty that the glory of God is revealed."²⁰² Christ's appearance before Pilate²⁰³, and the inscription nailed to the Cross in Hebrew, Greek and Latin at his "bloody execution",

¹⁹⁷ Perhaps MacKinnon chose this comparison for the amusement of Dorothy L. Sayers, who also spoke at Malvern (see below, pp. 259ff).

¹⁹⁸ D.M. MACKINNON, 'Revelation and Social Justice', pp. 82-83, 104-105.

¹⁹⁹ See, however, his letter to Reckitt, 28 June 1940, cited in MAYHEW, 'Christendom Group', p. 165: "I grant that we may be [in this war] defending the possibility of a future Christendom... But I wonder if as Christians our energies were not better directed to learning to die well."

²⁰⁰ See below, pp. 166. Note however that Bell was singled out by the Nazis as a particular enemy, and might well have faced martyrdom in a more literal sense in the event of a Nazi victory.

²⁰¹ The theme of the tragic nature of man had been touched briefly by Alfred Edward TAYLOR, 'The Vindication of Religion', *Essays Catholic and Critical*, p. 60.

²⁰² MACKINNON, *God the Living and the True*, pp. 86-88.

²⁰³ *ibid.*, pp. 41-43.

demonstrated that "The wisdom of Greece, the piety of Israel and the justice of Rome unite in the mockery of the Man of sorrows."²⁰⁴ The tragedy of the Cross condemned human institutions and aspirations, and it was the function of the Church to confront societies and individuals with this stark reality. The Church must not compromise in revealing the transience of the cultural forms created by man, and the recognition of this was essential to the proper conception of the social and prophetic responsibilities of the Church:

To some extent the Christian baptised into the death of Christ must always, if he is loyal to his Master, be a disruptive force in society. For in and through his baptism he accepts the verdict of rejection pronounced from the Cross upon man's cultural achievement and is thereby irrevocably committed to the task of pointing the whole social frame to its origin beyond itself. The Church in its members is both involved in, and independent of, the historical cultural moment. It is involved in it, for it is compact of individual historical men and women who are here to-day and gone to-morrow, but it is independent of it, for it is at the same time the Body of Him who is the dissolver of all cultural forms that destroy and impede the attainment by the creature of his true status.²⁰⁵

At Malvern, MacKinnon urged that soteriology was "the very nerve centre of specifically Christian theology", the means by which the Church understood the divine-human relationship. Christian social action depended on recognising that "Apart from the darkness of Golgotha, we know neither what we do, nor what we are."²⁰⁶ He insisted that the Christian apologist must confront the world with "man's sense of frustration rather than... his sense of achievement", and point to the Cross as evidence of his tragic failure²⁰⁷. Yet this apologetic must issue not in denunciation, but in compassion, humility and the "espousal of Christ's hiddenness", enacted now, in wartime, and not relegated to glib discussions of post-war reconstruction.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁴ MACKINNON, 'Some Reflections for Passiontide', p. 255. See Charles WILLIAMS, *The Descent of the Dove: A Short History of the Holy Spirit in the Church*, London, 1939, p. 4.

²⁰⁵ MACKINNON, *God the Living and the True*, pp. 44-48. This passage may have been influenced by Jacques MARITAIN, *True Humanism*, London, 1938, p. xvii.

²⁰⁶ MACKINNON, 'Revelation and Social Justice', pp. 114-115, and see MAYHEW, 'Christendom Group', p. 134. Similar convictions had been expressed by other *Signposts* writers. See CASSERLEY, *Providence and History*, pp. 116, 120: "we must learn to handle evil creatively as we see God handling it upon the Cross..."; BENTLEY, *Catholic Design for Living*, (*Signposts* No. 9, 1940), p. 108.

²⁰⁷ MACKINNON, *God the Living and the True*, p. 55.

²⁰⁸ MACKINNON, 'Revelation and Social Justice', p. 115. See also his 'Christianity and Justice', *Theology*, XLII, 1941, p. 353: "We are entering a situation in which our first weapon, perhaps our only weapon, will be the intimacy of our union with the Crucified. For though the face of the

MacKinnon's Catholic theology attempted at once to avoid the liberal optimism about human nature which neo-orthodoxy decried in schemes of reconstruction, and the denunciatory tendencies of neo-orthodoxy itself; his statements about "cultural impotence" and "the bankruptcy of human achievement" might have been penned by D.R. Davies, but while such convictions led Davies to call for bombing reprisals in the tabloid press, they led MacKinnon - and, as will be seen, George Bell - to insist on compassion. Christ's Cross had passed judgement on human culture, not just for the condemnation of sin, but so that the creature might find fulfilment and dignity as a child of God.

MacKinnon's preoccupation with the agony and obscurity of Christ's death, combined with his conviction that the Church represented an extension of the Incarnation, led him inexorably to the idea of martyrdom. Ramsey had made a similar connection, but in the comfortable abstractions of peacetime, saying in *The Gospel and the Catholic Church* that "The death of the self qua self, first in Christ and thence in the disciples, is the ground and essence of the Church."²⁰⁹ For MacKinnon in 1940, this acquired a harsh significance that Ramsey could not have anticipated. "It is the example of the martyrs," he declared, "that is compelling men to reconsider the mystery of revelation... For in martyrdom unto death the whole witness of the Church is made concrete"; in accepting death, the martyr gives expression to Christian dogma, and "attests the vindication of divine sovereignty wrought out upon the Cross". MacKinnon predicted in 1940 that "we are nearing a situation when martyrdom unto death is the only language that can be spoken."²¹⁰ In 1941, the activities of the Christian, like those of Christ, were most likely to be "wrought out in silence, in desolation, in obscurity":

The crucifixion of Jesus was an event of little importance in the history of Roman provincial administration. The achievement of the Christian social agent will not be advertised in *The Times*, nor will he seem anything more than an oddity at Chatham House. His act is a question, an Eli, Eli lama sabachthani uttered in darkness with only criminals for whom there is no room in society and his executioners to hear him. But that is the victory of God, the strategy of the house of darkness.²¹¹

Crucified is marred above that of the sons of men, yet His stripes are the ensign of an infinite compassion." In 1948, MacKinnon would return to the theme in 'The Sacraments', *Sixth Anglo-Catholic Congress*, pp. 130-137.

²⁰⁹ RAMSEY, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, pp. 25-26.

²¹⁰ MACKINNON, *The Church of God*, pp. 43-44, 56-57.

²¹¹ MACKINNON, 'Revelation and Social Justice', pp. 104-105.

Such statements attest the continuing influence of what Hoskyns, in a more comfortable time, had maintained. Whereas liberal theologians had attempted to highlight the contrast between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith, Hoskyns saw instead a contrast between "a supernatural order characterised by a radical moral purification involving persistent moral conflict and the endurance of persecution, and a supernatural order in which there is no place either for moral conflict or for persecution."²¹² For MacKinnon, this supernatural purification must not only characterise the individual Christian life; it also had its bearing on the relationship of the Church to the world. The Crucifixion had revealed the horrific results of "human cultural synthesis"; consequently, the Church was totally reliant on the grace of God to carry out its true social mission, namely "the defence of man against the systems he creates."²¹³ The younger Catholics repeatedly emphasised in wartime that the prophetic task of the Church must be carried out in the context of a suffering community. In 1936, Ramsey had described the Church as "one single organism of joy and sorrow", where the suffering of an individual Christian "may beget life and comfort in Christians elsewhere." He countered Protestant criticisms of St. Augustine's identification of the Church with the kingdom of God, such as those offered by Niebuhr, claiming that Augustine had meant that the Church manifested the kingdom "under persecution and humiliation."²¹⁴ Casserley wrote in 1940 that "The divine alchemy turns the darkest moment in the world's history into an endless glory... even a war can obliterate an evil peace and re-discipline the life of a nation"²¹⁵. Bentley counselled Christians to accept "unavoidable suffering [as] a means of grace." The penitent endurance of suffering by a Christian implied solidarity with the crucified Christ and his Church, since "creation is an organism, and when one part of an organism is abused, the whole is affected." Before the sacrifice of Christ could be fully effective, it must be embraced by the Church²¹⁶.

If martyrdom was a serious possibility for the Catholic in wartime, Catholic witness also required resistance to the secular wartime consensus. For MacKinnon in 1941, the wartime parish Eucharist was charged with "a spiritual tension that is well-nigh intolerable; the embrace of that suffering, which a vision of our predicament as citizens in an apostate society, for whose apostasy we are in part responsible, will bring, is our surest safeguard". Nothing could have been more damning than

²¹² HOSKYNs, 'The Christ of the Synoptic Gospels', pp. 177-178.

²¹³ MACKINNON, 'Revelation and Social Justice', pp. 97-98.

²¹⁴ RAMSEY, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, pp. 46, 156 (italics original). Compare this observation with Niebuhr's criticisms of Catholic ecclesiology, discussed above, pp. 46ff.

²¹⁵ CASSERLEY, *Providence and History*, p. 114.

²¹⁶ Aside from war, such suffering may take the form of a life-long illness, or of unemployment. BENTLEY, *Catholic Design for Living*, pp. 116-118.

MacKinnon's charge that "I think what we Anglicans most fear is the censure of *The Times*." The Church was being tempted to embrace respectability, when it ought to be participating in Christ's suffering and disgrace. The peace of Christ, realisable in religious communities²¹⁷ as well as in individuals, ought not to be confused with "interior tranquillity". It was rather the "restless, urgent seeking of the will of God" bestowed upon the disciples on the eve of Christ's own execution²¹⁸. MacKinnon often exercised this right to an "independent voice". In *God the Living and the True*, he wrote in sympathy with the moral agonies of the Christian who is "convinced that war is a duty, but the methods of war a crime", and must come to terms with "the casting out of devils by Beelzebub"²¹⁹. At Malvern, during a crisis of proportions unprecedented in British history, he refused to back down from the convictions voiced in his letter to *Theology* in 1939²²⁰, insisting that the Church, as a prophetic society, was bound to resist totalitarianism, both in its dictatorial, continental forms, and in its more insidious forms within English society. The Christian could not compromise with either totalitarianism or total war. He warned enthusiasts for post-war reconstruction that "we do well to pause in our planning of Utopias for the future to ask what is happening to men here and now." Christians must never forget that the Church is an "eschatological society" intent on proclaiming the Cross, that "her very character... speaks eloquent word [sic] against the abomination of total war."²²¹ The Christian response to total war need not be "pietistic or escapist": it may lead to enlistment in the army, or to ministry in the East End. Regardless, it would issue in "a spiritual agony probably greater than we have ever known":

It is hardly the act of a pietist to induce a frame of mind where prayer of petition becomes nearly impossible for there seems nothing left to pray for, and where assistance at the Blessed Eucharist becomes almost an occasion for despair. It is not the act of an escapist to go on thinking and acting, when one's only certainty is, as was the case with the Mexican priest in Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory*, the likelihood and complete justice of one's own damnation.²²²

²¹⁷ For an expansion of this theme, see L.S. THORNTON, *The Common Life in the Body of Christ*, London, 1944, p. 34ff.

²¹⁸ D.M. MACKINNON, 'Revelation and Social Justice', pp. 107-109. On the subject of religious communities, MacKinnon cited Eric Gill's *Autobiography* (p. 282): "The purpose of my life has been to make a cell of good living in the chaos of the world."

²¹⁹ MACKINNON, *God the Living and the True*, pp. 86-87. Quotation from Father Victor WHITE O.P., *Blackfriars*, November, 1939.

²²⁰ His concerns were shared by the Moot. (See below, pp. 272, 281ff.)

²²¹ MACKINNON, 'Revelation and Social Justice', pp. 102-103.

²²² *ibid.*, p. 103.

As a result, he appreciated the "appalling delicacy" of the pacifist vocation, and supported Donald Attwater's proposal that exemption from military service should be extended to those "fitted to serve their country by helping to conserve the arts, sciences and values of peace and civilization" and preserve Britain from the totalitarian erosion of morality, religion and human rights. It had been such people who had resisted the internment of so-called "enemy aliens"²²³. For MacKinnon, as for other young Catholics, the ethical witness of the Church in wartime must reject the idea that the end justified the means. Bentley was disturbed by popular acceptance of this doctrine, whether applied to contraception or the bombing of civilians²²⁴. MacKinnon warned against a "facile Kantianism" which could only lead the Church into an acquiescence in the decisions of military experts:

We are, it is claimed, in this war, seeking justice. The ultimate, if not the proximate, motive of British nationals engaged in this conflict with Germany, is the pursuit of justice. Therefore it matters not what they do. The propriety of means is a matter for the military expert. Now, if morality is concerned solely with motives, it follows necessarily that there is no problem of the means, and, if for the religious critic only moral considerations (in this sense) are relevant, questions of means inevitably fall without his purview. They become "technical" matters.

Such assumptions could only be true if Christian dogma was merely a vehicle for abstract metaphysical ideas:

Once criticize that assumption, once suggest that the language of the Nicene Creed states cold facts, once allow that its first clause - Credo in unum Deum, patrem omnipotentem, factorem coeli et terrae, et visibilium omnium et invisibilium - expresses not a pious aspiration,

²²³ *ibid.*, pp. 112-113. MacKinnon cited Bell's *Christianity and World Order*. In 'The Task of the Christendom Group in Time of War', *Christendom*, IX, 1939, pp. 139-142, he insisted that whether or not a Christian can participate in war "must remain an open question..." He felt that the Group should seek "the conscious loyalty in participation and abstention alike, of the Christian to those standards which are his doctrinal heritage." See Timothy D. WILBY, 'Attitudes to War in the Church of England 1939-1983', M.A. Thesis, University of Durham, 1987, pp. 98-100.

²²⁴ BENTLEY, *Catholic Design for Living*, pp. 14-15. See my discussion of the views on bombing expressed by D.R. Davies and Christopher Chavasse (above, pp. 57-60), and George Bell (below pp. 157ff). The opposition to contraception, or at least to its official promotion, was common among Anglicans in this period. See the condemnation of the issue of prophylactics to troops in the "Draft statement on moral welfare of the troops", issued by the Bishops' War Committee on 14 November, 1939, *BWC*, M.S. 2448, f. 12v.

but a fact of the utmost importance concerning everything that is, and what happens?²²⁵

If the Christian dogmas were true, then the Church, as the Body of Christ, the extension of the Incarnate Word, must be the source of the profoundest dissent against the assumptions of the modern state and the corruption of modern culture. The charge levelled by Henson at Anglo-Catholics, that "the average English man is perplexed and offended, never illuminated and assisted, by them"²²⁶, might serve as a criticism of the amorphous generalisations about social reconstruction and the glib condemnations of "apostasy" offered by Peck and Reckitt at Malvern²²⁷. It might also have been - as in the case of MacKinnon's condemnation of obliteration bombing - all that could be expected for an institution whose founder had warned that a prophet is unheeded in his own country. The younger Catholics were, in the early years of the War, carrying Hoskyns's identification of the Church with the Christ to its logical conclusion. Christ's coming had been so far out of sympathy with the human structures of his day that he had been judicially executed. Barth, subject to criticism as a theologian, could thus be admired as a prophet²²⁸. With this in mind, MacKinnon enunciated his description of the true priest, charged with the consciousness of the *theologia crucis*, and yet at heart fundamentally Catholic:

The true priest knows that the advent of the Son of God is the very crisis of human life. He knows with what terrible consequences is fraught the confrontation of man with that love of God. It is his task in the ministry of the word to make that confrontation possible. But it is at the altar that he pleads the oblation of Christ's flesh that the meeting may be for salvation, and not for judgment... The life of the priest is a life of pain. He is oppressed at once with a sense of his own unworthiness, of his own continual frustration of the work that Christ would accomplish through him, and of the hideous need of his people. His hope is the Christian hope, the hope that is set upon the Cross, where in the darkness the centurion penetrated the divine incognito.²²⁹

²²⁵ MACKINNON, 'Revelation and Social Justice', pp. 84-85.

²²⁶ *HHHJ*, 1 July 1940 (Vol. 79, p. 105).

²²⁷ See PEART-BINNS, *Maurice B. Reckitt*, pp. 143-144, for a record of contemporary criticisms of these speakers, particularly of their ignorance of economics. See also MAYHEW, 'Christendom Group', pp. 78-80, 122.

²²⁸ See "Scholasticus"'s review of F.W. CAMFIELD, *Reformation Old and New: A Tribute to Karl Barth*, in *Church Quarterly Review*, Vol. 144, 1947, p. 217.

²²⁹ MACKINNON, *The Church of God*, p. 80.

No English Christian leader in the 1940s was more qualified to set such an example than George Bell, the Bishop of Chichester²³⁰.

²³⁰ Mackinnon recognised this in a letter to Reckitt, cited in MAYHEW, 'Christendom Group', p. 199: "You seem still so sure of the justice of our cause, of our quasi-Messianic dignity... I can only remember the wounds from which all Europe bleeds, the rise of horror... the impotence of men who, like the Pope and the Bp. of Chichester, strive even a little to stem it."

Chapter
3

"The Rights of God":
Tradition and Dissent in the Wartime Ministry of George
Bell, Bishop of Chichester

On May 14th 1944, Rogation Sunday, a Pastoral Letter was read in the Churches of the Chichester Diocese, from its Bishop, Dr. George Bell. The Ministry of Agriculture had initiated "Farm Sunday", to coincide with Rogationtide, a religious festival of mediaeval origin seeking divine blessing on rural industries, and had "requested the various organizations connected with the agricultural industry to co-operate with the clergy in the observance of this Sunday"¹. It was evident from Bell's Pastoral Letter that the question of the relationship between the Church, the countryside and the nation was close to the Bishop's heart:

Times have changed much in the last two centuries. The tendency everywhere is for the machine to gain the mastery, and for life to become more and more artificial, more and more wanting in community, in love of the home, in care for beauty, and in faith in God. "For long enough," says T.S. Eliot, "we have believed in nothing but the values arising in a mechanised, commercialised, urbanised way of life; it would be well for us to face the permanent conditions upon which God allows us to live upon this planet." We need now to get back to a right attitude to Nature, which implies also a right attitude to God. Let the Church and the Countryside rediscover one another, and who knows what awakening may take place in the heart of the nation!²

¹ BELL, Vol. 72 ('War 1939-45'), f. 56. For discussions of the liturgical significance of Rogationtide, see BELL, Vol. 139, 'Liturgical Committee 1937-1948', ff. 65-74. In 1938, objections to Rogationtide were raised because the prayers addressed "not primarily the spiritual needs of man but his material security and well-being." (f. 67.) Bell recognised the public appeal of Rogationtide festivals, and sought to make them a vehicle for teaching on the environmental responsibilities of the Church, rather than simply opportunities for petitionary prayers for agricultural prosperity.

² George BELL, 'The Church and the Countryside', Pastoral Letter of the Bishop of Chichester, Rogationtide, 1944, BELL, Vol. 72 ('War 1939-45'), ff. 57-58. Bell's letter bears striking similarities to David. G. PECK's article on the Council for the Church and Countryside, *CN-L*, No. 244, September, 1945, which included the quotation from Eliot, and warned that the restoration of the countryside "will not come by importing the fashionable urban sensations or substitutes for true community." He wrote of "religious virtues to be found in the life of the countryside." The Council dissociated itself from "Neo-Calvinism" and from "relativist Protestant liberalism" affirming that "The Gospel gives abundant life because it frees men from the false preoccupations of this world... not because it frees men from any concern with it..." (pp. 7-8.)

Bell's words capture a number of his key motivations, and address themes common in English thought during the late thirties and early forties. Prelates such as Archbishop Lang had repeatedly lamented in sermons during the thirties, that industrialisation had intolerably increased the pace of modern life³. Mechanisation, commercialisation and urbanisation were the frequent rhetorical targets of neo-Romantic élites, repelled by mass culture and its secular concerns. Bell's Rogationtide letter also echoed popular texts and images: propaganda posters and films of the period advanced the vision of the countryside as "Deep England", and the English village as an ideal community, with the parish church at its centre⁴. The countryside represented an antidote to the horrors of war, the source of the hope that civilisation might not collapse after all. Yet there is a more sophisticated agenda behind Bell's statement: the parish church is not merely a picturesque rural icon, inscribed with the caption "Your Britain: Fight for it Now". Rather, it stands as the antithesis to the artificiality of modern culture, "beating the bounds" of the parish to prevent secularisation, mechanisation and urban sprawl. It safeguards the treasures of English Christian culture: its sense of "community", its "love of the home", its "care for beauty", and, in logical progression, its "faith in God."

In light of this apparent conservatism, it may seem incongruous that of all the wartime Anglican Bishops, Bell was viewed with suspicion as a political agitator whose indiscretions destroyed his chances of becoming Archbishop of Canterbury, and that he has been seen in recent historiography as epitomising religious dissent in twentieth century Anglicanism⁵. In response to reports of continental church-leaders supporting Hitler in 1938, Bell revealed another side of his character, quoting Adolf Keller: "The Church idyll is over." No longer simply "a lovely feature of the landscape...[,] the village church (like the town church) represents the Revelation of God, the Cross of Christ, the Spirit which makes holy"⁶. During the war, Bell exemplified the conviction that by laying claim to Catholic tradition, one accepts a standard of dogma and ethics which leads inexorably to dissent from the presumptions of the modern state and the banalities of modern culture. By refusing to identify Germany with the "Hitlerite State", by criticising the internment of

³ C.G. LANG, Sermon, 'Recovery of Soul', Canterbury, December 30, 1934, *CGL*, Vol. 271, "Sermons and Addresses 1934-1938", f. 36.

⁴ Frank Newbould, *Your Britain fight for it now* ('The South Downs'), propaganda poster, Imperial War Museum [Plate 18].

⁵ An examination of the letters in the Bell Papers, responding to his statements on the ethics of war policy, suggests that David HEIN's description of Bell as "Britain's most unpopular prelate" is an over-simplification ('George Bell, Bishop of Chichester, on the Morality of War', *Anglican and Episcopal History*, LVII, No. 4, 1989, p. 498).

⁶ George BELL, 'From the Bishop's Window', *Chichester Diocesan Gazette* April 1938, pp. 121-122.

"enemy aliens", of area bombing and the atomic bombs, and even by commissioning works of modern art for display in the churches of his Diocese, Bell determinedly pursued a Catholic witness in time of war. Yet this reputation for dissent was largely a result of his desire to revivify the Anglican Church, and through it, the nation, by means of an appeal to Catholic tradition.

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The notion that Christian tradition was intimately associated with European culture was a favourite theme in Bell's wartime sermons. Eliot's assertion, in *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*, that religion and culture were intrinsically related, was anticipated by Bell in 1945: "One of the convictions which history teaches is that the quality of the culture or the civilisation of a nation depends on its religion."⁷ Yet at the outbreak of the Second World War, in his "Penguin Special", *Christianity and World Order*, Bell insisted that the road to war had been paved by a radical disjunction between national culture and religious tradition, originating in the First World War, when the "old spiritual bonds were dissolved", and the "principles and traditions which had hitherto controlled or inspired the common life melted away."⁸ This had produced "a widespread abandonment of civilised standards in thought, taste and conduct". The facility with which Bell spoke of "taste" and "conduct" in the same breath, points to the pivotal role which he assigned to culture in the maintenance of order. If the "restoration of civilisation" in Europe was to be achieved, then "the ground on which we must stand is the ground of culture". Bell defined European culture in terms of the Christian religion, the humanistic and scientific traditions and "the tradition of law and government". The humanistic tradition had created the intellectual culture of the west; "international collaboration" had nowhere been more apparent than in the growth of science, and the European legal tradition differed significantly from that of Asiatic society. It was Christianity,

⁷ George BELL, Sermon on the importance of Christianity in education, "Look unto the rock whence you are hewn", Isa 51, Lancing College, 29 June 1945, *BELLP*, Vol. 347 (Sermons/Addresses: 1945-47), f. 59. A sermon given in Oxford University, 18 June, 1939, 'God Above the Nation', expressed similar ideas: "The world cannot mend itself... it is impossible that recovery should come from either humanism or laissez-faire... Civilisation cannot be saved except at the price of a fearlessly Christian education..." George BELL, *The Church and Humanity*, London, 1946, p. 209.

⁸ George BELL, *Christianity and World Order*, Harmondsworth, 1940, p. 12. Bell had lost two younger brothers during the First World War. See Andrew CHANDLER, *Brethren in Adversity: Bishop George Bell, the Church of England and the Crisis of German Protestantism 1933-1939*, Church of England Record Society 4, Suffolk, 1997, p. 3; Gordon RUPP, 'I Seek My Brethren': *Bishop George Bell and the German Churches*, London, 1974, p. 17. A precedent for Bell's ethical witness in the Second World War was provided by the Anglican symposium, *The War and the Kingdom of God* (1915), edited by Bell himself. See also Alan WILKINSON, 'Bishop Bell and Germany', in CATTERALL and MORRIS, *Britain and the Threat to Stability in Europe 1918-45*, London, 1993, p. 77.

however, which was most influential, and had "provided the original bond of unity between the European peoples". This conviction lay at the root of Bell's insistence that the Church must play a pivotal part in the re-establishment of "world order", of which peace was a by-product. The Church was "the Mother of the civilisation of the West", the custodian of an absolute morality, and of the notion that "mankind is God's family".

The need for a revived Christian element in European culture was magnified by the rise of the fascist dictatorships, and by the Nazi attempts to control religious doctrine in particular. Preaching in 1940, Bell argued that the Nazi concentration camps, "oppression of the churches" and anti-Semitism, as well as "the destruction of human personality, the suppression of freedom, and the worship of violence", were "bound up with a passionate faith, a faith which makes the... German state its God." In order to counteract this "false faith" of the Nazis, "It is a faith, a true faith, that we need as Britons." British civilisation "was built on Christianity", and its possible death at the hands of the Nazis would be evidence that "the faith of Christians... had died". Bell proceeded to define Christian faith in terms of "the revelation which the Bible and the Church teach together", and closed the sermon with a series of paraphrases of the articles of the Apostles' Creed.⁹ Such statements, proposing an itemised summary of the doctrinal Christian orthodoxy which Bell thought essential for the moral survival of the British Empire and of Europe, are common in his writings and sermons, and the motivation behind them is suggested in *Christianity and World Order*:

We must acknowledge an absolute law which we are vowed to obey. And there must be a dynamic faith as well. There must be dogma, and there must be belief. Nothing less can possibly suffice. And if we are to be

⁹ George BELL, Sermon, 11 March 1944, Paris Embassy Church, Mark 9:23-24, *BELLP*, Vol. 346 (Sermons/Addresses 1940-44), ff. 153-161. "I think that the Churches, with complete loyalty to their respective histories, could and should, by a common effort, secure a new basis of co-operation between themselves for the renewal of this European unity." Other Churchmen who wrote on the distinction between culture and barbarism included W.R. MATTHEWS, *The Moral Issues of the War*, London, 1940, p. 22; H.H. HENSON, 'Christianity and Liberty', in *Last Words in Westminster Abbey*, London, 1941, p. 66. Bell's conviction that Christianity was essential to European civilisation is discussed by Jaakko RUSAMA, *Unity and Compassion: Moral Issues in the Life and Thought of George K.A. Bell*, Helsinki, 1986, p. 53.

¹⁰ George BELL, Sermon, 1940, (To Canadian Troops in training), 1 John 5:5, *BELLP*, Vol. 346 (Sermons/Addresses 1940-44), ff. 23-27. For an earlier example of a similar argument, see 'From the Bishop's Window', *Chichester Diocesan Gazette*, June, 1937, p. 171. Bell reiterated these convictions at the end of the war: "...in order to destroy Western culture... [Hitler] had to destroy the Christian faith and the Christian life. The [German Confessing] Church, in fighting for its life, was in fact fighting for the soul of Germany and of all Europe." George BELL, Sermon, 'The Church in Occupied Germany', c. 1945-6, *BELLP*, Vol. 347 (Sermons/Addresses 1945-47), f. 104.

saved at all, we must be prepared for a dogma and a belief that make heroic demands upon us.¹¹

The conviction that the social application of Christian doctrine was the bulwark of civilisation, and that the "real world conflict" was between "Godlessness" and Christianity¹², was reiterated in Brighton in 1944, in the midst of the German V-bomb attacks. Bell chose the pilotless plane as a metaphor for the spiritual condition of Britain: "We have been very powerful, very rich in material resources, but without a pilot." The war was symptomatic of a more fundamental clash between rival creeds:

A totalitarian creed, which says that man is the tool of the state.

A secularist or humanistic creed, which says that man is an animal.

The Christian creed which says that man is a creature made in the image and likeness of God, with an eternal destiny.¹³

The doctrine of man that Bell proposed as an antidote to totalitarianism and secularism was strongly coloured by his affirmation of the Catholic Incarnational tradition. Christianity could not be limited to its conception "in the minds of the mass of people" as being synonymous with "the standard of moral and social decency prevailing in the period in which they [live]"; nor could it be reconciled with an otherworldly, modernised Gnosticism "which regards Christianity as something solely concerned with man's spiritual life"¹⁴. The rise of Nazism, Bell argued, was a reproof to the popular tendency to equate Christianity with prevailing moral standards, and Bell's Incarnational creed left no room for a Christian life sequestered from the world:

The Christian religion is built on the doctrine of the Incarnation (Embodiment) of God in human form. "The

¹¹ BELL, *Christianity and World Order*, pp. 26-27. "Apart altogether from their military machine, the Nazis have a weapon which they wield with tremendous effect. It is the weapon of the idea. They proclaim the 'New Order'... But the weakest spot in the whole of our British offensive is that we use no weapon of the idea. We proclaim no 'Order' at all..." BELL, 'The Pope's Five Peace Points', in *The Church and Humanity*, p. 50. Originally a speech given at the Stoll Theatre, 10 May, 1941. The chair of the meeting was Cardinal Hinsley.

¹² BELL, *Christianity and World Order*, p. 105. This conviction motivated his enthusiasm for such projects as Dorothy L. Sayers's "Oecumenical Penguin" (see below, pp. 224, 232, 240, 243).

¹³ George BELL, Sermon, 'Our Citizenship is in Heaven', Brighton, June 1944, *BELLP*, Vol. 346 (Sermons/Addresses 1940-44), ff. 165-166.

¹⁴ George BELL, Undated wartime sermon, 'My Father Worketh Hitherto and I Work', John 5:17, Brighton, *BELLP*, Vol. 346 (Sermons/Addresses 1940-44), ff. 194-197.

Word (God) became flesh (Man), and dwelt among us." If God took bodily form, He must regard the body as being worthy of being His vehicle. But the body represents the material element. Therefore the Incarnation (Embodiment) implies the consecration of the material. It also requires, as a consequence, that the body, the whole material element in life, shall not be misused, or polluted, but treated as consecrated to God.¹⁵

This "consecration of the material" ensured that Christianity was "a religion of the body [and] no cult of the ivory tower: or a refusal to mix in the human conflict"¹⁶, since Christianity was not so much an abstract system as faith in a Person. Christianity must involve a "right detachment" from secular forces in order to keep the "material element... consecrated to God"; yet it must avoid a "wrong detachment"¹⁷ which, by avoidance of secular problems and secular resources, would destroy the social and cultural relevance of Christianity. For the theologian and the pastor, such a creed demanded that he "must not dwell altogether apart from the turmoil of the market place, or regard its problems... as no concern of his."¹⁸ Bell's treatment of Redemption added weight to his argument:

The Gospel sets forth the "Liberation" (or Redemption) through Christ as the turning point in human history. And the liberation is not from sin, as immoral behaviour, but from slavery to superhuman powers. And the freedom which our Lord brought was freedom within man's soul. It was freedom from terror, freedom from nihilism, freedom from possession by evil spirits... The Church... through its possession of spiritual freedom, generated an atmosphere in which justice and charity were better able to breathe and to exercise their rule among men. On the other hand, the absence of that Divine Society - the Church - would be only too likely to involve the absence of justice and charity; its suppression would certainly mean a general relapse to cruelty and hatred, to darkness

¹⁵ BELL, *Christianity and World Order*, p. 36. See Peter WALKER, *Rediscovering the Middle Way*, London, 1988, pp. 31, 59; RUPP, *I seek my brethren*, p. 9; RUSAMA, *Moral Issues*, pp. 46-50.

¹⁶ George BELL, Address to the William Temple Society, 26 May 1949, *BELL*, Vol. 348 (Sermons/Addresses 1948-49), f. 173.

¹⁷ BELL, *Christianity and World Order*, p. 145.

¹⁸ George BELL, 'The Church and the Theologian', in G.K.A. BELL and Adolf DEISSMANN, *Mysterium Christi*, London, 1930, p. 283. Bell's observations lend support to Frank FIELD's argument that: "To see Bell becoming more radical as he grappled with the turmoil of the 1930s, is to mistake the man. Any radicalism was inherent in Bell's views..." ('George Bell: A Uniquely Consistent Life', Lambeth Palace Library, *Annual Review*, 1996, p. 51.) His argument is a revision of that offered by M.D. HAMPSON, 'The British Response to the German Church Struggle', D.Phil. Thesis, Oxford University, 1973, p. 174.

and chaos, and a general surrender of humanity to the powers of spiritual evil.¹⁹

Consequently, the doctrines of Incarnation and Redemption, as Bell portrayed them, demanded that the Church take its stand on ethical issues, so that the physical world "shall not be misused, or polluted", or subjected to the slavery which was the antithesis of the gospel. The use of the word "Liberation" shifted the emphasis from deliverance from sin, to deliverance from any force which deprived human beings of their freedom. Bell's Catholic faith required not the act of self-denunciation advocated by neo-orthodoxy, but the acceptance of that freedom of which the Church was custodian. It also required an "affirmation of images" similar to that extolled by Charles Williams²⁰. If man was "a creature made in the image and likeness of God", then a "wrong detachment" that withdrew from the world was irreconcilable with Christianity²¹. Material resources must be utilised by the Church to their fullest potential. The Church's affirmation of this could find no more powerful expression than in its partnership with the visual, dramatic and musical arts.

In his Presidential Address to the Chichester Diocesan Council in 1946, Bell spoke on the responsibility of the Church to evangelise the nation. "If England is to give an effective moral lead," he commented, "it must be a Christian England". This could only be achieved through "the converting energy of the Church of England", and would require the use of "modern agencies" for the proclamation of the gospel: "education, the drama, the film, the wireless, the press, literature, music, art, television, outdoor processions, exhibitions, and propaganda of many kinds."²² Bell had held this conviction since his days as Dean of Canterbury, and by 1946 he had already initiated Church involvement in most of these media. In particular, he saw the artist as one of the Church's greatest potential allies, remarking in his Penguin Special:

Why should not the artist receive the grace, and carry the commission, of the Church, as he paints? We need other

¹⁹ George BELL, B.B.C. Broadcast, *The Pillars of Freedom*, 6, 'The Church', Re-recorded 11 November 1944, for Pacific, African, N.A., G.O.S. Service, *BELL*, Vol. 346 (Sermons/Addresses 1940-44), ff. 176-184.

²⁰ See below, pp. 182-183.

²¹ Bell would be involved in a similar discourse during his participation in the Commission on *The Era of Atomic Power*, in which the advocate of this kind of detachment was referred to as "the Yogi". See below pp. 330ff.

²² George BELL, Presidential Address, Chichester Diocesan Council, The Dome Brighton, 17, 18 July 1946, *BELL*, Vol. 347 (Sermons/Addresses 1945-47), ff. 152-153.

ministries in the Christian Church, auxiliary to the traditional ministry of the Word and the Sacraments.²³

The idea gained urgency for Bell when he read Kenneth Clark's letter to *The Times* in October 1939, which outlined the initial arrangements for the formation of the War Artists' Advisory Committee, a group designed to employ artists in making a "documentary record" of the war, in order to boost morale²⁴. Bell responded by writing to F.C. Eeles of the Central Council for the Care of Churches, asking whether "some way could be devised for linking up the artists with the Church at this very moment, and helping the artists in war"²⁵. He then contacted T.A. Fennemore, of the Central Institute of Art and Design, and explained that while he was "not thinking of big expensive commissions", it might be possible to commission framed pictures for hanging in parish churches. The arrangements would be mutually beneficial, for Bell appreciated "the great importance of doing anything that can be done to help artists in war-time, and also the naturalness of a renewal of the contact between the Church and the artists."²⁶ Eeles responded predictably:

The difficulty will be to get people to spend the necessary money. I have just heard of an incumbent refusing to raise money for urgent repairs to a church tower on the ground that such work is wrong in time of war. I am also afraid the bishops may make it difficult for us... I myself believe the opportunity may come when a demand arises for war memorials.²⁷

The prediction about war memorials, however prescient, did little to resolve the immediate need for employment for artists in wartime, or to arrest the decline in standard of church art and craftsmanship, but the Committee admitted that "unless the Church can keep pace in the standard of ornaments and decoration of her buildings with the higher education and increased artistic appreciation which is being developed in all classes of the community today, she has less and less hope of

²³ BELL, *Christianity and World Order*, p. 57.

²⁴ See below, p. 307.

²⁵ George BELL to F.C. Eeles, 23 October, 1939. *BELLP*, Vol. 150 ('The Church and the Artist 1929-1940'), ff. 30, 31.

²⁶ George BELL to the Secretary of the Central Institute of Art and Design, National Gallery, 23 October 1939, *BELLP*, Vol. 150, f. 32.

²⁷ F.C. EELES to Bell, 7 November 1939, *BELLP*, Vol. 150, f. 37. See also f. 38 (EELES to T.A. Fennemore of C.I.A.D., 7 October 1939): "At the moment there is... an almost entire cessation of what we sometimes hear described as 'luxury work', and I simply do not know how to stimulate the demand for work which ought to continue if artists are to live and work."

seeing them at her services."²⁸ Miss Gluck, an artist friend of Bell's, could also see a plethora of difficulties. She referred disdainfully to the Parochial Church Councils, "whose nature, in many cases, makes it impossible to expect any improvement in taste in Church decoration..." She feared that "the central idea of your vision would be defeated in nine cases out of ten", because "Public taste has been so debased through years of having to look at bad decoration"²⁹. If this was any discouragement to Bell, it was mitigated by Fennemore's immediate recommendation that the Church should employ Eric Gill as a letterer and illuminator, and John Piper and Hans Feibusch as mural painters. All of these would later accept ecclesiastical commissions³⁰. Meanwhile, Bell had drafted a memorandum on "Artists and the Church in War Time", pointing out that artists were "exceptionally hard-hit by the war" and insisting that it was "more important than ever to keep the arts alive, with all that they represent in times like these." At this early stage, Bell anticipated a revivification of the Church's role as a major patron of the arts, based on a distinctly mediaeval model:

In days not less unsettled long ago, the Church offered all manner of opportunities to the Artist - the sculptor, the painter, the craftsman as well as the architect. The evidence of their skill is to be found in the Churches and Cathedrals all over England. Could not the Church as part of its sense of the inestimable value of spiritual things, renew its association with Artists of different kinds today? By such re-association it would do much, not only for the Artists, but for the community as a whole.

Bell suggested three initiatives for Sussex: employing artists to produce the rolls of parishioners called up for military service, commissioning memorial sculptures, and "wall-paintings or ordinary pictures". Bell appealed to a past when the "most beautiful pictures... were made for churches", and hoped that such pictures would again be painted "by living Artists for Churches today"³¹. He also initiated the Sussex Churches Art Council³². Kenneth Clark responded to Bell's

²⁸ Memorandum of the Central Council for the Care of Churches (c. 1939-1940), quoted by BELL in 'The Church and Artists and Craftsmen, by the Bishop of Chichester', *BELLP*, Vol. 151 ('The Church and the Artist'), ff. 284-288. This statement, produced during the Phoney War, did not make specific reference to the value of art in wartime.

²⁹ Miss GLUCK to Bell, 7 December 1939, *BELLP*, Vol. 150, ff. 73-74. Bell replied, "I am very much interested in your reaction to Sir Kenneth Clarke's [sic] letter." (f. 78, 11 December 1939.)

³⁰ Correspondence between T.A. FENNEMORE and George Bell, December, 1939, *BELLP*, Vol. 150., ff. 52-66.

³¹ George BELL, 'Draft: Artists and the Church in War Time', November, 1939, *BELLP*, Vol. 150, ff. 46-47.

³² Ronald C. JASPER, *George Bell, Bishop of Chichester*, London, 1967, p. 130.

offer of assistance with guarded enthusiasm. He agreed that without great initial cost the Church could gradually get back some of her old position as patron of the arts", but predicted that in commissioning artworks, Bell would inevitably excite "a certain amount of controversy". Clark's letter revealed at once his pessimistic expectations of the response of churchgoers to modern art, and of the abilities of modern artists to paint religious subjects with originality:

I am sure that the Church can only gain the confidence of artists and lovers of painting if it decides to give up the mawkish style too long associated with ecclesiastical art and support what is most vital in modern painting... It is almost impossible for living artists to invent, with any conviction, [religious] scenes which have been given such perfect expression for centuries by the great artists of the past, but it is an interesting task for any painter to translate these images into the colour and handling of modern painting.³³

Bell forwarded Clark's letter to Gluck, who professed herself "profoundly shocked... as it destroys at one blow all you hope to achieve", and affirmed that "It is principally because his idea has been followed for the last hundred years that we now feel something must be recaptured of the earlier *spirit*, to stem the alarming fall in the birth-rate of spontaneously creative decoration for churches."³⁴ The gulf between Clark and Gluck symbolises the tension which continually accompanied Bell's attempts to promote the Church's stewardship of art. If the Church merely commissioned non-Christian artists to paint traditional religious scenes in "the colour and handling of modern painting", this would do little to foster the relationship between Christianity and culture. Yet to dedicate an artist's work to the Church was to take a risk: if the artist painted from the heart, the results could not be easily controlled. Bell was encouraged to continue on this potentially dangerous path by Arthur Wragg, an artist and friend of Dick Sheppard³⁵, who had envisaged a similar scheme³⁶. With such support, Bell increased his support of artists at a time when

³³ Kenneth CLARK to Bell, 22 November 1939, *BELLP*, Vol. 150 ('The Church and the Artist 1929-1940'), f. 48.

³⁴ Miss GLUCK to Bell, 7 December 1939, *BELLP*, Vol. 150, ff. 73-74.

³⁵ See R. Ellis ROBERTS, *H.R.L. Sheppard: Life and Letters*, London, 1942, pp. 231-232, 279-281. Sheppard, of St. Martin in the Fields, a prominent pacifist, died in 1937.

³⁶ Wragg's scheme aimed to "1. Link together the religious life of the community and the creative spirit of contemporary art. 2. Bring artists once more to the realisation that the Church is a natural home for all forms of the expression of spiritual experience, and is *not* aloof from what is going on in the hearts of other "of God". 3. ... encourage men and women to regard the Church as an important part of their cultural life... Just as they themselves offer up their prayers to God, so also does the Poet, the Artist and the Musician." Arthur WRAGG to George Bell, 9 February 1940, and see also WRAGG to Bell, 12 March 1940, *BELLP*, Vol. 150, ff. 107, 187.

other churchmen were refusing to enlist them, even for repairs to war-damage, on the grounds that this was "luxury work".

Before the war, Bell had already commissioned an artist to work in his Diocese. Professor E.W. Tristram, an expert on medieval mural paintings, had been commissioned by Bell to restore murals, and then, in 1938, to do a series of life-sized paintings of the events surrounding the birth and baptism of Jesus for the walls behind and to the sides of the altar at St. Elisabeth's in Eastbourne³⁷. Tristram's paintings were closely modelled on medieval works, the formal poses of the figures, the stylised drapery and haloes, and the inscriptions echoing Byzantine models [Plates 4-5]³⁸. Tristram corresponded regularly with Bell during the war, encouraging his vision of a revival of medieval painterly traditions³⁹, but was highly pessimistic about the prospect of the Church renewing its association with artists on a large scale, remarking in 1944, after Bell had made several successful commissions, that most modern artists of his acquaintance were either atheists or agnostics. He warned that for the sake of survival, the artist must be "ultra-modern" in order to gain critical favour, and "There is no living tradition of religious art, and one will not be created by the activities of artists with no convictions other than aesthetic convictions, indulging in aesthetic experiment on the walls of churches." It was the voice of a traditionalist jaded by the onslaught of "modernism". Bell mentioned a religious picture by Picasso, and Tristram retorted that "as a religious painting, and considered as such and not as a purely aesthetic production, [it] is a piece of blind and half-conscious evil."⁴⁰

³⁷ JASPER, *George Bell*, p. 129; Keith WALKER, *Images or Idols? The Place of Sacred Art in Churches Today*, Norwich, 1996, p. 48. Finance for the commission came from "the trustees of Mrs. Watson's will, Mr. H.V. James and the Public Trustee". Bell publicised Tristram's paintings in the *Chichester Diocesan Gazette*, March 1938, pp. 89-90. Tristram favoured painters who worked in styles similar to his own, hence his recommendation to Bell of Alan Sorrel, whose religious scenes were strongly influenced by medieval manuscript illumination: "work of this nature, traditional in feeling & obviously 'English' in character, would be very suitable for church decoration." See for example: Eleann of Castile with Saints and Angels, 1947. Alan SORREL to George Bell, January 14 1945, *BELLP*, Vol. 152 ('The Church and the Artist'), f. 94. See also ff. 95, 96.

³⁸ The baptism scene bears close comparison with the similar scene in the mosaics of the Byzantine monastery at Daphni. The overt traditionalism of Tristram's style is the more striking when one considers their context in a church which, as the *Chichester Diocesan Gazette* put it, "is in lofty modern style in red brick..." (March 1938, p. 103.)

³⁹ Bell supported a proposal to exhibit Tristram's copies of medieval paintings, along with material from the Pre Raphaelite Brotherhood and some modern works. "With so many churches destroyed by enemy action... it would, I hope, help to make people conscious of the part that can be played by the artist in the work of reconstruction." Phillip JAMES, Director of art at C.E.M.A., to George Bell, 12 October 1942, *BELLP*, Vol. 151 ('The Church and the Artist'), f. 41. John Piper was recommended as a suitable collector for the exhibition.

⁴⁰ E.W. TRISTRAM to George Bell, 14 August 1944, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, ff. 135-136.

Bell did not think so ill of Picasso; he found his work "recondite", but taught himself to appreciate it, as he had earlier taught himself to appreciate Eliot's *The Waste Land*.⁴¹ If Bell was to achieve his objectives, it would clearly be by commissioning "modern" artists, even artists outside orthodox Christianity. A Sussex architect, Walter H. Godfrey, put it in pragmatic terms:

Living artists are sometimes a little intolerant of homage to art of former periods, but only I think in proportion to what they conceive is their own neglect. In a wise encouragement of contemporary art we shall find our best means of preserving ancient beauty.⁴²

It is more likely, however, that Bell's own thinking reflected that of Bertram Nicholls, who felt that, since "All the greatest schools of painting the world has known arose in response to a demand", the very action of the Church in calling for religious paintings might be the catalyst for a new "movement" in its own right⁴³. In the event, it was one of the artists recommended to Bell by Fennemore, the exiled German Jew, Hans Feibusch, who provided the first wartime painting for a parish in the Diocese of Chichester⁴⁴. Bell asked Feibusch to paint a mural for the Vicar of St. Wilfrid's Church in Brighton, advising him that its architect, Mr. Goodheart Rendal, had requested a *Nativity* for the North Chapel⁴⁵ [Plate 6].⁴⁶ It was an adventurous commission in two respects: Feibusch was Jewish by faith, and the painting was, as one critic pointed out, perhaps "the first 'modern' work of the kind in any English church". It was, however, a comparatively easy initiation for Bell as a patron of modern artists for religious purposes. There is no record in his papers of any opposition to the work. At least one critic praised it for "belonging to the present generation and [being] based in its forms and colour on the revolution in the graphic arts brought about by the researches and experiments of Cezanne and Picasso." The painting had a modernist simplicity which did not obscure its traditional allusions:

Other wall-paintings of to-day in churches and public buildings in contrast belong to the Italian Primitives or to the 15th century in Italy or even to Victorian England. This work is both modern and universal as is all the best

⁴¹ George BELL to Herbert Baker, 25 September 1942, *BELLP*, Vol. 205 (Chichester A-B), f. 69. Baker's reply, 26 September 1942, in which he explains his own dislike of Modernism, is in Vol. 151 ('The Church and the Artist'), f. 40.

⁴² Walter H. GODFREY (a Sussex architect) to Bell, 16 February 1940, *BELLP*, Vol. 150, f. 129.

⁴³ Bertram NICHOLLS to Bell, 16 February 1940, *BELLP*, Vol. 150, f. 133.

⁴⁴ JASPER, *George Bell*, p. 129.

⁴⁵ George BELL to Hans Feibusch, 27 December 1939, *BELLP*, Vol. 150, f. 88, 92.

⁴⁶ Hans FEIBUSCH to George Bell, 24 February 1940, *BELLP*, Vol. 150, f. 151. Feibusch refused to accept payment, beyond a £30 reimbursement of expenses.

modern art. It is a flower of the pre-war civilization of Europe as it was before last September....Here at St. Wilfrid's, when the world is rocking on its foundations, this German artist, now fortunately for us an Englishman, has added both spiritually and materially to the things of permanent worth and has thereby done something to offset the evils of our time.⁴⁷

The painting's severest critic was Feibusch himself, who decided that it had been "done in a too formal and conventional way." It still contained "too much Italian Renaissance composition", and he wished that he could have "infuse[d] it with more feeling and the sense of mystery [and]... inward luminosity."⁴⁸ Feibusch, contrary to Clark's predictions, wanted to produce art which would communicate his own spiritual experience. When he converted to Christianity under Bell's influence⁴⁹, Bell made his approval of this explicit in a private letter:

... religion is something very different from an optimus modus vivendi: we want fire and mystery and extasis, and the relation of every slightest thing to God in some mysterious way. It is here that the saint and the artist have so much to teach...⁵⁰

If the artist provided a ministry "auxiliary to the Sacraments", there was also a connection between art and sanctity. Both communicated a sense of the intensity of religious experience to the Church. Bell sent Feibusch a poem he had written about St. Francis, in which he described a visit to Assisi:

Where Giotto's radiant genius paints
His visions on the walls
The spirit of those glorious saints

⁴⁷ 'Professor Reilly Writes', c. June 1940, *BELLP*, Vol. 150, f. 248.

⁴⁸ Hans FEIBUSCH to George Bell, 8 March 1941, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 7.

⁴⁹ After the completion of the *Nativity*, he continued to correspond with Bell, telling him in November 1940 that, "It is a comfort to me to think of you and what you stand for in these days of dreary, stupid savagery and destruction." (Hans FEIBUSCH to George Bell, 24 November 1940, *BELLP*, Vol. 150, f. 280, and see George BELL to Hans Feibusch, 3 December 1940, *BELLP*, Vol. 150, f. 281.) Feibusch read *Christianity and World Order* over Christmas, was "impressed... by your statement of the reality of Christ's life, his crucifixion and resurrection... I have become troubled and terrified by the idea that perhaps Christ is really alive, and I had the feeling that it would be a blessing beyond words to surrender to Him." He was afraid of his family's reaction should he become a proselyte, and appealed to Bell for guidance, since "It was because I was very much attracted to the whole atmosphere surrounding you, my Lord Bishop, as well as Father Westhall and his church." (Hans FEIBUSCH to George Bell, 11 January 1941, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, ff. 4-5.) Feibusch confessed that "I dream of Hell as a place where I shall be tortured by the knowledge that I shall never paint again.", 26 May 1941, (f. 10).

⁵⁰ George BELL to Hans Feibusch, 31 October 1941, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 18.

Upon my spirit falls.⁵¹

Encouraged by Bell, Feibusch continued to work privately on paintings with Christian themes, and on still life compositions of fruit and flowers, painted by candlelight to add a numinous quality. He now tried to avoid "any bolstering up from tradition and the old masters." He felt that modern painters of religious subjects were frequently "tempted into using old styles" because in the past "Religious vision was so much more intense... But Religion should be here and now." Stanley Spencer, he felt, had achieved a genuinely spontaneous expression of religious experience through art, but while Spencer "sees resurrection in his own village churchyard", Feibusch, perhaps because he was an exile, opted for a style which would "see the whole world *sub specie aeternitatis*, as in the case of a man who is not rooted to any particular soil."⁵² Despite these private experiments, Feibusch longed for further ecclesiastical commissions. An opportunity came in 1944, when he was commissioned by Professor Charles Reilly to paint a large mural of scenes from *The Pilgrim's Progress*, for St. Elisabeth's in Eastbourne⁵³ [Plate 7]. "I am convinced that I was made to paint murals", he told Bell in 1948, and again he was "disturbed at the idea that I might die without having fulfilled my vocation":

On your side there is the Church, hundreds of Bishops, hundreds of churches, millions of believers, and a great fight in progress against the horrors, the unbelief, the coldness of the world. In this fight, this relentless, desperate fight, is there no room for a painter...?⁵⁴

In the event, Feibusch was commissioned by Canon C.B. Mortlock in 1948 to paint a Crucifixion in the Church of St. Martin at Dagenham on the wall above the High Altar, received other Church commissions in the fifties, including the *Baptism of Christ* for Chichester Cathedral in 1951, and a further wall-painting of the *Ascension* in Bell's chapel, painted as a gift in 1953.⁵⁵ Bell could not provide Feibusch with

⁵¹ George BELL, 'Assisi', late 1930s, *BELLP*, Vol. 204, f. 6. The full text is given in Appendix 2, below, pp. 351-352.

⁵² Hans FEIBUSCH to George Bell, 12 November 1942, Vol. 151, f. 45.

⁵³ It is likely that the choice of subject was Feibusch's own. He had read Bunyan during the process of his conversion. "I think it was while reading 'Pilgrim's Progress' that I was first impressed by that humble hopefulness and the rays of a heavenly world shining helpfully into the darkness around us."

Hans FEIBUSCH to George Bell, 8 March 1941, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, (f. 7).

⁵⁴ Hans FEIBUSCH to George Bell, 20 July 1948, *BELLP*, Vol. 152, ff. 128-129.

⁵⁵ Hans FEIBUSCH to George Bell 25 December 1948, *BELLP*, Vol. 152, f. 137. See also f. 227. For reproductions of Feibusch's later religious art, which has continued to dominate his interest to the present day, see David COKE (Ed.), *Hans Feibusch: The Heat of Vision*, (Exhibition Catalogue), London, 1995. In his own *Mural Painting*, London, 1947, Feibusch described Church art as "the greatest realm of mural painting." (p. 89).

exclusive employment during the war - he had, in any case, enough secular commissions - but he had succeeded in reintroducing a modern artist to the Church, and had allowed Feibusch an outlet for his desire for religious expression.

A further wartime initiative, pursued by Bell in co-operation with Fennemore in 1940, was to test his diplomacy to the fullest: a competition between eight religious muralists⁵⁶. Bell suggested that they produce large-scale cartoons, with a view to having the winning design painted for Bishop Hannington Memorial Church, Hove.⁵⁷ The architect of the church, Edward Maufe, admitted that "I tend to fight shy of decoration", but suggested the Great Commission as a subject ("I fight shy too of martyrdoms"), and expressed the hope that an artist like John Nash would be chosen over one like Hans Feibusch, since "This is a gentle, peaceful church..."⁵⁸ Problems arose, in confirmation of Gluck's earlier prediction, when the Church Council began to procrastinate. The vicar, Gordon M. Guinness, caught between the wishes of his conservative congregation and the zeal of his Bishop, feared that a mural might destroy the simplicity of the church, and suggested that "we ought to retain the power to reject any of the preliminary drawings..."⁵⁹ Bell attempted to dissuade the Church Council from insisting on the "right of veto" [sic] by pointing out that the winning painting would outlive the existing congregation⁶⁰, and that it was not in their power to predict the response of future generations. He also argued that "...suitability of the painting to the particular purpose of the building... is one of the most important elements in the adjudication,"⁶¹ and pressed the P.C.C. to make

⁵⁶ George BELL to T.A. Fennemore, 27 February 1940, *BELLP*, Vol. 150, f. 154. The expenses were estimated at £250. See also T.A. FENNEMORE to George Bell, 28 February 1940; 5 March 1940, *BELLP*, Vol. 150, ff. 164, 171.

⁵⁷ George BELL to T.A. Fennemore, 6 March 1940, *BELLP*, Vol. 150, f. 174. See JASPER, *George Bell*, p. 129.

⁵⁸ Edward MAUFE (architect of Bishop Hannington Church) to Professor C.H. Reilly, 5 March 1940, *BELLP*, Vol. 150, f. 177.

⁵⁹ Rev. Gordon M. GUINNESS to George Bell, 6 March 1940, *BELLP*, Vol. 150, f. 175. See also George BELL to T.A. Fennemore, 8 March 1940, f. 183.

⁶⁰ This argument was the reverse side of a coin used by Bell in July 1937 ('From the Bishop's Window', *Chichester Diocesan Gazette*, p. 208) to discourage unauthorised additions to churches, citing a recent case in which the Commissary-General made it clear that the Bishop's authority on such matters was final. "The Church is not 'the property for the time being of the incumbent or the parishioners.' This is a very important principle to remember... We would therefore repeat that for the Diocese of Chichester the guardian of every parish Church is the Bishop of Chichester, not only for the present generation but for future generations."

⁶¹ George BELL to Rev. Gordon Guinness [undated, March 1940], *BELLP*, Vol. 150, f. 191. There is an ironic postscript to this story. In 1995, Augustus Lunn's *Great Commission* was covered by a heavy curtain which cannot be drawn back. The painting may now only be viewed by standing on the altar whilst holding up the curtain, a practice which is unlikely to be encouraged by representatives of the current P.C.C. It is to be hoped that future generations will recognise the hanging of the curtain as an act of censorship, and remove it out of respect for Bell's judgement that it is unreasonable to expect a congregation to demand the right of veto on a work of art which will presumably outlive them.

its decision⁶² "I am afraid that the Bishop Hannington people have got cold feet about the wall painting...", he told the architect, explaining that the prospective painting's chief antagonist, "is an excellent man, but with no taste, and old fashioned in all sorts of ways."⁶³ Bell's plans were met with an instinctive distrust of modern art, combined perhaps with Evangelical suspicion of imagery. It was therefore a pleasant surprise when Guinness wrote that the Council had decided to accept the offer after all⁶⁴. The competition went ahead, was won by Augustus Lunn⁶⁵, and the completed painting was installed behind the altar. Lunn ecstatically informed Bell that the architect had said "the painting makes a complete unity with the Church". He added cryptically, "It was also a very helpful experience to hear the views of the people at the Church because their reaction to and interest in the painting was so different from that of the architect."⁶⁶ Lunn's two-tiered portrayal of the *Great Commission* [Plates 8-9] depicted a commanding figure of Christ flanked by his disciples, sending them out to the nations, represented in the bottom tier of the painting by figures paying homage to a statue of Buddha and two African tribal masks and by an abstract, faceless figure composed of classical columns and drapery, but holding an empty bowl like a beggar. At the apex of the composition stood the heavenly city. It was perhaps due as much to the patron as to the artist that the painting, executed amidst the international chaos of 1940, and in the context of the internal politics of the Bishop Hannington P.C.C., communicates a vision of the unity of the Kingdom of God⁶⁷.

A still more ambitious project, in the twelfth-century East Sussex parish church at Berwick, involved the painting of murals by Duncan Grant, Vanessa Bell and her children Quentin and Angelica, an idea suggested to George Bell by the

⁶² George BELL to Rev. Gordon Guinness, 3 April 1940, *BELLP*, Vol. 150, f. 200.

⁶³ George BELL to Edward Maufe, 3 April 1940, *BELLP*, Vol. 150, f. 201.

⁶⁴ Rev. Gordon GUINNESS to George Bell, April 5 1940, *BELLP*, Vol. 150, f. 203.

⁶⁵ T.A. FENNEMORE to Bell, 24 November 1941, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 20, and see WALKER, *Images or Idols?*, p. 49.

⁶⁶ Augustus LUNN to George Bell, 1 January 1942, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 24.

⁶⁷ The bottom right and left of the picture may be taken to represent non-western and classically-influenced nations respectively. I offer this as an alternative interpretation to that given by the undated pamphlet, 'Our Church Picture', produced by Bishop Hannington Church, which sees the disciples as descending "to the dark places of the earth", interprets the Buddha and the African masks as symbols of "evil", and describes the composition in the bottom left of the picture as a depiction of the disciples "confronting the empty headedness of pure reasoning". The inclusion of the African masks was, in fact, singularly appropriate, in a church which was a memorial to Bishop Hannington, the first Bishop of Eastern Equatorial Africa in the mid-nineteenth century. In any case, it would be surprising if Lunn had needed to look so far afield for symbols of "evil" in 1941.

architect, Sir Charles Reilly⁶⁸. "We have had some difficulties to overcome," Bell wrote to Feibusch:

... a leading parishioner was opposed to the whole scheme, disliking changes, the usual conservative objection. Indeed, the application for a Faculty was opposed by her, and the chancellor had to hold a court to hear the objections. I am glad to say that we got some very good people to come and give evidence in favour, including Sir Kenneth Clark, T.A. Fennemore, Bertram Nicholls and Etchells the Architect. The Chancellor gave us an overwhelming approval for a Faculty."

It was an important victory for Bell. As the painting was in progress, a leading article from *The Times* reflected that, "when more beauty is being destroyed and threatened than ever in the world before... mural painting, already growing in worldly use and esteem, will also surely win back its place in the Church's regard."⁷⁰ On St Francis's Feast day in 1943, Bell preached effusively at a special Dedication Service for the paintings. He exhorted the congregation to recall the thirteenth century, "The century in which Giotto was born - the century of Dante", and characterised Giotto as "the great humanizer of painting" who breathed "life" into wall paintings and altarpieces, quickening "the dead conventionality of inherited practice with the fire of natural action and natural vive [sic]." The new wall paintings in Berwick, he claimed, had also broken the conventionalities of post-Victorian church decoration. They signalled the "re-entry of the artist into the realm of religion", which, he hoped, "will prove a part of the general awakening of our time", with Grant, Vanessa Bell and their fellow artists as "the heralds of new spiritual birth." It was a characteristic sermon, appealing to tradition as a source of innovation and revivification, and linking this with spiritual renewal and unity. For Bell, the artist who "pursues his art as a vocation given him by God" is engaging in "devotions - he worships with his painting, " but the artist is also comparable with the Priest as an interpreter of spiritual experience and a "herald" of "spiritual awakening". As such, art plays a dual role which recalls the medieval precedents to

⁶⁸ See Michael DAY, *Modern Art in English Churches*, London, 1984, pp. 28-29; WALKER, *Images or Idols?*, pp. 51-52.

⁶⁹ George BELL to Hans Feibusch, 31 October 1941, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 18. The scheme had been approved by the Diocesan Chancellor in July 1941, but Mrs Sandilands of the P.C.C. had appealed against his decision. Her protest was not primarily on artistic grounds, but was based on an unfounded rumour that Quentin Bell was a conscientious objector. See Frances SPALDING, *Vanessa Bell*, London, 1983, p. 319, and her *Duncan Grant: A Biography*, London, 1997, pp. 380-385. The final decision in favour of the scheme came in October 1941. See Guidebook, *St Michael and All Angels and its Paintings*, Berwick, Sussex.

⁷⁰ Leading article from *The Times*, October 16 1943, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 117.

which Bell had appealed. First, it is didactic, translating the doctrine of the Incarnation into images which the modern villagers of Berwick will recognise. Second, the paintings are "a call to worship - a call to adore".⁷¹ Bell was attempting to restore the role of aesthetics in the worship of the parish church. Many of its stained glass windows had been blown out by bombs, and Bell had suggested that they be replaced by clear glass, the decoration of the church being restricted to the wall-paintings. In the event, the artists worked on plaster-board panels which were later attached to the walls. After the paintings had been completed, a flying bomb destroyed the chancel roof, half of the nave roof, and shattered several more windows, demonstrating the wisdom of Bell's suggestion. The choice of mural paintings over stained glass also lightened the atmosphere of the church, and revived a long-standing Sussex tradition in church decoration⁷².

The iconographic programme drew heavily on a model for decoration reminiscent of medieval parish churches. The churchgoer, seated in the nave, is flanked by Vanessa Bell's paintings of the *Annunciation* to the south [Plate 10], and the *Nativity* to the north [Plate 11]⁷³. The contemporary significance of these images of the Incarnation is, as Bell observed in his dedication speech, emphasised by the depiction of Sussex countryside in the landscapes, the use of local shepherds and their children as models, and even by a basket of local farm produce in the foreground of the *Nativity*. The "spiritual" quality of the paintings, so praised by Bell, is heightened by the handling of restricted light sources, the lantern illuminating the figures from the front in the case of the *Nativity*, and the light from the window streaming in from behind in the *Annunciation*. Traditional iconographic elements are retained: the Virgin's blue cloak and sash, the halo of the infant Jesus,

⁷¹ George BELL, Sermon on the Dedication of the Mural Paintings at Berwick Church, Feast of St. Francis, 10 October 1943, *BELLP*, Vol. 156 (Religious Drama 1934-1950), f. 152. See also Bell's article, which coincided with the Church and the Artist Conference, 'The Church as Patron of Art', *The Listener*, 14 September 1944, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 185: "...how great an opportunity there is for an inspired painter to set forth a profound religious interpretation of the modern Tragedy of Europe on the walls of some chapel or aisle or porch... A painting in a Church is, or should be, a statement of belief, just as a sermon or a prayer is a statement of belief, for the instruction of worshippers and for their assistance in the practice of their religion." The Berwick paintings fulfilled Bell's hope that "It would be a great thing to have living artists painting in our Churches for the teaching of the Christian faith, and for the presentation of the worship of God." 'Foreword' to Exhibition, 1 September 1941, Vol. 151, f. 15.

⁷² The tradition which they revived was exemplified by the Byzantine-influenced mediaeval wall-paintings in Hardham Church in Sussex. See 'Byzantium in Sussex', *Guardian*, 15 January 1937, p. 42. The new murals were painted under the direction of an architectural adviser, Frederick Etchells, and were funded in part by Mr Peter Jones, a friend of Sir Charles Reilly. SPALDING, *Vanessa Bell*, p. 318.

⁷³ For reproductions of the preparatory studies for the Berwick Church paintings by Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, see Gillian NAYLOR, *Bloomsbury: the artists, authors and designers by themselves*, London, 1993, pp. 300-302.

and the lilies symbolising the Resurrection. The theme of light as a symbol for spiritual illumination is taken up again in Quentin Bell's painting of the aptly chosen parable of the *Wise and Foolish Virgins* [Plate 12], above the inside of the chancel arch. His altarpiece of the *Supper at Emmaus* [Plate 13], added in 1944, combines the particular and parochial - represented by portrait figures of two Londoners who operated a local searchlight and the chalk-downs landscape - with the divine and the traditional, suggested by the eucharistic subject and the mannered gestures and drapery of the figures themselves. The combination of tradition and innovation is achieved in a different way by Grant's *Christ in Glory* [Plate 14], which faces the congregation, above the chancel arch. The image of Christ enthroned, haloed and with outstretched arms, echoes the style of medieval *Pantocrator* images, while the angels beneath suggest baroque influence. Viewing the scene from the ground are five modern figures, kneeling, once more, against a background of Sussex countryside: to the left, representatives of the Armed Forces, all portraits of local servicemen⁷⁴, and to the right, the Rector of Berwick, George Mitchell, and Bishop Bell himself [Frontispiece]. Bell's interest in patronage is thus recorded within the imagery itself, in a style strongly reminiscent of medieval "donor portraits". The iconographic programme was completed in 1944, again recalling medieval models, in a series of small vignettes on the chancel screen. On the side facing the congregation, Grant's *Four Seasons* [Plate 16] depict scenes of ploughing, haymaking, apple-picking and wood-gathering, images which, by their subject matter and their restricted, circular compositions, recall medieval scenes of "The Months' Labours" from manuscript illuminations and choir stall decorations⁷⁵. On the side facing the altar, Quentin Bell's scenes of *The Cycle of Life* [Plate 17] depict the six sacraments available to lay members of the Church⁷⁶. The small twelfth century church had become the scene of Bishop Bell's most ambitious experiment in patronage: here was offered not merely a single painting, but an entire iconographic programme embodying Bell's Incarnational creed. Grant, when he added a crucifixion for the back wall of the church, chose to paint a *Victory of Calvary* [Plate 15]. The figure of Christ is open-eyed, apparently beyond pain, and the hands, although nailed to the Cross, are raised in benediction. The paintings were not "modernist" in the sense that Graham Sutherland's *Crucifixion* commission at St.

⁷⁴ They were the soldier Douglas Hemming, the sailor Mr. Weller and the airman Mr. Humphrey. See the *Berwick Guidebook*, p. 4. Hemming was killed in action at Caen in 1944, and this portion of the painting now serves as a memorial. See Derek BOORMAN, *For Your Tomorrow: British Second World War Memorials*, London, 1995, p. 18.

⁷⁵ The author's own 'Medieval English Miscellanies as Sources for Social History', Honours Thesis, Australian National University, pp. 16, 40-45, discusses the mediaeval iconography of 'the "Months' Labours"'.
⁷⁶ Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, Communion, Marriage and Last Rites.

Matthew's in Northampton would be in 1947, rather, they exhibited a neo-Romantic reverence for the countryside and the individual, combined with a recourse to stylistic traditions which caused Sir Charles Reilly to comment after his first visit, "It's like stepping out of foggy England into Italy."⁷⁷ The depiction of local scenes and modern people within the iconography of a parish church implied, as similar medieval artworks had implied, that Christianity was all-embracing, that the Church welcomed, and could consecrate, "the conditions of actual life".

Bell remained an active patron of the visual arts as the war progressed. When parish churches were damaged or partially destroyed, he enlisted architects and artists who were willing to work to collaborate in reconstruction⁷⁸. He also tried to procure commissions for Christian artists from outside his own Diocese. Such was the case with the exiled German sculptor Rudolph Wallfried, who had been making religious woodcuts out of butterboxes whilst working at a grocer's shop⁷⁹. Bell's efforts on behalf of the Indian Christian artist Alfred Thomas were particularly helpful: he obtained commissions for him to do line drawings for publishers Messrs. Mowbrays, and to design Christmas cards for Messrs. Raphael Tuck & Sons, and purchased himself "a beautiful picture of the Flight into Egypt"⁸⁰. Other attempts at gaining commissions were less successful, but Bell tended to sympathise with the artist rather than the patron. On 17 July 1947, Bell wrote to the Dean of St. Paul's recommending Benno Elkan as a sculptor for war memorials: "He has a grand idea of a memorial which would act as a perpetual reminder of the tragedy of war - showing what war does to ordinary people." However, Laurence Irving did not think the spirit of the proposed memorial was "British" enough, and Elkan wrote despairingly to Bell on 9 August that Irving's "way of reaction goes down to the very root of the whole problem."⁸¹ Occasionally, patrons and critics were entirely out of sympathy with an artist's visual expression of faith. Such was the case with Angela Latham, a wall-painter recommended to Bell by Gluck, who had developed "a preparation which ensures permanence for wall painting". She worked on a painting for Chichester Theological College, but when Bertram

⁷⁷ SPALDING, *Vanessa Bell*, p. 320.

⁷⁸ This was the case, for example, at Donnington Church, outside Chichester, which had been partially destroyed by fire. George BELL, 'Memorandum: Diocese of Chichester. Artists and the Church', *BELLP*, Vol. 150, f. 116.

⁷⁹ His work was "not romantic primitivism, but... nearer to the sculpture of the early Middle Ages than anything since...I am not at all sure whether this kind of expressionist sculpture will be at all congenial to the English people. Herbert Read says that it never has been, even in the Middle Ages." Unsigned letter from the Society of the Sacred Mission to George Bell, 5 August 1943, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 107.

⁸⁰ *BELLP*, Vol. 152, ff. 18-42. Thomas later published *An Indian Life of Christ*, containing 24 reproductions of his paintings.

⁸¹ *BELLP*, Vol. 152, ff. 75-78.

Nicholls saw it, he deemed her work unsuitable for a church, and told Bell, "It is characterised by a certain light-hearted, happy-go-lucky approach and exhibits the artist's delight in splashing about with bright colour on a large wall surface... had Mrs. Latham's work been of a secular subject it would have been a notable decoration in a restaurant... But for God's sake keep it out of the Chapel!"⁸²

Towards the end of the war, Bell tried to involve artists in producing war memorials. Leonard Greaves, the Secretary to the Guild of Memorial Craftsmen, felt in 1944 that:

... the prevailing level of English churchyard and church memorials is deplorable, and the position has deteriorated from year to year, in spite of the existence of excellent sculptors working in this sphere, and this has been largely the result of the importation of readily carved foreign memorials [inappropriate to]... the English surroundings and climate.

Representing the Bishops on the War Memorials Advisory Council, Bell tried to rectify this situation, and a C.I.A.D. memorandum on war memorials asserted in July 1944 that "the present seems to provide an excellent opportunity for reviving the art of architectural sculpture." Bell discussed with Eeles the idea of retaining ruined churches as war memorials, which Eeles felt represented "a defeatist outlook for the future of the Church". He also corresponded with T.S. Eliot in February 1945 concerning the relative merits of utilitarian and non-utilitarian memorials, and both favoured the latter on the grounds that a work of art was more likely to survive for several generations than was, for example, a hospital wing which would later require rebuilding.⁸³ Bell's opinion on war memorials was consistent with his general policy of employing individual artists for work which the Church habitually contracted out to industrial companies. He insisted on the autonomy of the war

⁸² *BELLP*, Vol. 152, ff. 106-124. Bertram Nicholls to Bell May 1 1949, f. 168. The author's attempts to locate Latham's painting were unsuccessful, and there is no record of any further commissions being offered to her. For details on the difficulties experienced in the commissioning of Marguerite Thompson's mural of a general *Resurrection* in Bishop Otter College Chapel, and on others of Bell's commissions in the 1950s, see JASPER, *George Bell*, pp. 130-133.

⁸³ Leonard GREAVES to George Bell, 20 April 1944, *BELLP*, Vol. 72 (War 1939-45), f. 70. C.I.A.D. Draft Memorandum (c. July 1944) on War Memorials, f. 176). Correspondence with F.C. Eeles, f. 107. Correspondence with T.S. Eliot, ff. 136, 145. Bell felt that one of the functions of war memorials was to 'help to form the character of later generations'. Herbert BAKER to George Bell, 12 October 1944, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 234. Bell and Eliot, in arguing thus, were pressing a typically Catholic concern. Jay WINTER, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: the Great War in European Cultural History*, Cambridge, 1995, p. 97, observes that after the First World War, "Utilitarian war memorials were preferred in many parts of Britain, a reflection of Protestant traditions..."

memorial as a work of art in its own right, refusing to see it as dispensable "luxury work". Such a policy also reasserted the spiritual aspect of memorialisation, encouraging the Church to regain its influence on a process which was becoming increasingly secularised⁸⁴.

A further initiative designed to "bring the people back to the Church, and Art back to the people", was a "travelling exhibition of suitable pictures... taken from Church to Church."⁸⁵ Bell took up the matter with Miss M.G. Glasgow of the Pilgrim Trust and the Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts.⁸⁶ Glasgow agreed to arrange the loan of pictures to the Diocese for travelling exhibitions⁸⁷. This led to the creation in 1941 of the Pictures in Churches Loan Scheme⁸⁸, which aimed at "restoring the early practice of showing pictures in churches, thus helping art once more to become a vital element in the daily life of the people." This included an attempt to foster popular familiarity with modern art:

It is only unfamiliarity with the idiom of modern art of all periods that has hindered its appreciation, whether it be in the time of Giotto, of Rembrandt, or of Picasso.

Once again, the paper appealed to the "Old Masters" as precedents for the freshness and vitality of modern painting. The Loan Scheme aimed to promote a consciousness of this within the Church, and through it, the wider community. The paintings chosen for the scheme were "not of intent religious in character" This reflected Bell's conviction that the Church bore relevance to the whole of life; it was, in other words, a practical outworking of his Incarnational doctrine. He felt

⁸⁴ Note, for example the proportion of Church to secular memorials listed by BOORMAN, *For Your Tomorrow*.

⁸⁵ The idea was the brainchild of Desmond CHAPMAN AUSTON (Major, Retired), and he wrote to Bell, 7 December 1939, *BELLP*, Vol. 150, f. 70 to ask for support. A further initiative which continued with some interruptions in wartime was the Art School for the forces, which operated in Chichester, including life-drawing classes in the Palace drawing room. See letter from the Art Editor of *The Times* to George Bell, 26 May 1943, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 104. Miriam Wormum to George Bell, 30 September 1944, ff. 227, 231. See also unidentified newspaper article on the art school, f. 362.

⁸⁶ Miss M.G. GLASGOW (Pilgrim Trust) to George Bell, 3 May 1940, *BELLP*, Vol. 150, f. 222. The latter was an organisation with the object of "maintaining as far as possible the arts of music, painting and theatre at a time when it was felt that these things were needed in the country more than ever before... and also as a means of maintaining the permanent values of peace at a time when there is much disillusionment."

⁸⁷ Miss M.G. GLASGOW to George Bell, 1 June 1940, *BELLP*, Vol. 150, f. 237. Later, 15 pictures were put aside for loan to the Diocese. Miss M.G. GLASGOW to George Bell, 19 June 1940, f. 242. She also mentioned the possibility of an "emergency scheme under which you might be prepared to open some of your churches for music and other activities, perhaps at short notice, for hard-pressed or homeless groups of people..."

⁸⁸ See JASPER, *George Bell*, p. 130; WALKER, *Images or Idols?*, p. 50.

that the paintings embodied "as fully as any purely ecclesiastical painting the moral principles which all true art expresses":

There is the deeply religious sense of the poetry and intensity of human life and natural phenomena, the perception of truth and fearless integrity... and a toleration of nothing less than perfection. These are the principles on which all true art must depend whatever its nature and purpose.⁸⁹

As with Bell's appraisal of the paintings of Grant and the Bells at Berwick, the artists' works were ascribed a function comparable to that of the sacraments: they were organs of "perfection", of "truth" and "integrity"⁹⁰, and indeed, art which did not possess this sacramental and "poetic" quality, was not "true art". This was a strong cultural antidote to Nazism, and helps to explain the comparative freedom of expression which Bell allowed to his commissioned artists.

Similar sentiments, combined with a sense that Church patrons and artists needed to learn how to communicate, were reiterated by Bell at a Conference on the Church and the Artist in 1944⁹¹. The "great spiritual crisis" had left the Church and the artist with new responsibilities, since:

What we *all* need, what the world needs, is Order, a Pattern, a sense of purpose, a Philosophy, a Faith. The Church has a Faith, and the artist with his vision has the genius and the capacity to mediate Order and to represent that Faith.⁹²

The surviving records of the Conference indicate that Bell had succeeded in bringing together churchmen, artists and critics in a forum specifically designed to give the representatives of each of these groups an opportunity to explain their expectations

⁸⁹ Paper on the "Pictures in Churches Loan Scheme", 1941, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 13.

⁹⁰ This was apparently true even of work produced by artists who were non-Christians. Bell's use of the word "integrity" in this context highlights the relationship between his artistic patronage and his ethical dissent. RUSAMA, *Moral Issues*, p. 209, observes, "The word *integrity* describes... [Bell's] basic outlook."

⁹¹ See JASPER, *George Bell*, p. 130; WALKER, *Images or Idols?*, p. 50. The conference ran from 15th to 18th September.

⁹² "Certainly, the Church needs the Artist very badly... I want to see Art playing a much larger part in people's lives, and I also want to see religion making a much larger contribution to the tradition and atmosphere in which people live." George BELL, opening speech to the Conference on The Church and the Artist, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, ff. 186, 188.

of "Church art"⁹³. Not only was the church ignorant of the modern arts, Bell lamented in his invitation, "The artist... when asked to carry out a commission for the Church, having been separated for so long (in a professional way) from the Church's tradition, is often at a loss with regard to the atmosphere and feeling and faith which are natural to the Church."⁹⁴ Bell therefore hoped that the Conference would help to clarify:

1. The requirements of the Church from the point of view of what the artist can supply.
2. What the Church expects from the artist taking a religious subject.
3. How the artist regards the idea of religious subjects, or the idea of working for the Church.
4. The question of content, and the language of the painter and sculptor.⁹⁵

That such a conference should be necessary indicated, Bell felt, how far Church and artist had drifted apart, despite the fact that "Most artists did their work in the Middle Ages wholly for the Church, and I suppose always in the atmosphere and tradition of the Church." To many artists, he maintained, "the whole tradition and atmosphere of the Church is utterly strange", but then, that was true of most people in the modern world. Bell blamed the Church for creating this "gulf", pointing in particular to the "hostility to the connection of Art with the Church at the time of the Reformation, and... the antagonism of the Puritans which has a great deal for which to answer."⁹⁶ However, Bell had his own artist friends, Grant, Feibusch and Gluck, present at the Conference to testify to the success of artistic commissions in his Diocese, and Henry Moore spoke about his commission to produce a *Madonna and*

⁹³ Invited to the Conference on The Church and the Artist were: E.L. Maufe, Hope Bagenal, Duncan Grant, Bertram Nicholls, Augustus Lunn, John Piper, Eric Newton, Stanley Spencer, Gluck, Hans Feibusch, F. Ernest Jackson, Henry Moore, Charles Wheeler, Rev. Martin D'Arcy S.J., Rev. A.C. Craig, T.S. Eliot, Dorothy Sayers, Sir Eric Maclagan, Sir Kenneth Clark, F.C. Eeles, T.A. Fennemore, the Dean of Chichester, Charles Williams, Evelyn Underhill. *BELLP*, Vol. 151, ff. 128, 131.

⁹⁴ George BELL, General Invitation to the Conference on "The Church and the Artist", *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 138.

⁹⁵ George BELL to Sir Eric Maclagan, regarding subjects to be discussed at the Conference, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 153. See also George BELL, letter to "Sir Herbert [Baker?]", 19 August 1944, f. 148: "One of the problems to be faced is that if artists and sculptors are to tackle [sic] religious subjects, they must understand religion, and indeed be willing to serve religion as far as they can through their art." R.S. HAZLEHURST wrote to George Bell, 7 September 1944: "I think someone should get up and say, in the cause of the Church, that if we owe all that is lovely in and out of our churches to artists, we owe to them also all the atrocities." f. 174.

⁹⁶ George BELL, opening speech to the Conference on The Church and the Artist, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, ff. 186, 188.

Child for St. Matthew's in Northampton⁹⁷. Much discussion was devoted to the need to find a balance between artistic freedom and the requirements, doctrinal and aesthetic, of the Church. Father D'Arcy, speaking on "The Church's Point of View", suggested that "the Church's worship and belief defined what the artist should represent, but subject to that, there was freedom". Beyond this, the artist should be "tender with the sensitive soul of believers", treating sacred subjects with deference. D'Arcy cited Rouault as an example of an effective modern religious artist. His conclusion, however, that "The Church should dictate the subject matter, the Artist the style,"⁹⁸ was not accepted by several of his listeners. It came too close, perhaps, to Clark's expectation that artists employed by the Church should merely rework the subjects of the "Masters" in modern styles and colours, to which Gluck had taken such exception. The painter W.T. Monnington related two experiences of working for ecclesiastical patrons. He had painted a reredos for a church in the Midlands, and had been given freedom to "give exposition to his religious belief with his own symbolism", but had been unable to complete a commission at Church House, Westminster, "where a symbolism was imposed upon him" which he did not understand⁹⁹. Dorothy L. Sayers, speaking perhaps from her own experiences with *The Man Born to Be King*, insisted that "Art was the great unbaptised". While the religious artist worked most effectively "from inside the dogma", the problem of language and symbolism was vexing:

The fact had to be faced that a technical theological vocabulary was not intelligible to the ordinary man to whom the writer or artist had to convey truths. The clergy should not crush the artist if he did not give 'the whole truth', and yet the artist's expression of dogma required checking by the clergy. The artist should not invent new symbols, or use private language of his own, he should hook up new archetypes with the old.¹⁰⁰

Church art ought to communicate Christian dogma using language that the "ordinary man" could understand, but the "autonomy" of the artist must be respected. It was a conviction which clearly impressed Bell; it was also an apt description of the

⁹⁷ Moore gave a very favourable report on the conference in a letter to Walter Hussey on 19 September 1944, *WH*, M.S. 228.

⁹⁸ Summary notes from the Conference on The Church and the Artist: Father D'Arcy's speech on "The Church's Point of View", *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 190.

⁹⁹ Summary notes... observations of Mr. W.T. Monnington, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 194.

¹⁰⁰ Summary notes ... observations of Dorothy L. SAYERS, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 193. For details on the Moot's discussion of the idea of archetypes, see below, pp. 283ff. Sayers's argument applied ideas which she had discussed with Bell in relation to the "Oecumenical Penguin", to the field of Church art. Bell's involvement in Dorothy Sayers's "Oecumenical Penguin" venture, and Sayers's interest in aesthetics, are discussed below, Chapter 5, *passim*.

dilemma which faced ecclesiastical patrons during the middle ages, when art was used to communicate dogma to a largely illiterate populace. In the 1940s, Bell was using Church art to communicate spiritual experience to a populace which, according to Sayers, was theologically illiterate, and his more successful commissioned works were the embodiment of Sayers's conviction that the artist "should hook up new archetypes with the old." It is not surprising that Sayers prefaced her remarks with a reference to their mutual friend Charles Williams's *The Figure of Beatrice*. Beatrice had wanted Virgil to deliver Dante from his suffering through poetry, but poetry was only able to take him to an earthly paradise; religion alone could take him to heaven. Religion and culture were thus mutually dependent: art or poetry were insufficient by themselves, but "What Charles Williams called the affirmation of images was the way of art. At the back of it lay the doctrine of the Trinity, the *Unimaginable* communicating Itself both to Itself and to the world in *Power and Love*." Despite the differing points of view expressed at the conference, there was agreement at least on Father D'Arcy's statement that:

the business of the artist was to serve beauty, of the Church, goodness. But they were often the same thing.¹⁰¹

The notion that aesthetics and morality were linked had been a part of Bell's rationale in supporting the visual arts throughout the war years. It was implicit in Bell's equation of art with sanctity in response to Feibusch's painting, it had prompted him to describe the Berwick paintings as "a call to worship", and it had provided his justification for choosing paintings with "secular" subjects for the travelling exhibition.

The art critic Eric Newton was also present at the conference, and spoke at length on developments in contemporary art, and in particular, on what he called the current "renaissance" in "symbolic" art. He presented an outline of art history, suggesting that there had been a "Primitive period" in the Middle Ages, when the "symbolic outweighed the descriptive", and a period of aestheticism in the 17th century. He suggested that "In the 20th Century we had just emerged from a period of extreme descriptiveness, and the artist had become more and more interested in the symbolic."¹⁰² He later defined "symbolism" as "the artist's power to express non-visible values and to give his work an emotional content derived directly from

¹⁰¹ Summary notes... Charles Wheeler's observations on "The Artist's Point of View", *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 190.

¹⁰² Summary notes... observations of Mr. Eric NEWTON, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 194.

his own experience - in a word, to depict emotional rather than visual experience."¹⁰³ The "swing of the pendulum" had thus brought the Church and the artist to a point where their relationship could be re-established, and in order to achieve this, the Church "must build up a tradition in which the artist would be at home."¹⁰⁴ The Dean of Chichester¹⁰⁵ added that the new theological emphasis of neo-orthodoxy on "the severer aspects of the Gospel" rather than the "sentimental teaching" of Liberalism, made modernist styles seem more relevant to the Church¹⁰⁶. Edward Maufe related Newton's statements to architecture, reflecting on "How important it is to retain *and* to go on building on this tradition"¹⁰⁷, and Herbert Baker wrote to Bell after the Conference:

The ideal to be aimed at, I think, is that art - including poetry - should transcend and so help to reconcile divergencies, Rights and Lefts, High and Low... I have always felt that Roman Catholic and some High Church art and, in opposition, Puritan iconoclasm might be bridged by refined, pure and spiritual art, non realistic symbolic without appeal to the lower emotions.¹⁰⁸

The discussion was heartening for Bell. He had already encouraged Feibusch, Grant and the Bells to paint from "spiritual experience" in their treatment of Biblical scenes, and the idea of allowing the artist to invent a living symbolism whilst "building on" the tradition of the Church had been central to his vision throughout the war. The notion that such art might promote unity across the denominations also pleased him. The problem was how to regain "the religious habit in which the primitive painters grew up", in order to give artists the desire to adapt the new symbolic trend towards spiritual ends¹⁰⁹.

Bell came away from the conference convinced that he should take still more ambitious steps in the organisation of arts and crafts in his Diocese. Early in 1943, he had been contacted by the Hungarian glass-painter Ervin Bossanyi, who had ambitions to form a "National Art Service": a fraternity of Christian artists who

¹⁰³ Eric NEWTON to George Bell, 20 September 1944, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 221.

¹⁰⁴ Summary notes... observations of Mr. Eric NEWTON, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 194.

¹⁰⁵ A.S. Duncan Jones.

¹⁰⁶ Summary notes... observations of the Dean of Chichester and Father D'Arcy, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 195.

¹⁰⁷ Edward MAUFE to George Bell, 23 September 1944, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 223 (italics original).

¹⁰⁸ Herbert BAKER to George Bell, 12 October 1944, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 234.

¹⁰⁹ George BELL, 'The Church and Artists and Craftsmen, by the Bishop of Chichester', *BELLP*, Vol. 151, ff. 284-288

would, with official support, work for the Churches¹¹⁰. Bell was kindly disposed to Bossanyi, who had been imprisoned in France as a Hungarian soldier during the last war, fled to Germany, and fled again to England in search of work, only to be interned as an "enemy alien"¹¹¹. Bell also appreciated his art, especially the stained glass window which the Tate Gallery had commissioned from him between 1937 and 1942¹¹². However, Bossanyi's scheme, despite the visionary zeal with which he promoted it, was extremely ambitious, and the C.I.A.D. judged that it was not possible in wartime. He wrote to the Bishops individually, and Bell indicated to Temple that Bossanyi had corresponded with him "rather voluminously". With the exception of Bell's sympathetic replies, he met only with "episcopal silences"¹¹³. However, the application of the idea on a smaller scale appealed to Bell, and after the Church and the Artist Conference, he began to think seriously about establishing a "Guild Workshop" of artists and craftsmen which would serve the four hundred churches in his diocese¹¹⁴, an effort to revive "The tradition which during the Middle Ages produced a constant flow of beautiful works of art, in architecture and craftsmanship"¹¹⁵. Bell's pamphlet on the proposed scheme referred to the "lamentable" effect of many "restorations" of church art and furnishings during the past century, claiming that this was "due to the craftwork having been carried out by... men who... were often out of sympathy with the spirit and real aims of Ecclesiastical Art." He hoped that the formation of a Guild in Chichester would encourage similar endeavours in other dioceses.¹¹⁶ Bell had the support of his Dean, who "would certainly welcome an artist or a sculptor for the Cathedral (and why not

¹¹⁰ Ervin Bossanyi to George Bell, February 1943, Memorandum, 10 February 1943, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, ff. 84, 91.

¹¹¹ Bernard RACKHAM to George Bell, 24 August 1942, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 30. Bossanyi was also recommended to Bell by the Headmaster of Merchant Taylor's School, Northwood, Middlesex, on 16 September 1942 (f. 34).

¹¹² Ervin BOSSANYI, *The Angel Blesses the Women Washing Clothes*, Stained Glass, Tate Gallery, 1937-1942, installed in 1948.

¹¹³ Ervin BOSSANYI to George Bell, 2 March 1943, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 87; 19 April 1943, f. 98; FENNEMORE to Bossanyi 9 April 1943, BOSSANYI to Fennemore (undated), ff. 99, 100; F.C. EELES to George Bell, 1 May 1943, f. 102. Bell had referred Bossanyi to Eeles, apparently in the hope that this would divert his attention from his plan to write individual letters to all the Bishops. See also correspondence between Bell and Ian H. WHITE-THOMPSON, ff. 113, 114, and Ervin Bossanyi to Bell, (undated, c. October 1943), f. 118, 27 October 1945, f. 308. The Bishops were probably more repelled by Bossanyi's florid language than apathetic about art. "The rattle of the racing tractors ban all doubt: this world is a most gigantic potatoe [sic] field in erection..." He presents a classic case of the gulf separating the artist from the potential ecclesiastical patrons. Bossanyi had made his window for the Tate Gallery in 1938-41, but complained to Bell of being out of work in a letter of 16 July 1948, Vol. 152, ff. 126, 140.

¹¹⁴ George BELL to Sir Herbert Baker, 23 October 1944, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 239.

¹¹⁵ Diocese of Chichester: 'Proposal for a Workshop for Church Craftsmen and Artists', *BELLP*, Vol. 151, ff. 310-312. Cost estimates were £150 to £250 p.a. for the premises, £150 for lighting etc., £400 for materials. The "nucleus" was to be "a good stone carver", and the proposal suggests that £3000 capital would be required.

¹¹⁶ Pamphlet: 'A Guild Workshop for the Diocese of Chichester', n.d., *BELLP*, Vol. 152, f. 16.

a poet)¹¹⁷, and of Lawrence Irving, who corresponded with him on the possibility of employing a Warden who, apart from having a liberal attitude to the arts, must be prepared to "overcome the prejudices of parish priests and ecclesiastical Faculties."¹¹⁸ Bell's most trusted adviser in the scheme was Sir Herbert Baker, who felt that the most effective way of introducing the Guild would be through the "war-necessity for repairing damage... with the hope of a permanent artistic 'school' growing out of it."¹¹⁹ Baker contacted a number of sculptors and master craftsmen, but their responses were discouraging. Joseph Armitage thought the scheme "worth trying", but added that he had "seen so many schemes of a similar kind start with enthusiasm & gradually decay or definitely blow up"¹²⁰, L.A. Turner thought the scheme sounded like "amateurish sloppiness"¹²¹, and A.T. Scott described Bell's report as "high faluting and divorced from realities."¹²² Perhaps more devastating, for its perceptiveness, was Gilbert Ledward's response:

The Bishop of Chichester's scheme is an endeavour to revert to the ideals of the medieval monastic craftsmen and in my opinion such a scheme is quite impossible under the changing and revolutionary conditions of the world to-day.¹²³

This was precisely what Bell had in mind, and, while he was not thinking in terms of a strictly religious community¹²⁴, he did exchange letters on the subject with H.D.C. Pepler, who, after his conversion from Quakerism to Roman Catholicism, had taken part in the lay Dominican artists' community at Ditchling, along with Eric Gill and Edward Johnston. Pepler warned, "I think that communities are born and not made but may be given to you gradually as you insist on Christian standards of work and

¹¹⁷ George BELL to Lawrence Irving, 13 February 1940, *BELLP*, Vol. 150, f. 123.

¹¹⁸ Lawrence IRVING to Bell, 'Draft on duties of a Warden', c. February 1940, *BELLP*, Vol. 150, ff. 136-137.

¹¹⁹ Herbert BAKER to George Bell, 27/28 October 1944, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 242. Bell agreed with this: see George BELL to Sir Herbert Baker, 28 November 1944, f. 279.

¹²⁰ Joseph ARMITAGE, master craftsman, to Sir Herbert Baker, on Bell's ideas, 2 November 1944, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 269.

¹²¹ L.A. TURNER, master craftsman to Sir Herbert Baker, 26 October 1944, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 271.

¹²² A.T. SCOTT to Sir Herbert Baker, 21 November 1944, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 273. "I am sorry I cannot give you the opinions of those T.S. Eliot writes of: "the young, the enthusiasts, the breakers of fetters." Sir Herbert BAKER to George Bell, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 272. The impression that Bell's report was "divorced from realities" may have been harsh, considering that there were over four hundred churches in the diocese to provide employment for the guild.

¹²³ Gilbert LEDWARD, R.A. (Sculptor) to Sir Herbert Baker, 10 November 1944, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 270.

¹²⁴ George BELL to H.D.C. PEPLER, 2 November 1944, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 255. Bell explained that he would like to start with "a cabinet maker, a carver, a painter and a silversmith."

living,¹²⁵ explaining that "We attempted a religious life not only beyond our staying power but beyond what laymen should undertake."¹²⁶ Bell had hoped to start the workshop in the latter half of 1945¹²⁷, but the scheme was continually postponed, and in early 1946, Sir Herbert Baker died¹²⁸, clearly a setback. It was then decided that the Guild idea should be abandoned in favour of a panel of craftsmen to be called upon when necessary, and free to do their own work at other times. Disappointed, Bell determined to look for further opportunities, observing in 1948 that he was "sure that the agency idea... is the wrong line"¹²⁹. In 1950, however, he was forced to admit that while once his workshop idea had seemed "practical politics", it now seemed impossible¹³⁰. It was one of the few times that Bell's persistence as a supporter of the arts went unrewarded. The economic conditions of the post-war period may have taken their toll: it remained possible to make individual commissions, but these did not involve a long term commitment. A more compelling explanation, however, is that Pepler had been right to suggest that such a scheme was more likely to succeed if it grew spontaneously than if it were deliberately organised. Yet the proposed Guild was a typical product of Bell's thought and policy during the forties, combining the desire to reform church craftsmanship with medieval prototypes of the common life. It was Bell's response to "the mechanisation of culture" and the wartime destruction of church buildings, and it provided a further example of his conviction that the Church's relation to art could only be revived through recourse to tradition¹³¹.

Bell's optimism about his scheme for a Guild was perhaps a result of the success of another Christian arts organisation built on a mediaeval model, the

¹²⁵ H.D.C. PEPLER to George Bell, 30 October 1944, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 248. The community had "the unofficial support of Father Vincent McNabb and many other priests - but *not* with the explicit authority, either of the Bishop or the Dominican Order. [Bishop Amigo probably would not have approved it anyway] partly because he could not stand Gill's art..."

¹²⁶ H.D.C. PEPLER to George Bell, October 31 1944, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 254.

¹²⁷ George BELL to Edward Maufe, 30 November 1944, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 283.

¹²⁸ *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 322.

¹²⁹ George BELL to "Sir Charles", 21 February 1948, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 101, and see 'Draft Minutes of a Meeting... to consider the proposal for a Diocesan Centre for Work by Craftsmen and Artists in Chichester', and letter from George BELL to Mr. Phillips, 1 July 1947, *BELLP*, Vol. 152, ff. 57, 62.

¹³⁰ *BELLP*, Vol. 152, ff. 169, 182. Bell's first ever commission, while he was Dean of Canterbury, had been a dramatic and musical one: John Masefield's play *The Coming of Christ*, with music by Gustav Holst (1928). See SLACK, *George Bell*, Naperville, Illinois, p. 35

¹³¹ See JASPER, *George Bell*, p. 134: "Throughout all his efforts to further the association of the Church and the arts, Bell was impressed by the need for spiritual unity. The life of the Spirit had been gravely threatened by the mechanization of culture no less than by dictatorship and war: and it could only be strengthened and sustained by communion with the Creator."

Pilgrim Players, formed in 1939¹³². In 1930, as President of the Religious Drama Society¹³³, Bell had begun his association with the drama producer Martin Browne, who produced revivals of medieval mystery plays such as the *York Nativity Play* of Christmas 1930. Browne was appointed Director of Religious Drama for the Diocese of Chichester, and together, Browne and Bell weathered Protestant Truth Society protests against Henri Gheon's *The Marriage of St. Francis* in March 1931, saw *Disarm*, a play by Henzie Raeburn, Martin Browne's wife, performed in 1932, and held a Conference on Religion and Drama in the same year¹³⁴. In 1933, Browne produced the *Acts of St. Richard*, Chichester's thirteenth century patron saint, for celebrations of the centenary of the Oxford movement in June 1933.¹³⁵ Bell promoted the religious drama offered in the Diocese of Chichester as a potent evangelistic tool, calculated to "combat the religious indifference common today."¹³⁶ In 1934, Browne moved to York and was replaced at Chichester by Miss Bruce Williams. Bell also promoted *Nicodemus*, a play by Andrew Young, a Presbyterian minister from Hove, and produced by Browne, recommending it for performance at Rochester Cathedral in 1937,¹³⁷ and enlisted the help of Charles Williams in writing a pageant for The National Council for the Fourth Centenary of the English Bible in 1938¹³⁸. Bell and Browne remained in constant contact, and in November 1939, the Pilgrim Players were formed¹³⁹. The Players advertised themselves as "A company of professional actors who present plays with a spiritual theme... like the strolling Mystery players of old, they bring actors, costumes and properties to where the audience is, and play on any stage or none, at any time of the day..."¹⁴⁰ Here was another organisation under Bell's partial supervision which employed a traditional

¹³² Pamphlet on the Pilgrim Players, c. 1940, *BELLP*, Vol. 156 (Religious Drama 1934-1950), f. 185. See Dale E. SAVIDGE, 'E. Martin Browne and the Revival of Verse Drama in England', Ph.D. Thesis, University of South Carolina, 1991; E. Martin BROWNE, 'Drama as the Expression of Religion', *CN-L*, No. 208, March, 1944. The group was advertised in the *Guardian*, 16 February 1940, p. 83.

¹³³ *BELLP*, Vol. 155 (Religious Drama 1930-1933), f. 355.

¹³⁴ Charles WILLIAMS to George Bell 4 October 1932; Memorandum on Conference on Religion and Drama at the Palace, Chichester, October 1-3, 1932, *BELLP*, Vol. 155, ff. 222, 225-228. George BELL to T.S. Eliot, 20 August 1932, *BELLP*, Vol. 208 ('Eliot-Shaw'), f. 20.

¹³⁵ JASPER, *George Bell*, pp. 121-128. See also George BELL, 'The Church and Religious Drama', October 1930, *BELLP*, Vol. 155, f. 8.

¹³⁶ Pamphlet: 'Religion and Drama in the Diocese of Chichester', c. 1933, *BELLP*, Vol. 155, f. 353.

¹³⁷ *BELLP*, Vol. 156, ff. 139-143, 160-161.

¹³⁸ F.S. CRAGG to George Bell, 7 June 1937, *BELLP*, Vol. 156, f. 155. See also the synopsis of the pageant on f. 156.

¹³⁹ *BELLP*, Vol. 156, f. 183. John Gielgud was President, and Bell, T.S. Eliot, the Bishop of Oxford, Dorothy L. Sayers, Dame Sybil Thornecliffe and Charles Williams were Vice-Presidents

¹⁴⁰ Pamphlet on the Pilgrim Players, c. 1940, *BELLP*, Vol. 156, f. 185. The plays offered by the Pilgrim Players in 1940 were: T.S. Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral*, James Bridie, *Tobias and the Angel*, Morna Stewart, *England's Green*, Henri Gheon, *The Way of the Cross*, Charles Williams, *Terror of Light*, and for children, *Pilgrim Pie*. John Moorman remarked on their visit to his parish in the summer of 1942 that "They are certainly most accomplished actors." (*JRHM*, M.S. 3636, p. 62.)

means of combining religion and the arts¹⁴¹. The Players and the Religious Drama Society continued to co-operate in wartime, and plays were performed throughout the diocese, despite an incident in 1940 in which some members of the R.D.S. resigned their positions when they discovered that several Pilgrim Players were members of the Peace Pledge Union¹⁴². By 1944, Browne's work had been successful enough for Bell to make efforts to secure accommodation for his work back in Chichester¹⁴³. In 1947, a second Religious Drama Conference was held, at which the establishment of other "quite small travelling groups of players, who would take religious plays into villages and towns", was discussed.¹⁴⁴

Bell's association with T.S. Eliot also endured throughout the war years. The two had corresponded since 1930, when Bell had complimented Eliot on *Ash Wednesday*¹⁴⁵, and throughout the thirties Eliot sought Bell's advice on ecclesiastical matters arising from his work as a publisher.¹⁴⁶ Bell had also been responsible for introducing Eliot to Martin Browne, and Eliot's pageant *The Rock* had been the result. Eliot felt "gratified... that my first opportunity to do anything like the sort of work that I want to do, has come through the Church"¹⁴⁷. In the following year,

¹⁴¹ There were aspects of mediaeval drama that could not be revived. See Frances GLENDENNING's perceptive contribution to Frank GLENDENNING, *The Church and the Arts*, London, 1960, p.74, 'Drama, Theatre and the Church': "It is possible to resurrect the medieval plays, but it is impossible to recreate the medieval climate out of which these plays were written and into which they were received."

¹⁴² Martin BROWNE to George Bell, 16 August 1940, *BELLP*, Vol. 156, f. 183. The Pilgrim Players remain active in the 1990s.

¹⁴³ Correspondence between George BELL and Martin BROWNE, 29 September 1944 - 26 January 1945, *BELLP*, Vol. 156, ff. 192-210. Bell had wanted in September 1944 to dedicate Holy Trinity, Brighton specially to religious drama, and hoped that Martin Browne would make it his centre. The church and gallery held 800 people, had been an R.A.F. Garrison Church, and now had only a handful of parishioners, but the idea was not followed up. See also JASPER, *George Bell*, p. 125.

¹⁴⁴ *BELLP*, Vol. 156, f. 248.

¹⁴⁵ George BELL, letter to T.S. Eliot, 4 July, 1930, *BELLP*, Vol. 208 ('Eliot-Shaw'), f. 3. Eliot's reply, 20 July 1930, f. 4, explained that the poem "aims to be a sort of modern Vita Nuova... not 'devotional' verse." In his youth, Bell had acquired a reputation for his interest in poetry, and had received the Newdigate Prize for poetry in 1904. See Edwin ROBERTSON, *Unshakeable Friends: George Bell and the German Churches*, London, 1995, p. 1.

¹⁴⁶ Eliot sought his advice on a critique of the Lambeth Conference of 1930, (ELIOT to George Bell, 19 November, 1930, *BELLP*, Vol. 208, f. 5. See also ELIOT to Bell, 25 November, 1930, f. 7), and on possible contributors on religious drama to a Christian Encyclopedia (ELIOT to Bell, 19th November, 1930, f. 6). They also corresponded on Anglo-Catholic liturgical preferences (ELIOT to Bell, 19 December 1930, 7 January 1931, ff. 10-12), but Eliot had to decline Bell's invitation to write an article for the *Cicestrian* on what he would do if he were a Dean: "I do not have the slightest idea... I know that if I were a bishop I should go very quickly into a nursing home for Nervous Disorders..." (ELIOT to Bell, 9 February 1931, f. 13.) In 1934, Bell played host to Eliot, Emily Hale and her father, and discussed Hitler with them over lunch (ff. 22-28).

¹⁴⁷ T.S. ELIOT to George BELL, 13 June, 1934, *BELLP*, Vol. 208, f. 21. *The Rock*, which had its opening night on May 28 1934, and ran until Saturday June 9, was an enormous production, with 90 parishes taking part in the final scene. *BELLP*, Vol. 156, f. 24. Bell had, shortly after his enthronement as Bishop of Chichester, appointed Martin Browne as "diocesan Director of Religious Drama - the first appointment of its kind in Great Britain." JASPER, *George Bell*, p. 121.

encouraged again by Bell, Eliot wrote *Murder in the Cathedral* for the Canterbury Festival, later commenting that "To Dr. Bell's initiative... I owe my admission to the theatre..."¹⁴⁸ However, Bell's later attempts to involve Eliot in a church commission were unsuccessful. In 1935, he encouraged Eliot to write a pageant for Liverpool Cathedral, but Eliot responded that for pageants, "the prime necessity is a producer of imagination, rather than a poet or dramatist". Bell took Eliot's advice, and left the pageant in the hands of Martin Browne.¹⁴⁹ At the Church and the Artist Conference in 1944, Eliot explained further that "He was himself more interested in what secular drama should be when written by the instructed Christian than in 'religious drama'". His discussion of the relationship between the secular dramatist and his religion recalled Sayers' conviction that the artist "did his work best when it was produced from inside the dogma": he felt that "The Christian dramatist should be interested in theology for its own sake, and should digest it before using it." The Christian religion helped to keep the writer "right".¹⁵⁰ This was a quality which Bell recognised in Eliot's *Four Quartets*. "The more one reads and re-reads them the deeper impression they make," he wrote to Eliot; "They are themselves a profound spiritual experience, and that is communicated to the reader."¹⁵¹ Here, then, was a further way in which the Church and the artist could re-establish their connection: not through direct commissions, but through the decision of the artist to work on "secular" projects within a religious framework. During the thirties and forties, Bell fostered friendships with a number of writers who often worked in this way, including Sayers, Charles Williams¹⁵² and C.S. Lewis¹⁵³. Bell was forced, however,

¹⁴⁸ T.S. ELIOT, addition to the 'Obituary' on Bell for *The Times*, 14 October 1958. *BELLP*, Vol. 208, f. 43. Bell wrote to congratulate Eliot on the play on 10 July 1935, (f. 32), and hoped that "you will give us successive plays... on great religious themes." See also RUPP, 'I Seek My Brethren', p. 5.

¹⁴⁹ *BELLP*, Vol. 156, ff. 93-95. Eliot felt that he could not afford to postpone his other activities to write a pageant. Bell did not have any particular past connection with Liverpool Cathedral; it is likely that he was consulted because of his reputation as a patron of drama, gained while he was Dean of Canterbury.

¹⁵⁰ Summary notes on The Church and the Artist Conference: Comments by T.S. Eliot, " *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 193.

¹⁵¹ BELL to T.S. Eliot, 16 October, 1944, *BELLP*, Vol. 208, f. 36. See below, Chapter 4, *passim*.

¹⁵² Williams also wrote 'A Service to be used at St. Paul's at the meeting of the Conferences of Oxford and Edinburgh. Prepared at the request of the Bishop of Chichester' (*CW*, Box 1, Envelope 1, K1, K2). The service included a remarkably original litany in four "acts", but on 28 June 1937, Bell was compelled to write to Williams: "To my great chagrin the authorities both at St. Paul's and at Lambeth have shied at the actual text of the Service which you so nobly drafted. They liked the arrangement of the four acts, but they stumbled at the words, and they said that if they, being not plain men, found the language difficult, would not really plain men, whether of our own or other tongues, find a greater difficulty? I entirely disagree with the authorities on the matter. You will be glad to hear that I also have Evelyn Underhill on my side." (*BELLP*, Vol. 217, Chichester Correspondence V-Z, f. 183.) It is difficult to ascertain what the authorities, versed in the language of the Book of Common Prayer, found difficult in Williams's service.

¹⁵³ Bell had also corresponded with John Masefield, and, earlier, with Gustav Holst. *BELLP*, Vol. 205, ff. 205, 222, 235.

to discourage the use in the Church of drama written from outside a Christian framework, even when it addressed apparently Christian themes. A controversy arose in 1948 when plans were made without Bell's permission for a production of Shaw's *Saint Joan* in St. Swithun's church. When a parishioner protested, Bell insisted that the play be transferred from the church to the parish hall, since "Shaw's own interpretation in his Preface is hardly a Christian one..." Bell's Chaplain told the *Kent and Sussex Courier* that "[the Bishop] has to make sure that the play proposed to be given in Church comes clearly within the field of religious drama, and is intended directly to advance the Glory of God."¹⁵⁴ The incident reveals the one limitation which Bell placed on the use of art within the Church: it must be informed by catholic orthodoxy, and be in keeping with the traditions of the Church.

Writing on the relationship between religion and culture in 1940, Bell linked his interest in the arts with other equally controversial aspects of his ministry:

Believers in justice and truth, in mercy and love, in art and poetry and music, have this as common ground: that the things they believe are indestructible. They are not the same things as the Christian religion... But they can truly be regarded as auxiliaries to the Christian religion... they have noble gifts to bring to Christianity. And without Christianity will *they* in the long run be able to survive?¹⁵⁵

Bell argued that "true art" aimed for "perfection", "truth" and "integrity", that the purposes of art were best fulfilled within a Christian framework, through which it could contribute to defeating the "totalitarian creed" and preserving civilised culture. If Catholic tradition was relevant to art, it was essential to maintaining an ethically acceptable war effort. For the "secularist", the world was "an enclosed system, with no reference to any authority outside itself," whereas Christianity made ethical demands which were not subject to relativism:

If there is no authority outside the finite world, what is there to live for? What is the justification of life? What is the standard by which the worth of any action is to be judged? What is the justification of ethics and morality?

¹⁵⁴ Views of the Bishop's Chaplain published in the *Kent and Sussex Courier*, under the title, 'Shaw and Bishop Write to Courier', *BELLP*, Vol. 156, f. 283. Shaw's response was abrasive: "He excludes me because he thinks that I am a dangerous man... He is right. I am a dangerous man, as dangerous as Ibsen or Nietzsche, Wycliffe or Hus, Peter or Paul." *Kent and Sussex Courier*, 'G.B.S. Upsets the Apple Cart', 5 March 1948, *BELLP*, Vol. 156, f. 284.

¹⁵⁵ BELL, *Christianity and World Order*, pp. 146-147.

What hope is there of declaring a law which citizens or nations will obey?¹⁵⁶

The concepts of law and justice were, Bell argued, inseparable from those of sin and righteousness. Consequently, "a man who has no reverence for Law and Justice... cannot... hear the Gospel of God's love."¹⁵⁷

Bell's opinions on the ethical responsibilities of the British war effort were not always shared by his ecclesiastical colleagues¹⁵⁸. He insisted that tradition and dissent were compatible, and indeed, that the Establishment of the Church of England compelled him, as a member of the House of Lords, to take exception to aspects of the war effort which he felt compromised Christian morality. As well as speaking as "a convinced and public opponent of Hitler and the Nazis from the beginning of his dominion as chancellor of the Reich in 1933", he also tried to speak with "a faith in something more than patriotism... as a minister of the Church of Christ, which proclaims the sovereignty of God over the whole of human life, and is universal in its range."¹⁵⁹ The Church and its ministers must criticise the State. Bell's view of the responsibilities delegated to the Church by Establishment, combined with his Incarnational affirmation of the validity of the Church's role in the world, led him to insist that "the entry of the Church into politics" was sometimes necessary to avoid "a betrayal of the Church's faith":

The Gospel is relevant to the whole of human conduct. Christianity requires action, which has to be taken under the conditions of actual life... It is from the Church's standpoint false to say that religion has only to do with the

¹⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p. 63. Bell referred his readers to Oliver QUICK, *Christianity and Justice*, p. 49. See also BELL's 'Preface' to *The Church and Humanity*, p. vi.: "I am convinced that it is in a living faith in a personal and transcendent God, with all that it means for the rule of law, and for love and brotherhood among men, that the principal source of the spiritual recovery of Europe and the world will be found."

¹⁵⁸ See Timothy D. WILBY, 'Attitudes to War in the Church of England 1939-1983', M.A. Thesis, University of Durham, 1987, pp. 85ff.

¹⁵⁹ BELL, 'Preface' to *The Church and Humanity*, pp. v-vi. Bell had supported appeasement because he regarded the Versailles treaty as inequitable, and was horrified by the prospect of war. In March 1937, he protested against the "colossal sums about to be spent on British rearmament", fearing that such action would have a "bellicose effect." ('From the Bishop's Window', *Chichester Diocesan Gazette*, March 1937, pp. 70-71, and see September 1937, p. 276.) However, his opposition to Nazism can be traced back to a letter to *The Times* on 14 June, 1933, calling attention to the plight of the German churches. CHANDLER, *Brethren in Adversity*, p. 41 (and see pp. 26-27 for a discussion of Bell's letter-writing campaign on the German church struggle in the columns *The Times*). The House of Lords was not yet open to Bell as an avenue of protest at this because the German church struggle was not the concern of national policy (p. 27). See also WILKINSON, 'Bishop Bell and Germany', pp. 84-85. For a discussion of the early responses of Anglican leaders to the Nazi concentration camps, see Andrew CHANDLER, 'The Church of England and Nazi Germany 1933-1945', Ph.D. Thesis, Cambridge University, 1991, pp. 6-44.

next world, and the State with this, or that religion is a purely individual and personal affair.¹⁶⁰

Since Christian action must be taken "under the conditions of actual life", it followed that the Church should work for social reform alongside Trade Unions¹⁶¹. It also followed that bearing arms against totalitarianism was justified, and ought to be supported by the Church. War did, however, remain incompatible with the gospel:

Christ declares the fatherhood of God. War blasphemes God. The gospel of Christ is salvation. War is destruction. The gospel affirms community. War denies it. The gospel stands for the imperishable worth of the individual personality. War shows the individual suddenly as "an isolated, helpless, powerless atom in a world of irrational monsters."¹⁶²

Bell hastened to distance himself from the jingoist attitudes which had prevailed in the Church of England during the First World War. War must be "a denial of the Christian way"¹⁶³, and words such as "crusade" ought to be abandoned on the grounds that "The Church stands for the Cross, the gospel of redemption... [and] one thing for which it is impossible to fight with earthly weapons is the Cross."¹⁶⁴ Bell preferred St. Augustine's doctrine of the Just War, which held that war was the

¹⁶⁰ George BELL, 'The Church and the Future of Europe', in *The Church and Humanity*, p. 115, originally published in the *Fortnightly Review*, March, 1943, the substance of a paper read to the American Democratic Union in London, January 20, 1943. Bell's own contribution to *Mysterium Christi* (1930) had anticipated this statement in the assertion: "Christian theologians are bound by the very principle of the Incarnation to make an effort to enter into the world's affairs." (See also WILKINSON, 'Bishop Bell and Germany', p. 80.) For similar assertions by William TEMPLE, see his *Citizen and Churchman*, London, 1941, p. 73.

¹⁶¹ "The Church must take its full part with trade unionists and all men of goodwill in the task of improving social conditions and developing the political and social conscience. Trade Unionists are not pagans." BELL, 'The Unifying Forces of Europe', in *The Church and Humanity*, p. 163. Originally a speech given in the House of Lords, 19 December 1944.

¹⁶² George BELL, *Christianity and World Order*, p. 73. Bell had probably been the author of the passage on war in the Continuation Committee Minutes which followed the Stockholm Conference, Eisenach, 1929: "We believe that war, considered as an institution for the settlement of international disputes, is incompatible with the mind and method of Christ, and therefore incompatible with the mind and method of his Church." See ROBERTSON, *Unshakeable Friend*, p. 6; WILBY, 'Attitudes to War in the Church of England', p. 1. Similar convictions were expressed in the Report of the Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State, *The Churches Survey their Task*, July, 1937, p. 59. For a discussion of Bell's criticism of the Nazi ideals of "community", encapsulated in the *Volk*, see RUSAMA, *Moral Issues*, p. 41.

¹⁶³ George BELL, Bishop's Message for "Special War Number of the Chichester Diocesan Leaflet", October 1939, *BELLP*, Vol. 72 (War 1939-45), f. 29. St. Francis's 'Peace Prayer' was incorporated in the same leaflet in a sheet of "prayers to hang up."

¹⁶⁴ BELL, 'The Church's Function in Wartime' in *The Church and Humanity*, pp. 27-28. Originally published in the *Fortnightly Review*, November, 1939. See also SLACK, *George Bell*, pp. 82-84.

result of a failure equitably to share the world's resources¹⁶⁵, and that it ought only to be pursued for the regaining of "Order", or "a system of right relations", peace being merely "the tranquillity which springs from Order."¹⁶⁶

At the outbreak of war in 1939, Bell accepted the standards of a "Just War" listed by the Roman Catholic publication, *A Code of International Ethics*¹⁶⁷. If such moral standards were to be maintained, the Church must be prepared to be "prophetic", and not be content with merely being a "spiritual auxiliary" to the State¹⁶⁸. Consequently, "when all of the resources of a State are concentrated... on winning a war, the Church is not a part of those resources," and "It must not hesitate, if the occasion arises, to condemn the infliction of reprisals, or the bombing of civilian populations, by the military forces of its own nation."¹⁶⁹ Early in 1942, Bell was compelled to follow just such a line when "area bombing" became the principal function of Bomber Command¹⁷⁰. This was a euphemism for the complete

¹⁶⁵ BELL, *Christianity and World Order*, p. 77. See WILKINSON, 'Bishop Bell and Germany', p. 87.

¹⁶⁶ BELL, *Christianity and World Order*, p. 73.

¹⁶⁷ "... for a war to be lawful, it must:- [(a) Have been declared by a legitimate authority. (b) Have a just and grave cause, proportioned to the evils it brings about. (c) Only be undertaken after all means of peaceful solution of the conflict have been exhausted without success. (d) Have serious chances of success. (e) Be carried out with right intention.[] They add further that:- 'It is also necessary that moderation should characterize the conducting of hostilities and should keep the demands of the victor within the limits of justice and charity.'" *ibid.*, p. 80, quoting the Catholic Social Guild, *A Code of International Ethics*, pp. 72-73. See ROBERTSON, *Unshakeable Friend*, p. 58. This Code was often cited by Catholic Anglicans in this period, and Oliver QUICK, *Christianity and Justice*, London, 1940, pp. 20-21, drew conclusions similar to those of Bell.

¹⁶⁸ The Methodist Gordon RUPP (*I Seek My Brethren*, p. 18) remarks that on this point "In fact Bell was much nearer to Luther's Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms than a good deal of later Lutheranism, in an authentic way which accounts for Luther's astonishing ethical radicalism often missed by those who think of him as simply supporting a conservative view." (p. 18, see also RUSAMA, *Moral Issues*, p. 70.) Alan WILKINSON comes closer to the mark in asserting that "Bell shared the Anglo-Catholics' conviction that the church was not, and must never be, the creature of the state." Bell's model was more likely to have been Charles Gore, who insisted that "What I believe in is not the Church of England but the one holy catholic church." ('Bishop Bell and Germany', p. 77.) Wilkinson also finds echoes of Newman's Tract 1 (1833) in this quotation (p. 85). See also HEIN, 'George Bell', p. 499.

¹⁶⁹ BELL, 'The Church's Function in Wartime', in *The Church and Humanity*, pp. 25, 27. See also *Christianity and World Order*, p. 86. Bell had protested against the Japanese bombing of China ('From the Bishop's Window', *Chichester Diocesan Gazette*, October 1937) and had a precedent in Archbishop Davidson's protest against bombing reprisals and the British use of poison gas during the First World War. See Andrew CHANDLER, 'The Church of England and the Obliteration Bombing of Germany in the Second World War', *English Historical Review*, 1993, p. 922; HEIN, 'George Bell', p. 506; WILKINSON 'Bishop Bell and Germany', pp. 78-79. Bell's insistence on the autonomy of the Church extended to domestic concerns such as divorce legislation. See 'From the Bishop's Window', *Chichester Diocesan Gazette*, March, 1937, p. 71.

¹⁷⁰ Lang had been informed by Sir Kingsley Wood, Secretary at the Air Ministry, that the government accepted the 1928 League of Nations declaration that "The intentional bombing of civilian populations is illegal." Many churchmen assumed that such action would be out of the question for British airmen, because, as the Bishop of Liverpool put it in 1940, "we [British] are fundamentally decent." (See CHANDLER, 'Obliteration Bombing', pp. 924-925.) However, the Assistant Chief of

obliteration of cities. Officially, the targets were military installations and factories, but the selected areas also included residential and civil buildings. Even the use of the word "target" could be regarded as deceptive rhetoric. In 1941, it was estimated that only 20 per cent. of British bombers were likely to drop their bombs within the 75 square miles surrounding their target. Arthur Harris, the new Commander-in-Chief of Bomber Command, taking up his position in February 1942, improved this record, but shifted the focus from military objectives to paralysing German industry. He inherited an agenda which from July 1941 had insisted on the attack of German morale. Harris believed that it was more effective warfare to kill German munitions workers than to bomb their factories. He zealously defended the actions of Bomber Command: precision bombing campaigns were rarely effective, and frequently involved horrifying losses. Harris's policies, confirmed by his conviction that bombing would win the war and his desire to preserve alive as many of his men as possible, were carried out, as in the case of the bombing of Dresden, out of obedience to High Command. Yet when three-quarters of Hamburg was destroyed in fire-storms in July 1943, the operation was remorselessly codenamed "Gomorra" ¹⁷¹.

This was intolerable for Bell, and in 1943 and 1944 he made repeated public protests ¹⁷², warning the House of Lords on 9 February, 1944 that "actions taken in war as military necessities are often supported at the time by a class of arguments which, after the war is over, people find are arguments to which they never should

Air Staff issued a memorandum on 12 October 1942, which described what had actually been the situation for some months, admitting that "the Cabinet have authorized a bombing policy which includes the attack of enemy morale." Max HASTINGS, *Bomber Command*, London, 1981, p. 201. The culmination of the "area bombing policy" was the bombing of Dresden in February 1945; it was showered with 650,000 incendiary bombs, and the resulting fire-storm killed 135,000 people and destroyed eight square miles of city. (HEIN, 'George Bell', p. 507.)

¹⁷¹ Richard OVERY, *Why the Allies Won*, London, 1995, pp. 108-113. The survey on the accuracy of Bomber Command's attacks was conducted by a British civil servant, D.M. Butt. His findings were corroborated by the Singleton Report six months later. Bombing did not prove to be a particularly effective means of paralysing industry; only 10 per-cent of Germany's production was destroyed in 1944 (p. 128).

¹⁷² Bell's first public protest was published in *The Times* on 17 April 1941. Lang then addressed Convocation on 27 May 1941, warning against the moral dangers of the bombing of civilians. Bell criticised bombing policy in the Upper House of Bishops on 28 May, and was shouted down by Bishop Garbett. (CHANDLER, 'Obliteration Bombing', pp. 929ff. See also Geoffrey BEST, 'The Bishop and the Bomber', *History Today*, 33, p. 30.) For accounts of other protests against obliteration bombing, see HASTINGS, *Bomber Command*, pp. 201-210; Adam PIETTE, *Imagination at War: British Fiction and Poetry 1939-1945*, London, 1995, pp. 78-79. Readers interested in the direct response to Bell's campaign in the Lords should consult *BELLP*, Vol. 70, which preserves a large body of correspondence from supporters and detractors. A detailed description of the response of the Anglican leadership is given by CHANDLER, 'Obliteration Bombing', pp. 926ff, and see p. 940 for a discussion of letters in support of Bell's stand.

have listened."¹⁷³ The comment echoed MacKinnon's insistence at Malvern that the Church must detach itself from the machinery of total war in order to safeguard the nation's future moral integrity¹⁷⁴, and it was supported by the protests of the R.A.F. chaplain John Collins, who voiced his dissent at the Bomber Command Headquarters at High Wycombe¹⁷⁵. It was not merely that revenge was incompatible with Christian ethics. It was characteristic of Bell's view of the integration of religion, the arts and national character that he also deplored the indiscriminate destruction of buildings in Berlin¹⁷⁶, containing spiritually valuable cultural artefacts, which would be required precisely as resources for re-civilising a defeated Germany:

It is said that 74,000 persons have been killed and that 3,000,000 are already homeless. The policy is obliteration, openly acknowledged. That is not a justifiable act of war. Again, Berlin is one of the great centres of art collections in the world. It has a large collection of oriental and classical sculpture. It has one of the best picture galleries in Europe, comparable to the National Gallery. It has a gallery of modern art better than the Tate, a museum of ethnology without parallel in this country, one of the biggest and best organised libraries... in the world. Almost all these non-industrial, non-military buildings are grouped near the old Palace and the Street of the Linden. The whole of that street... has been demolished... These works of art and those libraries will be wanted for the re-education of the Germans after the war. I wonder whether your Lordships realise the loss involved in that...¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ George BELL, 'Obliteration Bombing', in *The Church and Humanity*, p. 131, originally a speech in the House of Lords, 9 February, 1944. See Adrian HASTINGS, *The Shaping of Prophecy: Passion, Perception and Practicality*, London, 1995, pp. 28, 89, CHANDLER, 'Obliteration Bombing', pp. 938-939; SLACK, *George Bell*, pp. 94-96. J.H. OLDHAM covered the speech in this *CN-L* Editorial, No. 202, 23 February 1944, concluding that "We are powerless in ourselves to escape from the spiritual danger that encompasses us. The very air we breathe is poisoned."

¹⁷⁴ See above, pp. 74, 118-119.

¹⁷⁵ Diana COLLINS, *Partners in Protest: Life With John Collins*, London, 1992, pp. 133-134. Harris was Diana's father's cousin, and despite Collins's protests against his policy, he remained a close friend.

¹⁷⁶ For an expression of similar sentiments, see J.R.R. TOLKIEN, letter to Christopher Tolkien, 30 January, 1945, Humphrey CARPENTER (Ed.), *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, London, 1981, p. 111.

¹⁷⁷ Bell speaking to the House of Lords on the obliteration bombing of Berlin, 9 February 1944. *The Church and Humanity*, pp. 133-134; 139. Arthur PONSONBY wrote to Bell to express his agreement: "The destruction of the fine old historic cities is a ghastly loss not only to the Germans but to all of us to whom 'a thing of beauty is a joy forever' and who value our common European heritage." 10 February 1944, *BELLP*, Vol. 73 (War 1939-45), ff. 70-71. See HEIN, 'George Bell', p. 504.

Bell's plea for the preservation of culture for the future reconstruction of a Europe ravaged by Nazism did not dwell at length on the destruction of churches; rather the relation between religion and culture was implicitly accepted. The mention of the library¹⁷⁸ recalled the preoccupation of British literary culture with the burning of books during the Blitz, typified by Rose Macaulay, whose library was destroyed in May 1941, leaving her "bookless, homeless, sans everything, but my eyes to weep with," and Mervyn Peake's *Titus Groan*, in which the megalomaniac Steerpike has Sepulchre's massive library razed to the ground. Adam Piette argues that such instances reveal "the sheer emotional depth of people's attachment to culture in wartime."¹⁷⁹ By alluding to the existence of a library in Berlin, Bell reversed the perspective, compelling the Lords to apply these Blitz-engendered emotions to the destruction of German culture by Allied bombers. Area bombing not only killed civilians; it left the survivors surrounded by "the corpses of thought"¹⁸⁰, annihilated repositories of tradition, like Sepulchre amongst the ashes of his books.

Implicit in this perspective was Bell's belief, fostered by his close relationships with members of the Confessing Church, that it was necessary to distinguish "between Germany and the Hitlerite State", the latter being likewise notorious for its book-burning. The "annihilation of Germany" could not be considered a justifiable war aim. Bell opposed the policy of "Unconditional Surrender", and deplored Vansittart's broadcast talks for the B.B.C. Overseas Service entitled "Black Record: Germans, Past and Present", which characterised Germany as a "butcher bird", and described Hitler as "the natural and continuous product of a breed which from the dawn of history has been predatory and bellicose"¹⁸¹. Bell confided in the pacifist Duke of Bedford in 1943, "I am troubled by the drift from an ideological war to something much more akin to a war based on

¹⁷⁸ He also referred to the destruction of the University Library in Hamburg.

¹⁷⁹ PIETTE, *Imagination at War*, pp. 47-54, and see Jane EMERY, *Rose Macaulay: A Writer's Life*, London, 1991, pp. 267, 268-269; and Mervyn PEAKE, *Titus Groan* (1946), London, 1968, p. 112. According to Piette, *Titus Groan* was begun in 1940. In 1949, Macaulay could "still smell those acrid drifts of smouldering ashes that once were live books."

¹⁸⁰ PEAKE, *Titus Groan*, p. 235.

¹⁸¹ Robert VANSITTART, *Black Record: Germans Past and Present*, London, 1941, p. 16. See also CHANDLER, 'The Church of England and Nazi Germany', pp. 185-192. OVERY, *How the Allies Won*, argues that the blurring of the distinction between Nazis and Germans was due in large measure to President Roosevelt's Germanophobia (p. 287). J.H. OLDHAM, as editor of the *CN-L*, wrote on January 24, 1940 (No. 19), of "the necessity of distinguishing between the German people and that régime." On 12 February 1941, (No. 68) he criticised Vansittart. See also No. 77, 6 April 1941. Donald MACKINNON expressed disgust with Vansittart in 'Christianity and Justice', *Theology*, XLII, 1941, p. 349. The influence of Vansittartism on some Anglicans is attested by an anonymous document associated with Toc.H. (TC, M.S. 30446, n.d.), recommending the annihilation of millions of German, Italian and Japanese people in the interests of future world security.

power... I am all opposed myself to the cry of 'unconditional surrender'."¹⁸² In July 1944, Bell protested to Lord Halifax, describing Vansittart's policy as "deplorable", an appeal to "the lowest passions", and "a menace to all we stand for"¹⁸³. He also had in mind an immediate practical consequence of Vansittartism. Early in 1942, he had visited Stockholm on the request of Winston Churchill, as part of an effort to "re-establish cultural links" between Britain and Sweden¹⁸⁴. He had met with Schönfeld and Bonhoeffer, who had informed him of plans to overthrow Hitler, and sought to gain reassurance from the British Government that Germany would not be invaded in the event of a successful coup or assassination attempt. It would be difficult, they explained, to ensure the co-operation of the German resistance if there were no public or private guarantee that the Allies would not exploit a coup as an opportunity to destroy Germany. On his return, Bell pleaded with the Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden to make such a statement, but the British Government refused to make contact with the German Resistance¹⁸⁵. In the Upper House of Convocation at Canterbury in October 1942, Bell lamented:

I could wish that the British Government would make it very much clearer than they have done that this is a war between rival philosophies of life... and would assure the anti-Nazis in Germany that they would treat a Germany which effectively repudiated Hitler and Hitlerism in a very different way from the Germany in which Hitler still continued to rule.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸² George BELL to the pacifist Duke of Bedford, 17 December 1943, *BELLP*, Vol. 73 (War 1939-45), f. 314. See also RUPP, 'I Seek My Brethren', p. 18.

¹⁸³ George BELL to Lord Halifax, 18 July 1944, *BELLP*, Vol. 73, f. 356. Halifax replied, "...I certainly do not take so black a view of Vansittart's speech as you do!" but stated his broad agreement with Bell on "the right Christian attitude". (Halifax to Bell, 31 July 1944, f. 357.) See WILBY, 'Attitudes to War', p. 90. Bell had unsuccessfully requested Eden to publicly disassociate the Government from Vansittartism in 1942 (CHANDLER, 'The Church of England and Nazi Germany', p. 192).

¹⁸⁴ Bell kept a journal on the visit (*BELLP*, Vol. 279), and reported on the less confidential aspects of his visit to Sweden in a guest Editorial of the *CN-L*, No. 139, 24 June 1942. In 1944-1945, the *CN-L* printed an extensive discussion of the need to avoid vengeance in a defeated Germany (Nos. 216-224).

¹⁸⁵ George CAREY, 'Faith in Resistance 1933-1945', *Theology*, Vol. XCVIII, No. 786, 1995, p. 425; ROBERTSON, *Unshakeable Friend*, pp. 85ff; WILKINSON, 'Bishop Bell and Germany', p. 86; RUPP, 'I Seek My Brethren', pp. 20-23, FIELD, 'George Bell', pp. 56-57; SLACK, *George Bell*, pp. 88-94; HEIN, 'George Bell', pp. 501-502. Of these, only the last expresses any sympathy with Eden's decision. Bell's letter to Eden is preserved in the West Sussex Record Office folder on 'The Church in War', MP 2661. He publicised his own information about the plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler in *The Living Church*, February 3rd, 1946, in an article on 'The Background of the Hitler Plot' (pp. 15-17). He hoped this would correct common misapprehensions that "the plot of July 20, 1944, was a conspiracy of the militarists... the work of men who were already realizing in 1942 that they were losing the war..." Kathleen BLISS published details on the plot in her *CN-L* Editorial, No. 270, 2 October 1946. For details on the assassination attempts, see OVERY, *Why the Allies Won*, pp. 307-309.

¹⁸⁶ BELL, *The Church and Humanity*, pp. 83-84.

On 11 February 1943, a month after the Casablanca conference demanded the unconditional surrender of Germany¹⁸⁷, Bell told the Lords that the "Nazi assassins" ought not to be considered in the same light as the "people of Germany whom they have outraged"; indeed, to do so was to perpetuate the barbarism. "The remedy," he insisted, "is to tell those inside Germany who are anti-Fascist that we want their help..."¹⁸⁸ This was, he argued, a war against barbarism rather than against Germany, yet the tactics of the Allied powers, typified by Vansittartism, were themselves rapidly slipping into barbarism.

Bell's campaign for the rights of Jewish refugees, and his attempts to alert the British people to the realities of the Nazi persecutions, have been examined in recent historiography¹⁸⁹. The response of the Churches to these issues had been embarrassingly tardy. Arthur Ponsonby's 1928 publication, *Falsehood in War Time*, having exposed many of the atrocity stories of the last war as propaganda, now had the unfortunate effect of arousing popular scepticism of any atrocity story¹⁹⁰. Wilkinson has explored the attitudes to Judaism revealed in the journal of Bell's own diocese, *The Cicestrian*, reaching the disturbing conclusion that "Anti-Semitic attitudes were among the stock responses of many Christians", at least until after the holocaust, when the results of a determined anti-Semitic policy were revealed¹⁹¹. Until 1945, most English people had murky perceptions of the horrors of the concentration camps. Hans Ehrenberg, a Confessing Church Pastor and Jewish Christian who had been imprisoned at Sachsenhausen and forced to carry out corpses, escaped to England, and stayed with Bell in Chichester, found that most English people were unable to assimilate his experiences. He added the damning conclusion that "they always want to believe the best of people and absolutely refuse to have anything to do with the fight against the Devil."¹⁹² Bell, however, was active

¹⁸⁷ CHANDLER, 'The Church of England and Nazi Germany', p. 193.

¹⁸⁸ BELL, *The Church and Humanity*, pp. 86, 94. See also ROBERTSON, *Unshakeable Friend*, p. 90; CHANDLER, 'The Church of England and Nazi Germany', pp. 193-202. This had been an aim of the leaflet raids of 1939-40, but the rejection of Bell's pleas for support for the assassination attempt suggests that his fears of a "drift" in Allied policy away from the distinction between "Nazi" and "German" were well founded.

¹⁸⁹ WILKINSON, 'Bishop Bell and Germany', pp. 82ff; RUPP, *I Seek My Brethren*, p. 16.

¹⁹⁰ WILKINSON, *Dissent or Conform? War, Peace and the English Churches 1900-1945*, London, 1986, p. 246.

¹⁹¹ *ibid.*, p. 143. That the Anglican bishops were aware of the dangers of anti-Semitism in Germany is demonstrated by Andrew CHANDLER, 'A Question of Fundamental Principles: The Church of England and the Jews of Germany, 1933-1937', *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, XXXVIII, 1993, p. 223; and CHANDLER, 'The Church of England and Nazi Germany', pp. 31-43; 73-125, 202-212. Bell's opinion was clear enough in his 'From the Bishop's Window' column in the *Chichester Diocesan Gazette*, March, 1939, p. 89; July 1938, p. 211; September 1938, p. 271.

¹⁹² Hans EHRENBURG, *Autobiography of a German Pastor*, London, 1943, p. 51.

as early as 1933 in attempts to mobilise the International Missionary Council as well as other Anglican and Free Church leaders, to raise money to aid Jewish Christians in Germany, although he was disappointed by the results¹⁹³. Then, early in the war, refugees from Germany were interned by the British Government as "enemy aliens". Bell went personally in 1940 to visit his friend Pastor Franz Hildebrandt in an internment camp on the Isle of Man. Hildebrandt recalled that on his arrival, Bell was "almost speechless... The sight of the refugees in their captivity was just too much for him - it was not only a question of a wrong to so many of his personal friends, it was a moral burden on the English people."¹⁹⁴ "Refugee movements," Bell had told the Jewish Historical Society in 1939, "represent a challenge to humanity," and the evil which causes them can only be cured with "the aid of a counter-religion, deeper and stronger than the Fascist or the Communist."¹⁹⁵

Once again Bell was concerned with "moral burden on the English people", placed upon them by the refusal to distinguish Germans from Nazis. "The refugee is not an enemy alien. The present war is not a war on a primarily national basis, but is, as British statesmen have often stated, a war between ideologies and principles," Bell told the House of Lords in August 1940¹⁹⁶. The same principle governed his discussion of the response to the concentration camps and other atrocities in the House of Lords in 1943. He wanted to secure an agreement that only those directly responsible, and not the German people as a whole, would be punished for these crimes¹⁹⁷. It was impossible for a believer in the Incarnation to condemn the entire

¹⁹³ See 'From the Bishop's Window', *Chichester Diocesan Gazette*, December, 1937, pp. 406. For a discussion of Bell's activities on behalf of German Jews prior to 1937, see CHANDLER, 'A Question of Fundamental Principles', p. 238ff. On the question of why Bell's fundraising attempts received such meagre support, CHANDLER, 'The Church of England and Nazi Germany', p. 125, observes: "If the English Church failed to give to the victims of Nazism, it did not lack the humanity to be moved, nor the vision to judge and the voice to protest on their behalf. This should be recognized." (Chandler's italics.)

¹⁹⁴ Pastor Hildebrandt, quoted in Sabine LEIBHOLZ -BONHOEFFER, *The Bonhoeffers: Portrait of a Family*, Chicago, 1944, pp. 127-128. See ROBERTSON, *Unshakeable Friend*, p. 69, SLACK, *George Bell*, pp. 84-86. HILDEBRANDT later edited a collection of writings by German pastors, *And Other Pastors of Thy Flock: A German Tribute to the Bishop of Chichester*, Cambridge, 1942.

¹⁹⁵ George BELL, 'Humanity and the Refugees', in *The Church and Humanity*, p. 11. The quotation is from the Lucien Wolf Memorial Lecture, given to the Jewish Historical Society on 1 February 1939. Apart from being a recognition of the need for action on the part of Christians, the speech is duly repentant for anti-Semitic tendencies in the history of the Church.

¹⁹⁶ George BELL, 'Internment of Aliens', *ibid.*, p. 43. Originally a speech to the House of Lords, 6 August, 1940. In the same month, T.S. ELIOT, covering for J.H. Oldham as editor of the *CN-L* (No. 43, 21 August 1940), criticised internment, and described a letter which he had received from a released internee: "some of the officers in the camp laboured under elementary misconceptions... One of them remarked: 'I did not know that so many Jews were Nazis!'" Oldham supported Eliot's stand in his own editorial (No. 46, 11 September, 1940).

¹⁹⁷ BELL, 'German Atrocities', *ibid.*, p. 92. Originally a speech given in the House of Lords, 11 February, 1943. See also 'Germany and the Hitlerite State', pp. 98-103. See RUPP, *I Seek My Brethren*, p. 22; CHANDLER, 'The Church of England and Nazi Germany', p. 214.

German nation. Bell repeatedly maintained that the Nazi atrocities were made possible by the expulsion of the Christian gospel from Nazi ideology. In 1945, he maintained that atrocities perpetrated by the Nazis and the Japanese forces had been committed not as a piece of ordinary wickedness, but because their perpetrators were "possessed by a conception of life which made their actions *right* and *natural*." They illustrated a principle that Bell maintained was lost on most English people, "that a false belief is worse than any wrong action, because it leads to innumerable wrong actions." The "latent Christianity" endemic in English society was insufficient to prevent the perpetration of atrocities. Ethics must be derived from a faith, a dogma. The Nazis had committed atrocities because "They believed that it was right for them to do them."¹⁹⁸ Yet such a judgement was also applicable to those aspects of British war policy against which he had protested so consistently in the House of Lords. The British had interned innocent refugees, left Bonhoeffer and his co-conspirators without support, burned German cities to the ground, and then, in August 1945, had participated in the act which led Bell to regard the Just War tradition as finally unworkable.

Bell's regard for the civilian populations of enemy countries led him to protest in a letter to *The Times* against the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He accepted that the end of hostilities had brought immense benefits, but went on to point out the inconsistency in the Allies' moral stance:

At the beginning of the European War no words were too bad for the bombardment of Warsaw and Rotterdam, and in its closing stages, the use of the V - bombs was similarly censured. But the havoc then wrought by German forces cannot be compared with the ruin caused in Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the Atomic Bomb... In the Allies' agreement signed on August 8th establishing the War Crimes Tribunal, "war crimes" include wanton destruction of cities, towns or villages, or devastation not justified by military necessity. In the same document "murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation and any other inhumane acts committed against any civilian population, before or during the war" are described as "crimes against humanity".

The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was a denial of the "tradition of Law" and the "humanistic tradition" of the west which Bell had characterised as cornerstones

¹⁹⁸ George BELL, Ser non, Deut 30:19, Brighton, 18 August 1945, *BELLP*, Vol. 347 (Sermons/Addresses 1945-47), f. 86.

of modern European civilisation. It also represented, he maintained, a misuse of the "scientific tradition". The discovery of atomic energy had immense potential for good or ill, but the atomic scientists had been "unwilling conscripts in the cause of death"¹⁹⁹. Underlying these three denials was a fourth and fundamental denial of the "Christian tradition", which left the Allied nations ill-equipped morally for the task of reconstruction. The atomic bomb also made a future Just War an impossibility²⁰⁰. Bell kept among his papers a copy of Peter Hutton's poem, 'For Whom the Bell Tolls', written in response to the obliteration bombing campaign. It summarised his own attitude to what had been one of his least successful and most courageous campaigns:

Man's one pretension feeds the flame,
The glimpse of God is fugitive;
We care not though the world proclaim
That Beauty died that we might live.

While sheets of death remorseless fall,
Companions of man's nobler state
Expect their last, most tragic call,
The helpless hostages of hate.

All, all forgot...! Tradition's past,
Christ's Cross and love's philosophy...
But the bell tolls for us at last
- It is ourselves we crucify.²⁰¹

The price which Bell paid for exercising his right to dissent as a member of the Established Church may be gleaned from two letters he received in the forties. The first was from his own Dean, Duncan Jones, asking him to step down from preaching at an R.A.F. service on September 26 1943, on the grounds that "your expressions of opinion on political and military matters since the beginning of the war have caused deep resentment."²⁰² The second was from Martin Browne, writing from Canterbury immediately after Archbishop Temple's death: "Of course we can't

¹⁹⁹ George BELL to the Editor of *The Times*, 11 August 1945, *BELLP*, Vol. 113 (Nuclear Bomb 1945-1951), f. 6. See also RUSAMA, *Moral Issues*, pp. 157-160.

²⁰⁰ For a discussion of the Archbishops' Commission on the Age of Atomic Power, in which Bell was involved, see below, Chapter 7, *passim*.

²⁰¹ Peter HUTTON, 'For Whom the Bell Tolls - August, 1943', *BELLP*, Vol. 73, f. 42. Similar convictions were expressed by Roy FULLER: "For what is terrible is the.../ destruction of Europe by/ Its councils; the unending justification/ Of that which cannot be justified, what is done./ The year, the month, the day, the minute at war/ Is terrible and my participation/ And that of all the world is terrible."

²⁰² Dean of Chichester, DUNCAN-JONES, to George Bell, 15 September 1943, *BELLP*, Vol. 73, f. 243. See also ROBERTSON, *Unshakeable Friend*, p. 92, CHANDLER, 'Obliteration Bombing', p. 937; WILKINSON, 'Bishop Bell and Germany', p. 83.

help hoping now, that you may soon be - shall I say nearer home?" Bell replied: "I do not think there is the least likelihood of it for one so *persona ingrata* with the P.M. as myself."²⁰³

The latent aspect of English Christianity was, despite its manifest shortcomings, a source of hope to Bell. On the one hand, the newly converted W.H. Auden could relate the threat of wartime suffering to the manifestation of original sin, a proposition which Bell would have affirmed:

Yes, we are going to suffer, now; the sky
Throbs like a feverish forehead; pain is real;
The groping searchlights suddenly reveal
The little natures that will make us cry,...
Behind each sociable home-loving eye
The private massacres are taking place;
All women, Jews, the Rich, the Human Race.²⁰⁴

On the other hand, Bell took the pervasive sense of "fellowship in affliction" as a sign of the deeply ingrained role of Christianity in English culture²⁰⁵. Speaking in East Grinstead after a devastating air-raid in July 1943, Bell commented that "The very fact of a common suffering... makes all sufferers fellows." The wounded men and women, he attested, exhibited a "common courage" also evident among the rescuers:

One of the most striking results of this, as of other tragedies, has been the drawing together of all sections of the citizens in an overwhelming desire to give service...
[N]o sooner had the bombs fallen, than everybody's hand

²⁰³ Martin BROWNE to George Bell, 25 January 1945; George BELL to Martin Browne, 26 January 1945, *BELLP*, Vol. 156, ff. 209, 210. Churchill had been convinced that Hitler would only be defeated by "an absolutely devastating, exterminating attack by very heavy bombers upon the Nazi homeland." (OVERY, *Why the Allies Won*, p. 103.) Bell's stand against this was most likely the cause of Churchill's animosity. See WALKER, *Middle Way*, p. 4, CHANDLER, 'Obliteration Bombing', p. 945; WILKINSON, 'Bishop Bell and Germany', p. 90; RUPP, 'I Seek My Brethren', p. 19; RUSAMA, *Moral Issues*, pp. 19-20, SLACK, *George Bell*, pp. 112-116. FIELD, 'George Bell', p. 60, observes: "Bell's failure to be considered for Canterbury after Temple's early death gave rise to the only occasion when the Church should have thought seriously about disestablishment." More damning still is Donald MACKINNON's judgement that "The historians of the Church of England may yet recognize that the worst misfortune to befall its leadership in the end of the war was less the premature death of William Temple than his succession by Fisher of London, and not by Bell of Chichester." Quoted by Roger LLOYD, *The Church of England 1900-1965*, London, 1966, pp. 463-464, and see Donald MACKINNON, 'The Controversial Bishop Bell', in his *The Stripping of the Altars*, Suffolk, 1969, p. 85.

²⁰⁴ W.H. AUDEN, 'Yes, We are Going to Suffer', in GARDNER, Brian (Ed.), *The Terrible Rain: The War Poets, 1939-1945*, London, 1966, p. 7.

²⁰⁵ This was also praised by T.S. Eliot in *Little Gidding*. See below, pp. 209ff.

was stretched out to help... All of the wealth of unselfishness which lies in a hidden reserve in the most ordinary person's character was brought up to the surface and used with all the best skill and devotion which the human will could command... It is one of the greatest consolations in facing human sorrows that there *are* these hidden reserves...²⁰⁶

Bell's sermons, like those of many of his fellow clergy, alluded frequently to these "hidden reserves" of unselfishness in the face of suffering. In a sermon delivered in Westminster Abbey in 1947, he referred to "the tombs of the great men of the past in this Abbey church" as evidence that "Great men... serve the world not only by being great, not only by action or by teaching, but sometimes also by suffering... Great men must suffer..."²⁰⁷ In Petworth in 1942, he made the distinction between Christian and non-Christian strategies for dealing with suffering. First, "There is the attitude which flies from pain and indulges in pleasure and seeks for momentary happiness. This is the attitude of the pagan." Then, "there is the attitude of the man who steels himself against pain, and suppresses all emotion. This is the attitude of the stoic." Christianity must follow the example of Christ on the Cross, and face "the challenge which suffering humanity offers by pointing first to one marvellous Life, and then to other lives inspired by that Life, which plunged right into pain and conquered it." The threefold distinction between the Pagan, the Stoic and the Christian anticipated Eliot's distinction in 'Little Gidding' between "attachment", "indifference" and "detachment from self and from things and from persons"²⁰⁸. Bell was recommending a mysticism of the common people, based on an Incarnational faith which "plunged right into" the "conditions of actual life" but retained the detachment exemplified by the crucified Lord, thereby "transforming and overcoming suffering". The sense of outrage and horror at the killing of children in an air-raid led Bell to explain:

I want you to understand that the voice of protest in your heart is the voice of God... My very bitterness and despair over the heartlessness of suffering in the world as I know it turns out to be but one more effect of the unceasing activity of God, one more reason for believing and trusting in Him.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁶ George BELL, Sermon, 2 Cor 1:3-4, St. Swithun's Church, East Grinstead, "after a devastating air-raid", 18 July 1943, *BELLP*, Vol. 156, ff. 145-151.

²⁰⁷ George BELL, Sermon, "Whosoever will be great among you...", Matt 20:26-27, Westminster Abbey, 7 May 1947, *BELLP*, Vol. 347 (Sermons/Addresses 1945-47), ff. 172-173.

²⁰⁸ See below, p. 214.

²⁰⁹ George BELL, Sermon, Petworth, 11 October 1942, *BELLP*, Vol. 345, ff. 138-140.

The conditions of wartime were for Bell an opportunity for the eternal to break in upon the temporal through suffering and compassion. Death itself "is not like a great thick wall":

It is rather like a soft and yielding curtain, which is always trembling and waving with the impulses out of the life which lies upon the other side of it. As each soul passes, it almost seems as if the opening of the curtain to let it through were going to give us a sight of the unknown things behind. And though we are forever disappointed, yet when one after another departs, there is a sense, which we cannot lose, that through God's grace there is more in common between us and them than we had imagined, that we may unite with them in prayer, and that what we call death is not the end but a passing through into a new stage of life, the life everlasting, which we here on earth, in however fragmentary a way, may reach after and share.

Consequently, suffering and bereavement provide a point of identification between people and God, and the pain of bereavement "can be used to deepen and purify your whole character and life."²¹⁰ Indeed, this attitude to suffering as a means of purification, combined with an understanding of the traditional doctrine of the communion of the saints, was the only effective way of "overcoming" the suffering itself. While they avoid specific allusion to the works of specific mystics, such sermons make it clear that Bell viewed the responses of the populace to the crisis of total war as evidence that their "unselfishness" and latent Christianity could be strengthened through the application of traditional Christian mysticism to daily life.

Bell's Incarnational theology was often expressed in Romantic language. In recommending the didactic qualities of the paintings in Berwick Church to its parishioners, Bell projected a Romantic countryside ideal onto both the Palestine of Jesus' time and the modern English village, praising the painters' decision to portray the Biblical figures "not as sacred personages in a far off land and time, but as human beings", against a backdrop of "Sussex country painted in the pictures for a landscape". This helped, he explained, to underline the eternal relevance of the Gospel stories of the birth of Jesus, and to give the viewer the expectation that the people in the narrative were "just like the Sussex country people, with the same kind of human troubles, and faults, and goodness, and dangers, that we know in Sussex

²¹⁰ George BELL, Sermon, 2 Cor 1:3-4, St. Swithun's Church, East Grinstead, "after a devastating air-raid", 18 July 1943, *BELLP*, Vol. 345, ff. 145-151.

to-day - to whom He still comes, as He came before - the little child Jesus, sent from God to save and to teach and to heal."²¹¹ It is hard to avoid the suspicion, however, that if the Berwick paintings had been given a modern urban setting, Bell would have been less pleased. Bell's writings frequently express a strong sense of disaffection with industrial notions of progress. In *Christianity and World Order*, for example, he warned that "if 'progress' is to be known by its fruits, we can hardly remain quite so sure that it is a boon and a blessing." Progress may entail medical, scientific and technological advances, but:

The new industrial civilization brings the depopulation of the countryside, the starvation of agriculture, the loss of craftsmanship, the weakening of local life, a decline in the birth-rate, an increase in nervous diseases, a prodigious failure in the sharing of the world's wealth... a greater elaboration in the science of killing and the manufacture of armaments, and millions of unemployed!... There is something fatally inhuman about this age of the immense machine.²¹²

Industrialism also had its detrimental effect on aesthetics. Bell and Feibusch had corresponded on the subject of modern architecture, which, Feibusch felt, "having freed itself from Tradition, is in danger of succumbing to the materialistic idea of Functionalism..."²¹³ Bell's sermons for rural events such as Plough Sunday and Rogationtide, displayed an almost Wordsworthian reverence for nature. At a revival of Plough Sunday in Chichester Cathedral in 1945, preaching to a congregation of farmers, farmworkers and land army girls, Bell suggested that the ritual of the blessing of the plough "links your work and the life of your land, with the work which your forefathers did, and the land in which *they* rejoiced long ago." The plough, he said, was "the instrument of peace", the ploughman "a man of peace", and "The plough continues its unceasing task all through history, continues in the storm of war, and points forward past it." The plough itself was a symbol of "that waiting upon Nature, of which the seers and the poets speak, that contemplation of Nature which teaches man to value things in their true proportions." The farmer, by virtue of his adding to the world's wealth, is a "creator" who follows the path of the divine Creator, and the ritual of Plough Sunday

²¹¹ George BELL, Sermon on the Dedication of the Mural Paintings at Berwick Church, Feast of St. Francis, 10 October 1943, *BELLP*, Vol. 345, f. 152.

²¹² BELL, *Christianity and World Order*, p. 20.

²¹³ Hans FEIBUSCH to George Bell, 16 December 1941, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 22.

is an act of remembrance similar to the Eucharist.²¹⁴ This equation of the Sacrament with the blessing of the Plough emphasised the fact that observances such as Plough Sunday had been a long-standing Church tradition which Bell was attempting to revivify. He had seized a similar opportunity with Rogationtide in 1944, when his Pastoral Letter discussed in detail the feast days associated with the medieval English rural year. These ceremonies were "expressions of a healthy community life", combining "work and worship", as well as celebrations of fertility and opportunities to pray for abundance. Bell pointed to the traditional practice of "beating the bounds" on Rogation days, and suggested that "Nowadays the encroachment against which we should be most on our guard is that of the town on the country."²¹⁵ The Church must be on its guard against excessive urbanisation and industrialisation. Bell was instrumental in forming the Church and Countryside Association, motivated not only by a concern for the traditions of the Church and a dislike of industrialism, but also by a desire to preserve the rural element in English culture. Bell elaborated the theme in his Presidential Address to the Chichester Diocesan Council in 1947. Signs of the breakdown of industrial civilisation were occurring first in Britain, where the Industrial Revolution had started. Once again, he listed the benefits of industrialism, before cataloguing the evidence for the failure of industry to bring an equitable society:

when great business concerns became concentrated in a few hands, the labourer and his children were exploited and ceased to be regarded as persons; the land was neglected or ill-used; the old personal relationships between employer and employed were destroyed; and money became the principal god. In short a new form of corruption began.

It was the "older culture, on which industrial civilisation was built", which needed to be revived, since it "rested on the natural basis of the family, neighbourhood, the folk-life with its need of food and co-operation, attachment to a locality, a tradition handed down through generations - all bound together by the ties of religion." While Bell's vision for British, European and Christian unity has been amply documented in the secondary literature, the degree to which that vision depended upon pre-industrial models has not been fully recognised. The programme

²¹⁴ George BELL, Sermon, 'We are labourers together with God', 1 Cor 3:9, Chichester Cathedral, 14 January 1945, *BELLP*, Vol. 347, ff. 1-6. Bell's Plough Sunday sermon, Genesis 47:19, of 13 January 1946, also preached in the Cathedral, is also preserved (ff. 127ff). See also f. 131.

²¹⁵ George BELL, 'The Church and the Countryside', Pastoral letter from the Bishop of Chichester, Rogationtide, 1944, *BELLP*, Vol. 72, ff. 57-60. See also JASPER, *George Bell*, p. 92. The full text of the letter is transcribed in Appendix 1, below, pp. 345-350.

was essentially neo-Romantic, having much in common with C.S. Lewis's literary recreation of an Edenic paradise and re-appropriation of the medievalism of William Morris²¹⁶, and with concepts of nurture and mutual protection, present equally in the writings of Alex Comfort and the wartime works of Henry Moore²¹⁷. Bell was at one with neo-Romantics in proclaiming that "this new order of an industrial civilization has cut at the very roots of the old community life. It is *people* that matter, and you can't bind *people* together with nuts and bolts, or with systems of any kind, ideological or economic, which ignore personal relations, and scorn the personal bond." In the "older culture", despite its occasional wars, "co-operation was good and men were happy on the whole", but the new industrial culture had left them "restless, frustrated, artificial and unhappy". Bell praised the pre-industrial sense of community which had inspired the nation during the Second World War, but went on to assert that "the longer this industrial civilization goes on unchecked, the more surely will [it]... fail, and as soon as [it fails]... altogether the total collapse will come." The renewal of English civilisation depended upon a return to "the foundations of true community life", a phrase which seemed to echo Eliot's *The Rock*, and this entailed "a recovery of the *land*", and the correction of the imbalance that had developed between the town and the country.

We must go back to the primary facts, which have been *submerged* by the apparatus of a mechanized age, to the family, the neighbourhood, the land, and sound custom and tradition, springing from a true religion.

Here was a clear role for the Church as the sustainer of a tradition which pre-dated industrialism. Bell's programme for rural renewal, like the neo-Romantic movements which Veldman has seen as precursors of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the modern Green Movement, advocated the revival of rural industry as a solution to the problem of the world food shortage, and insisted that:

²¹⁶ This was most apparent in Lewis's novels *Perelandra*, London, 1943 and *That Hideous Strength*, London, 1945. See Meredith VELDMAN, *Fantasy, the Bomb, and the Greening of Britain: Romantic Protest, 1945-1980*, Cambridge, 1994, p. 39: "Lewis and Tolkien used fantasy to articulate a romantic protest against the shape and structures of the contemporary world..." Veldman makes a strong case for linking this romantic protest with the defense of human rights (p. 66). Lewis's critique of modern culture was at its most caustic in the portrayal in *That Hideous Strength* of a politico-scientific regime, the "N.I.C.E.", which worshipped sterility, saw an artificially-sustained decapitated human head as the peak of evolution, and aimed to strip the planet of vegetation.

²¹⁷ See below, pp. 313-314. This type of mediaevalist idealism is oddly perpetuated by RUPP's summation of Bell's own character in *I Seek My Brethren*, p. 30: "... in one dark land at least, in Hitler's Germany, this Englishman with his clear blue eyes, has been an emblem of Christian truth, justice and compassion, a gentle knight in shining armour - a champion of Christendom." SLACK, *George Bell*, p. 50, has pointed out that Bell was "deeply English", and that he was "defeated" in his attempts to learn German.

...to become more nearly self-supporting, in food, means to stop land being covered with brick and concrete, and to develop the amenities of life in the countryside so as to do justice to the human and social needs of the countryman.²¹⁸

There were also Romantic elements in Bell's attraction for the idea of a Christian "community" life. The idea had preoccupied the Christendom Group in the 1920s, and its tradition lived on in Eliot's *Idea of a Christian Society*²¹⁹. Bell hoped to foster the loosely organised growth of Christian communities which would draw upon the model of medieval monasticism whilst accepting to the fullest "the incarnational status of the human spirit". It was a model not unlike that of Nicholas Ferrar's Little Gidding. The "way of life lived in community under a rule" was proposed in Bell's Penguin Special as a realistic strategy for leading a distinctively Christian social life. There were examples of such communities already in the Anglican Communion²²⁰, but Bell clearly had in mind the introduction of communities for ordinary Christians as well as for those with a vocation:

It might be an agricultural community settlement. It might be a particular industrial enterprise..., work and worship going hand in hand. It might be a community of persons following different callings but living under a common rule of discipline and worship, and sharing their goods, or at least possessing their goods under a common direction. Such a community might be of the nature of an Order of laymen and women living in the world. It was by Orders that civilization was rescued from darkness or despair in earlier days. Then the religious communities - detached from the world - kept the flame of religion and the lamp of culture both burning. Perhaps lay communities of disciplined people living in the world, yet having a certain detachment from it, might render a like service to-day.²²¹

The encouragement of such Orders as a kind of social leaven points to Bell's desire for social unity based on the organic action of Christianity in the world. As with

²¹⁸ George BELL, Presidential Address to the Chichester Diocesan Council, 30 September 1947, *BELL*, Vol. 347, ff. 200-203. VELDMAN, *Fantasy, the Bomb and the Greening of Britain*, pp. 304-305.

²¹⁹ For a discussion of Bell's response to Eliot's book, see below, pp. 271-272.

²²⁰ The Community of the Resurrection at Mirfield and the Society of the Sacred Mission at Kelham were the best known.

²²¹ BELL, *Christianity and World Order*, p. 143. Bell recommended the Third Order of St. Francis as a possible model.

many of Bell's proposals, it was deliberately couched in vague terms. Communities, as Pepler said, "are born and not made", and Bell was increasingly aware that, having made his appeal to tradition, the process of revivification must be spontaneous. It would be easy to characterise Bell's ministry as a losing battle, hopeless in its Romanticism. Yet Bell's personal successes in wartime were innumerable: the commissioning of several artists and the conversion of at least one, the continuation of the tradition of religious drama, the release from internment of his friends Franz Hildebrandt and Gerhard Leibholz, and the maintenance of the ecumenical movement culminating in the first assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1948²²². His role as prophet in the House of Lords, while it often led to frustration, must be taken as an affirmation that the Establishment could allow for the voice of a distinctively Christian conscience within the nation's government. Even this role had its traditionalist aspect: Bell was devoted to St. Thomas of Canterbury, a martyr at the hands of the State. As Wilkinson has observed, "Becket wanted the Church to be free to preserve its own privileges. Bell wanted the Church to be free in order to be prophetic."²²³ Kenneth Slack, in seeing "the tactical unwisdom of his tenacity" as one of Bell's defects²²⁴, avoids the conclusion which Bell drew from the story of Becket: the prophet must accept, as MacKinnon affirmed, that martyrdom, in one form or another, may be the only reward for one's championship of the freedom of the Catholic faith²²⁵.

²²² CHANDLER, *Brethren in Adversity*, pp. 1ff; RUPP, *I Seek My Brethren*, pp. 6ff. See 'From the Bishop's Window', *Chichester Diocesan Gazette*, August 1937, pp. 244-245. Part of Bell's ecumenical success must be attributed to his ability to develop "religious", as opposed to "theological" friendships with those of very different theological persuasions. Rupp includes Bonhoeffer and Barth among such wartime friends (pp. 9, 12); a friendship with Gerhard Kittel also endured, despite his imprisonment by the allied forces in Tübingen after the war. Frank FIELD characterises Bell as "one of nature's conciliators" ('George Bell', pp. 54-55). See also RUSAMA, *Moral Issues*, pp. 29-33, 59-65, 85-87. Bell's ecumenical concerns extended also to the Roman Catholic Church; indeed, the second series of "Malines Conversations" in 1922 appears to have been initiated by Bell as Dean of Canterbury. See Bernard BARLOW, *A brother knocking at the door: The Malines Conversations, 1921-1925*, Norwich, 1996, pp. 76ff. Bell's own account of the formation of the W.C.C., *The Kingship of Christ*, was published in 1954.

²²³ Alan WILKINSON, 'The Ragged Rock in the Restless Waters: The Church of England in the 20th Century', in Sarah QUAIL and Alan WILKINSON (Eds.), *Forever Building: Portsmouth Cathedral*, Portsmouth, 1995, pp. 111-112. WILKINSON notes that when Bell spent Christmas with Archbishop Davidson in Canterbury in 1914, "he noted in his diary on 29 December that this was the day on which Becket was murdered and went to the Cathedral to visit the place of his martyrdom." ('Bishop Bell and Germany', p. 77, and see FIELD, 'George Bell', p. 53.) See also the Conclusion of this thesis. Ulrich SIMON remarks that "Bell re-enacted for the modern age what martyrdom had meant in the glorious past." (*Sitting in Judgement 1913-1963*, London, 1978, p. 86.)

²²⁴ SLACK, *George Bell*, p. 123.

²²⁵ MACKINNON recognised this as the upshot of Bell's tenacity: "Bell's greatness in a measure corresponded to Bonhoeffer's: the master lived out in his own very different situation the moral and spiritual tensions articulated by the theologian, prophet, and martyr whose mentor he was." (*Letter to Crucible*, July 1969, p. 123.)

However one assesses the effectiveness of his first twenty years as Bishop of Chichester, it is clear that Bell's actions of political dissent and his assiduous patronage of the arts, both sources of controversy during the wartime period, were based on his desire to foster a revivification of a historic Catholic tradition. While Bell's own cultural viewpoint owed much to Romanticism, he was able to appreciate, and even encourage, the influence of cultural Modernism within the Church. Yet Bell's cultural agenda was influenced by his desire to foster a revivification of an essentially mediaeval tradition, evidenced as much by his championship of Just War theory as by his patronage of religious drama and art, as much by his resistance to obliteration bombing as by his personal devotion to the saints or his revival of Plough Sunday and Rogationtide. Despite the difficulties that Bell experienced in promoting this cultural agenda, it would be rash to accuse him of impracticality or of hopeless idealism. He was convinced that, "The Church is not a sort of universal boudoir where people meet and take their ease, and keep their minds away from serious things. It is militant here in earth."²²⁶ It was implicit in Bell's thought and action that the recourse to Christian tradition would seem either untenable or reactionary to secular minds. Yet he saw the cultural mission of English Christianity to be inseparable from its social role of reasserting the need for "the common life." Bell characterised of the Christian gospel and culture in terms of "common life", "common interest" and "common tradition"²²⁷, thus emphasising the need for a renewed idea of Christendom in which the relationship between culture and theology could be encouraged, and incorporated in the ministry of the Church:

It is our task to make the European tradition, a tradition animated by the Christian spirit, prevail; to interpret its character, to show it reintegrating a dying civilisation by a rekindling of the old strength at the ancient sources; to set it forth in all its implications derived from an all-embracing Christian faith, and reveal it embodied in the political and economic order, in the relation of nations, and in the collective life, as well as in the experience of the collective personality.²²⁸

²²⁶ George BELL, Sermon, Worthing, 26 January 1942, *BELLP*, Vol. 346 (Sermons/Addresses 1940-1944), f. 72.

²²⁷ "The common life calls for the exercise of social qualities: give and take, consideration of the common interest, absorbing of the common tradition." George BELL, Sermon, John 10, Bishop Otter College, 5 October 1948, *BELLP*, Vol. 348 (Sermons/Addresses 1948-49), ff. 68-69. Bell was referring to a statement by Temple which praised "the English traditional education" because it entailed "education by means of a corporate life." Temple's reference to "traditional education" betrays a somewhat class-bound perspective, especially when one considers that he was speaking to the Workers' Educational Association.

²²⁸ George BELL, Diocesan Letter for New Year, 1940, *Chichester Diocesan Gazette*, January 1940. See also ROBERTSON, *Unshakeable Friend*, p. 77.

An essentially Catholic vision of life in community was presented in Bell's ministry as the bulwark of European culture, not least in its distinctive English form, and the different aspects of that ministry, its Incarnational theology, determined patronage of the arts, humanitarian activism, and ecumenism, were brought into harmony as safeguards for the preservation of a common tradition. Bell's abiding friendship with Eliot was partly based on a common apprehension of the cultural agenda of wartime Catholic Anglicanism: both saw tradition as a vivifying rather than a petrifying force. This had its collective, ecclesiological aspect; it also relied on a private faith which saw an essential unity between religion and culture²²⁹. Christian faith was "all embracing", catholic. Bell had encouraged his artist friends to demonstrate this unity through commissioned works of art, and had testified to the same unity in his speeches before the House of Lords²³⁰. This relationship between private and collective faith, and between art, sanctity and social responsibility, so emphatically underlined by Bell, would also find expression in Eliot's *Four Quartets*, a work which arose independently of the patronage of the Church.

²²⁹ Eliot's most thorough statement on tradition as a revivifying force was his essay, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent'. The collective aspect of Eliot's Christianity found expression in his contributions to the Moot (see below, pp. 277ff), a group which in many ways fitted Bell's description of a "spontaneous" Christian community. The personal aspect found expression in *Four Quartets*, and is discussed below, Chapter 4, *passim*.

²³⁰ This emphasis on unity is succinctly described by SLACK, *George Bell*, p. 37: "... for Bell... the realms of beauty, truth and goodness were inseparable, and were our experience of the divine. Bell was not only ecumenical in seeking the unity of Christ's people throughout the *oikoumene*, the whole inhabited earth; he was ecumenical in having found the unity of all human experiences of the divine, and refusing to separate them." See also Victor de WAAL, 'The Two Kingdoms', in Donald REEVES (Ed.), *The Church and the State*, London, 1984, p. 58: "[Bell's] commitment to the arts and his ecumenism are of a piece."

Chapter

4

"Desiccation of the world of sense":
The Catholic Context of T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*

T.S. Eliot insisted in 'East Coker' that "The poetry does not matter"¹, but this piece of self-effacement has largely been ignored. The ever-growing flood of critical and biographical studies about Eliot bears testimony to the diverse personae which he adopted, the subjects of detailed scrutiny by hagiographers and critics alike: the cosmopolitan dandy with Puritan ancestry², the American expatriate who was "more English than the English"³, the pungent and sometimes reactionary literary and social critic⁴, the latent anti-Semitic propagandist⁵, the "Classicist" who preferred Dryden to Shelley⁶, and the publishing executive who wrote poems about "practical cats"⁷. Recent criticism, determined either to claim him as a disciple of St. John of the Cross⁸ or to psychoanalyse him as a misogynist would-be lover⁹, has resurrected a further Eliotic persona: that of the aspiring mystic. Much of the ammunition for the

¹ EC II, p. 179. All page references to the *Four Quartets* are from T.S. ELIOT, *The Complete Poems and Plays of T.S. Eliot*, London, 1977.

² Eric Whitman SIGG, *The American T.S. Eliot: A Study of the Early Writings*, Cambridge, 1989.

³ The quotation is from a section heading of a British Council touring exhibition on Eliot's life and work, held to mark the centenary of his birth. For an admirable attempt to demolish this stereotype, see Steve ELLIS, *The English Eliot. Design, Language and Landscape in Four Quartets*, London, 1991, p. 1. See also Lyndall GORDON, *Eliot's New Life*, Oxford, 1988.

⁴ Roger KOJECKY, *T.S. Eliot's Social Criticism*, London, 1971.

⁵ Anthony JULIUS, *T.S. Eliot, Anti-Semitism, and Literary Form*, Cambridge, 1995.

⁶ See George BORNSTEIN, *Transformations of Romanticism in Yeats, Eliot and Stevens*, Chicago, 1976.

⁷ Marianne THORMÄHLEN, *Eliot's Animals*, Lund, 1984, pp. 39ff. For discussions of influences on *Four Quartets* other than specifically mystical ones, see Staffan BERGSTEN, *Time and Eternity. A Study in the Structure and Symbolism of T.S. Eliot's Four Quartets*, Stockholm, 1960, pp. 141ff (a discussion of the influence of Pascal's portrayal of the "intelligent believer"); Dominic MANGANIello, *T.S. Eliot and Dante*, New York, 1989.

⁸ An interpretation of the poems as having been inspired by St. John of the Cross is offered by Sister Corona SHARP, "The Unheard Music": T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* and St. John of the Cross', *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 51, 1982, pp. 264-278. See also Paul MURRAY, *T.S. Eliot and Mysticism: The Secret History of 'Four Quartets'*, New York, 1991. Other works which recognise Eliot's indebtedness to St. John of the Cross, *The Cloud of Unknowing* and Julian of Norwich's *Revelations of Divine Love* include: GORDON, *Eliot's New Life*, pp. 95ff; Fayek M. ISHAK, *The Mystical Philosophy of T.S. Eliot*, Connecticut, 1970; BERGSTEN, *Time and Eternity*, pp. 63ff; Kristian SMIDT, *Poetry and Belief in the Work of T.S. Eliot*, London, 1949, pp. 204-205; Raymond PRESTON, *Four Quartets Rehearsed*, London, 1946, pp. 29-33; Helen GARDNER, *The Composition of the Four Quartets*, London, 1978, pp. 30, 69; James Johnson SWEENEY, "East Coker": a reading', in Bernard BERGONZI, (Ed.), *T.S. Eliot: Four Quartets*, London, 1979, pp. 48-51.

⁹ Donald J. CHILDS, *T.S. Eliot: Mystic, Son and Lover*, London, 1997, argues that Eliot's mystical experiments were part of a lifelong intellectual and spiritual quest, complicated by his repressed sexuality. See this author's review in *Literature and Theology*, 11, No. 3, September 1997, pp. 316-317.

continuing critical cycle of character-assassination and indignant defense of Eliot the mystic is provided by *Four Quartets*, which present an "essentially Christian interpretation of temporal existence"¹⁰. Written between 1935 and 1942, the poems are distinctive examples of an Anglican Catholic appropriation of mysticism¹¹ in a period fraught with crises. Refined in the crucible of Eliot's private life in the thirties, they came to encapsulate much that was common to British experience in the forties¹², demonstrating that the language of Catholic mysticism retained its appeal as a response to personal and international crisis.

Yet for all the vast literature on *Four Quartets*, this appropriation of the language of Catholic mysticism is rarely emphasised in conjunction with the cultural environment of wartime Anglican Catholicism¹³. Piette has demonstrated that 'Little Gidding' was an attempt to transmute some of the meaningless horror of the Blitz into purposeful purgation, but his discussion does not place Eliot's reading of Dante within its Catholic context¹⁴. Childs has highlighted the impact on Eliot's poetry of exposure to the non-Christian mystical philosophy of Henri Bergson and the increasingly Catholic interpretation of mysticism adopted by Evelyn Underhill, yet his analysis of *Four Quartets* largely ignores Eliot's textual dependence on the Catholic mystics themselves¹⁵. Biographical research on Eliot has indicated that his interest in mysticism was not merely aesthetic, inspiring a more disciplined poesis, but was a significant element in his own religious practice. However, those critics

¹⁰ Frank Burch BROWN, *Transfiguration. Poetic Metaphor and the Languages of Religious Belief*, North Carolina, 1983, p. 58. A catalogue of authors who have seen the *Quartets* in this light, and of those who are repelled by the spirituality expressed in the poems, is given by CHILDS, *Mystic, Son and Lover*, pp. xii-xiv, and see MURRAY, *T.S. Eliot and Mysticism*, p. 9.

¹¹ Evelyn UNDERHILL defined mysticism as "the expression of the innate tendency of the human spirit towards complete harmony with the transcendental order... This tendency, in great mystics, gradually captures the whole field of consciousness; it dominates their life and, in the experience called 'mystic union,' attains its end. Whether that end be called the God of Christianity, the World-soul of Pantheism, the Absolute of Philosophy, the desire to attain it and the movement towards it - so long as this is a genuine life process and not an intellectual speculation - is the proper subject of mysticism." *Mysticism: The Development of Humankind's Spiritual Consciousness*, London, (12th Edition) 1942, pp. xiv-xv.

¹² GORDON, *Eliot's New Life*, Oxford, 1988, p. 94; Angus CALDER, *T.S. Eliot, Sussex*, 1987, pp. 133-134. For a record of Eliot's own wartime trials, especially during the writing of *Little Gidding*, see GARDNER, *Composition*, pp. 19-20.

¹³ A particularly tantalising example of this deficiency may be seen in Donald DAVIE's 'Anglican Eliot', in LITZ, *et. al.*, *Eliot in his Time*, Princeton, 1973, which argues that Eliot's Anglicanism disguised the fact that "Eliot knew England and the English very imperfectly", but does little to highlight the Anglican influence on Eliot, beyond noting that the opening of *EC* echoes parts of the B.C.P. (pp. 182-187).

¹⁴ Adam PIETTE, *Imagination at War: British Fiction and Poetry 1939-1945*, London, 1995, pp. 54-67.

¹⁵ CHILDS, *Mystic, Son and Lover*, 18-32, 33-43, 48-52; and see also his 'T.S. Eliot and Evelyn Underhill: An Early Mystical Influence', *Durham University Journal*, n.s. 49.1, 1987, pp. 83-98; 'T.S. Eliot: From Varieties of Mysticism to Pragmatic Poesis', *Mosaic*, 22, 1989, pp. 99-116.

who have shown an awareness of the textual echoes of Catholic mystics: *Four Quartets* have too frequently ignored the historical and religious context within which Eliot interpreted mysticism, a context shared by theologians such as MacKinnon, Mascall and other Christendom Group members, clerics such as Bell, and writers such as Charles Williams. *Four Quartets* came increasingly to be shaped by the climate in which Anglican Catholic Incarnational theology sought to come to terms with the moral and cultural implications of total war. Childs takes Douglass's perception that "The poet takes his place with those who accept, not deny life", as implying that the Eliot of *Four Quartets* is "theologically something of a modernist"¹⁶. By contrast, Murray finds the poet in "sympathy... with the Neo-Orthodox group", insisting that the influence of Kierkegaard on the poems is "guessable", albeit unsupported by textual echoes¹⁷. Such conclusions are barely credible because they ignore the perennial cultural and theological dilemma of Catholic mysticism - that of balancing the two "ways" of "affirmations" and of "negations" - which was being explored with renewed urgency in the thirties and forties¹⁸. Moreover, it is unnecessary to impose a Freudian psychoanalysis on Eliot's texts in order to appreciate that this dilemma was acute not only for Eliot the poet and social critic who had proclaimed himself "classicist in literature, royalist in politics", but also for the private Eliot who was "anglo-catholic in religion"¹⁹ and grappling with the practical consequences of that choice.

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By the 1930s, Eliot was notorious for preferring minor poets to major ones²⁰. It had been C.S. Lewis, an incorrigible Romantic, who had leapt to the defense of

¹⁶ CHILDS, *Mystic, Son and Lover*, p. 205, and see pp. 53-83.

¹⁷ MURRAY, *T.S. Eliot and Mysticism*, pp. 108, 111-112. He adds "But of course Eliot never sought to attach himself completely to any one theological camp or coterie." Eliot's Catholic Anglicanism is not mentioned.

¹⁸ Evelyn UNDERHILL, *Mysticism*, p. 41: "Over and over again... these two dominant ideas... demands, imperious instincts of man's self will reappear; the warp and woof of his completed universe... Man's true Real, his only adequate God, must be great enough to embrace this sublime paradox, to take up these apparent negations into a higher synthesis."

¹⁹ T.S. ELIOT, *For Lancelot Andrewes*, London, 1928, p. lx. Eliot later commented, "I have no objection to being called a bigot myself; but that is an individual concern. But I am more careful in the matter, because some years ago I made, wisely or unwisely, a brief announcement of faith religious, political and literary which became too easily quotable. It may have given some critics the impression that for me all these three were inextricable and of equal importance." T.S. ELIOT, 'Catholicism and International Order' (Opening Address to the Anglo-Catholic Summer School of Sociology), *Christendom*, II, No. 11, September 1933, pp. 180-181.

²⁰ CHILDS, *Mystic, Son and Lover*, p. x.

Shelley when Eliot proposed that Dryden was superior²¹. Lewis implied that Dryden was boring, and his poems "botched". This was to be the first of a series of literary skirmishes. In 1936, Eliot had Milton in his sights. Milton himself was "antipathetic", his theology was "repellent", and *Paradise Lost*, with its indulgence in florid displays of pomp, ceremony and ritual, was a "bad influence" on the English language, and no improvement on the *Genesis* myth²². Moreover, Eliot submitted that such critical judgements of poetry ought only to be made by "the best contemporary poets": a category to which Lewis had once aspired, but which had eluded him²³. Notwithstanding this disqualification, Lewis defended Milton in his Ballard Matthews Lectures:

'Civilization' - by which I mean mere barbarism made strong and luxurious by mechanical power - hates civility from below: sanctity rebukes it from above. The round table is pressed between the upper millstone (Galahad) and the nether (Mordred). If Mr. Eliot disdains the eagles and trumpets of epic poetry because the fashion of this world passes away, I honour him. But if he goes on to draw the conclusion that all poetry should have the penitential qualities of his own best work, I believe he is mistaken. As long as we live in merry middle earth it is necessary to have middle things. If the round table is abolished, for everyone who rises to the level of a Galahad, a hundred will drop plumb down to that of Mordred. Mr. Eliot may succeed in persuading the reading youth of England to have done with robes of purple and pavements of marble. But he will not therefore find them walking in sackcloth on floors of mud

²¹ C.S. LEWIS, 'Shelley, Dryden and Mr. Eliot', *Selected Literary Essays* (Edited by Walter HOOPER), Cambridge, 1969, pp. 187-208. He was commenting on Eliot's 'John Dryden', *Selected Essays*, London, 1932, p. 295.

²² T.S. ELIOT, *Milton* (1936), in *Milton: Two Studies*, London, 1968, pp. 1, 2, 19. The essay was originally a contribution to *Essays and Studies*, Oxford, 1936, under the title 'A Note on the Verse of Milton'. See Kenneth ASHER, *T.S. Eliot and Ideology*, Cambridge, 1995, p. 123.

²³ For C.S. LEWIS's response, see *A Preface to Paradise Lost*, Oxford, 1942, p. 10. The controversy continued in private correspondence between Eliot and Lewis in 1943 (*TSE*, Hayward Bequest, ff. 1-4). Eliot admitted (19 February) that his remark about poets as critics "was not happily phrased". Suffering from influenza in March, he re-read *Paradise Lost*, and still found that "it suffers from grotesqueness" (8 March). Lewis ("appropriately enough Ash Wed.") was compelled to agree. He observed that "Charles Williams is always promising (or threatening!) to confront us with each other in the flesh" (22 February), but now that the Moot meetings had been moved to London, Eliot had little reason to go to Oxford. Lewis had still less inclination to come to London. Eliot added, "I warn you that I may be in a mood rather to talk about the South India Scheme, which is disturbing my mind profoundly, than about poetry." (8 March.) Charles Williams had his way, ushering Eliot into the "Mitre" Hotel in Oxford during the last months of the war. The conversation was inauspiciously opened by Eliot: "Mr Lewis, you are a much older man than you appear in photographs." (Humphrey CARPENTER, *The Inklings: C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Charles Williams and their Friends*, London, 1997, pp. 48, 118, 158, 192.

- he will only find them in smart, ugly suits walking on rubberoid. It has all been tried before. The older Puritans took away the maypoles and mince-pies: but they did not bring in the millenium, they only brought in the Restoration. Galahad must not make common cause with Mordred, for it is always Mordred who gains, and he who loses, by such alliance.²⁴

The choice of the Arthurian metaphor was apposite. Eliot had appropriated an Arthurian theme, the dissolution of the Round Table after Lancelot and Guinevere's adultery, for his most influential work, *The Waste Land*²⁵. Other aspects of Lewis's analysis were equally perceptive: the recognition of the "penitential qualities" in Eliot's work aptly summarised the tone of *Ash Wednesday*, *Burnt Norton* and *East Coker*, and the equation of Eliot with Puritans anticipated the preoccupation of later critics with Eliot's ancestry. His insistence on the necessity of "middle things" communicated his essential distrust, not only of modernity, but also of the "negative way" which Eliot appeared to advocate both as a spiritual and a literary discipline.

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In 1936, eight years after taking a vow of celibacy in response to the failure of his marriage²⁶, Eliot published 'Burnt Norton'. The "penitential" tone of the work appears the more poignant in view of the discussions on divorce and remarriage in Convocation between 1935 and 1937²⁷. The 1935 report stipulated that the Church should not make its marriage service available to divorced people whose partners were still living, since marriage was "indissoluble", but conceded to Bishops the right to permit remarried couples to receive the sacraments²⁸. A mutual

²⁴ LEWIS, *Preface to Paradise Lost*, pp. 132-133.

²⁵ For an analysis of Arthurian motifs in the work of Eliot, Lewis and Williams, see Charles MOORMAN, *Arthurian Triptych: Mythic Materials in Charles Williams, C.S. Lewis and T.S. Eliot*, Los Angeles, 1960.

²⁶ GORDON, *Eliot's New Life*, pp. 1, 106: "Though Eliot's new life was backed by friends and even Vivienne's brother, the past left a sense of contamination that shut him off, in turn, from any close relationship until the last eight years of his life." When Eliot remarried, Vivienne had died.

²⁷ Full details of the debates are recorded in *Chronicle of Convocation: being a Record of the Proceedings of the Convocation of Canterbury for the years 1935-1937*. In May 1936, Bell moved "That while affirming its adherence to the ancient tradition of the Western Church... this House recognises that the actual discipline of particular Christian communions in this matter [marriage and divorce] has varied widely from time to time and place to place, according to the needs and distresses of the moment; and holds that the Church of England is competent to enact such a discipline of its own in regard to marriage... as may from time to time appear most salutary and efficacious." (1-2, No. 2, p. 82.) Bell hoped to convince Convocation that diocesan Bishops should be given freedom to judge individual cases on their merits, rather than being bound by Church law (*ibid.*, p. 163, and see 1-1, No. 1, January 1936, p. xix).

²⁸ See Arthur Robert WINNETT, *Divorce and Remarriage in Anglicanism*, London, 1958, pp. 218-228. The 1935 report, *The Church and Marriage*, included majority and minority reports, the former

friend of Lewis and Eliot, the novelist and poet Charles Williams²⁹, responded to the report with a memorandum which rallied Milton, Shakespeare and Dante to the defense of the experience of "falling in love". The Church excelled in Moral, Pastoral and Mystical Theology, but had neglected "Romantic theology". The marriage exhortations of Churchmen were "lamentably lacking in conviction, and we are left to discover superstitions instead of to practise the gospel." Williams begged to "submit all that I have said to the judgment of the Catholic Church," and therefore appealed to typical Catholic concerns:

...we are speaking of... [Romantic love] under the authority of the Faith, and... the Faith has, from the beginning, united the body and soul in a very particular manner. We are told this often enough when it is a question of the Sacraments - especially of Holy Communion. But in spite of the recurrent Manicheism which haunts the Church, we cannot dissociate the Incarnation from physical experiences.

The Bishops met the memorandum, with its recommendation that the Church should denounce jealousy "*semper, ubique in omnibus*" with bemused silence³⁰. The episode typified the zeal with which Williams pursued his doctrine of the "affirmation of images" through official church channels. At a time when other Catholic Anglicans wanted the Bishops to speak of remarriage as adultery, Williams portrayed "falling in love", even in adulterous form, as Beatrician experience, a "transient... vision of reality"³¹.

taking the stricter line, and the latter signed by Bishop Barnes and others, insisting that the teachings of Christ on divorce should not be taken as a law but as an ideal. Contemporary with Williams's memorandum, a booklet produced by the Theological and Liturgical Committee of the Church Union, *The Church, Marriage and Divorce*, 1936, argued that if marriage was indissoluble, admission to the sacraments of remarried divorcees whose former partners were still living could not be permitted. The hard-line approach of this report may have precipitated Williams's memorandum.

²⁹ Lewis's defense of Milton, the Arthurian symbols and the perception that the cause of Galahad may be usurped by Mordred were borrowed from Williams, who worked for Oxford University Press, wrote occult thrillers and Arthurian poems, and, notwithstanding his lack of a university education, gave regular public lectures on literary themes. Eliot himself enjoyed Williams's novels, and published *Descent into Hell* in 1937, while Lewis felt that Williams was a major poet, which perhaps accounts for the latter's comparative obscurity since his death in 1945.

³⁰ Charles WILLIAMS, 'Memorandum on Romantic Love', September, 1936, *BELLP*, Vol. 217, ('Correspondence: Chichester V-Z'), ff. 142-158. (Full text given in Appendix 4, below, pp. 353-358.) While the Memorandum did not specifically mention divorce, and the Bishops appeared to see it as irrelevant to their discussions for that reason, it is probable that Williams intended a subtle criticism of those elements of the Church which were inclined to label remarried divorcees as adulterers. For his opinions on divorce, see Charles WILLIAMS, 'The Way of Affirmation' (originally published as 'The Church Looks Forward', *St. Martin's Review*, July 1940), in *The Image of the City and other Essays* (Edited by Anne RIDLER), London, 1958, pp. 156-157.

³¹ WILLIAMS, 'Memorandum', f. 143.

Williams, who had guided Bell's life of Davidson to its completion in the early 1930s, was a convinced apologist for "the way of affirmation" and "the way of exchange" to the Anglican hierarchy³². Eliot, if Lewis's analysis was to be believed, was an exponent of the *via negativa*, obsessed with purity, and disdainful of the "middle things" which Williams wanted the Church to affirm. The situation was, however, more complex than that: both Eliot and Williams recognised that the two "ways" were means to the same end. In the early 1930s, Eliot had renewed his acquaintance with Emily Hale, an actress from New England who had claimed his affections prior to his marriage, but he was ultimately driven by conscience to break off the association. With this in mind, the opening of "Burnt Norton", reminiscent of discourses of mystical theologians on the relation between time and eternity³³, is at once suggestive of wistful regret:

What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present.³⁴

The notion of an eternal present in which all time coheres, the central preoccupation of *Four Quartets*³⁵, was drawn from Catholic mystical texts such as Augustine's *Confessions*.³⁶ The speculations at the opening of the poem revolve around this

³² Williams's unconventional approach was evident when, in 1936, the pressure to censor a passage from his Chelmsford Nativity play, *The Three Kings*, led him to confide in Bell, his episcopal sympathiser: "The Lord Chamberlain objects to the word 'anus' in my Nativity; it seems that a Christian view of Adam's physical nature must stop at the waist... We are substituting the word 'ankle'. This entirely ruins the rhyme, the meaning, and the high symbolism." Charles WILLIAMS to George Bell, 31 December 1936, *BELLP*, Vol. 217, f. 177. The offending word was restored when the play was printed in *Christendom*, VII No. 27, September 1937, p. 179: "I was Julius, and I am Octavianus, / Augustus, Adam, the first citizen, / the power of the world, from brow to anus, / in commerce of the bones and bowels of men..."

³³ PRESTON, *Four Quartets Rehearsed*, p. 9, proposes that the opening passage of *Burnt Norton* is based on Ecclesiastes 3:15.

³⁴ *BNI*, p. 171. The phrase "What might have been", in conjunction with the imagery of the garden, may also be a reference to the loss of the Edenic paradise.

³⁵ ISHAK, *Mystical Philosophy*, sees this as "the main theme of the *Four Quartets*" (p. 107), but interprets Eliot's use of the concepts of time and eternity as being based on "the Sankarene mysticism of the Advaita Vedanta." (p. 108). Yet the theme is dealt with in detail in a Catholic context by Augustine, who would have been more congenial to Eliot's Anglo-Catholic perspective. Graham HOUGH, 'Vision and Doctrine in *Four Quartets*', *Critical Quarterly*, Summer, 1973, pp. 117-120, isolates from the poems eight separate metaphysical doctrines about time, concluding that these do not constitute a dialectic, and that Eliot does not choose between them. The discrepancies between these propositions would appear to be resolved once one assumes that the poems have been written with Catholic orthodoxy in mind. This is supported by Doris T. WIGHT, 'Metaphysics Through Paradox in Eliot's *Four Quartets*', *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 23.1, 1990, pp. 63-69

³⁶ AUGUSTINE, *Confessions*, Chapter XI. MURRAY, *T.S. Eliot and Mysticism*, p. 49; BERGSTEN, *Time and Eternity*, p. 96; David WARD, *T.S. Eliot Between Two Worlds*, London, 1973, p. 228; Russell KIRK, *Eliot and His Age: T.S. Eliot's Moral Imagination in the Twentieth Century*, New York, 1971, p. 291. ECKHART cites the passage from Augustine in his *Defense*, and describes the "beginning" of Genesis 1:1 as "the first simple now of eternity... the very same now in which God

proposition that in the divine economy "all time is eternally present"; yet the poetic speaker frustratedly concludes:

Quick now, here, now, always -
Ridiculous the waste sad time
Stretching before and after.³⁷

Such a progression could be explained as a recycled version of a typical Christian conviction that excessive preoccupation with the past or future leads people to make mistakes in the present³⁸, were it not that 'Burnt Norton' affirms some moments as more valuable than others, because they provide windows through which eternity is perceived, and one must be "Quick" in order not to miss them.

The philosophical discourse which opens 'Burnt Norton' is interrupted by a description of just such a moment³⁹. Gordon has suggested that the rose-garden scene, in which the poem's narrator and protagonist first encounters the "heart of light", is based on Eliot's own experience, walking at Burnt Norton with Hale in 1934⁴⁰. Hale can hardly be described as a character in the poem - indeed, throughout the *Quartets* there are no characters who are not birds, ghosts or spirits⁴¹ - rather her presence is suggested by Eliot's use of the word "we". The garden is full of "echoes", perhaps of a previous meeting between Eliot and Hale before his marriage to Vivienne, and the speaker asks, "Shall we follow?" Their path takes them past the roses, along an "empty alley", until they reach a drained pool which, while apparently quite mundane, suddenly becomes the vehicle for a mystical vision:

Dry the pool, dry concrete, brown edged,
And the pool was filled with water out of sunlight,
And the lotos rose, quietly, quietly,
The surface glittered out of heart of light...

exists from eternity, in which also the emanation of the divine Persons eternally is, was and will be." (*Commentaries on Genesis*, B:7, in Edmund COLLEDGE and Bernard MCGINN, *Meister Eckhart: The Essential Sermons, Commentaries, Treatises and Defense*, New York, 1981, pp. 84-85.) Eliot was certainly acquainted with such texts.

³⁷ BN V, p. 176.

³⁸ This argument was resurrected in the war years by C.S. Lewis. See *The Screwtape Letters*, (1942), London, 1977, Chapter XV, pp. 76-80.

³⁹ BN I, pp. 171-172. GORDON, *Eliot's New Life*, pp. 95-6; CHILDS, *Mystic, Son and Lover*, pp. 198ff.

⁴⁰ GORDON, *Eliot's New Life*, pp. 46, 48, 96; CHILDS, *Mystic, Son and Lover*, p. 195.

⁴¹ ELLIS, *The English Eliot*, p. 112, compares this characteristic with the 1930s "emptied landscapes" of painters such as Paul Nash and Eric Ravilious.

Eliot's description bears close comparison with Williams's idea of the Beatrician experience through which divine reality is perceived. For Williams, the vision of the beloved is ultimately a vision of divine perfection, "in which the two persons exist in love, that is (humanly speaking), by virtue of the Incarnation, beholding each other in Christ, and the presence and power of Christ are with them."⁴² Thus, Williams's Palomides, in love with Iseult, is entranced by the angle of her arm, and begins to see her as an image of the divine creativity⁴³. Eliot's approach is less direct, or perhaps more inhibited. In 'Burnt Norton', the mystical experience does not arise through so direct a contemplation of the beloved; rather, the Beatrician aspect of the relationship is implied by the fact that the pair walking in the garden both experience the vision. Like Williams's "Romantic Love", the vision in the garden is also transitory ("The cloud passed, and the pool was empty"), and the reverie it has induced is rudely interrupted by the bird, which enunciates the first of the *Quartets*' series of unfavourable estimates of human nature:

Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind
Cannot bear very much reality.⁴⁴

The protagonists have lost contact with their glimpse of the eternal present, alongside which the flux of human time seems "ridiculous", and the remainder of *Four Quartets* describes a series of attempts to regain that reality, by means other than romantic love, through the *via negativa* of Catholic mysticism.

In the second movement of 'Burnt Norton', the experience in the rose garden is interpreted in the language of philosophical speculation with which the poem opened. The poetic speaker has witnessed "the still point of the turning world... where past and future are gathered."⁴⁵ The experience is spatially and temporally

⁴² WILLIAMS, 'Memorandum', f. 148.

⁴³ Charles WILLIAMS, 'The Coming of Palomides', *Taliessin Through Logres*, (1938), in David Llewellyn DODDS (Ed.) *Arthurian Poets: Charles Williams*, Woodbridge, 1991, pp. 47-48.

⁴⁴ These lines are also on Thomas's lips before his martyrdom in Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935), London, 1968, p. 75. Again, the influence of Augustine is discernible. The predominance of birds in Underhill's description of the "illumination of the self" (*Mysticism*, pp. 258-262) may have interested Eliot. The scolding of the bird, in this context, may represent an accusation that the human protagonist at Burnt Norton is not yet ready for illumination.

⁴⁵ BN II, pp. 172-173. See Eugene WEBB, *The Dark Dove: The Sacred and Secular in Modern Literature*, Seattle, 1975, p. 225. Ethel F. CORNWELL, 'The Still Point': *Theme and Variations in the Writings of T.S. Eliot, Coleridge, Yeats, Henry James, Virginia Woolf, and D.H. Lawrence*, New Brunswick, 1962, p. 48, analyses in more detail this first experience of the still point in BN. Numerous attempts have been made to isolate the source of this metaphor. See WEITZ, 'T.S. Eliot: Time as a mode of salvation', p. 58. CHILDS, *Mystic, Son and Lover*, pp. 200-201, finds evidence in BN that Eliot was sceptical as to whether the mystical experience in the garden was genuine. MURRAY, *T.S. Eliot and Mysticism*, p. 50, also sees the vision of the filled pool as a mere "illusion".

indefinable, "for that is to place it in time", but its effects are undoubtedly meretricious. It provides:

The inner freedom from the practical desire,
The release from action and suffering, release from the inner
And the outer compulsion, yet surrounded
By a grace of sense, a white light still and moving...⁴⁶

Yet the experience is threatening for mortals, whose "enchainment" to the temporal process is what protects them from "heaven and damnation/ Which flesh cannot endure." This realisation leads to the *Quartets'* appropriation of Catholic mysticism, for the import of the mystics' emphasis on purgation was that it was precisely the life of the "flesh" which must not endure. Eliot's discourse mirrors that of Evelyn Underhill's discussion of "The Purification of the Self", and borrows its language. Underhill affirmed that:

The true rule of poverty consists in giving up those things
which enchain the spirit, divide its interests, and deflect it
on its road to God - whether these things be riches, habits,
religious observances, friends, interests, distastes, or
desires - not in mere outward destitution for its own
sake.⁴⁷

However, she also recognised that true mystics, despite their detachment and spiritual "destitution", preserve an "innocent joy in natural things, as veils and vessels of the divine"⁴⁸. Eliot cannot deny this, because of his awareness that his mystical experiences have all been triggered by natural phenomena, themselves enchainment to past and future:

But only in time can the moment in the rose-garden,
The moment in the arbour where the rain beat,
The moment in the draughty church at smokefall

However, the later development of the poem, and particularly the passage beginning "But only in time" (BN II) would seem to controvert this.

⁴⁶ For an interpretation of the white light as the Holy Spirit, see CORNWELL, *The Still Point*, p. 34. The first step towards union with God in St. JOHN of the Cross's *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, is succinctly described by Eliot's phrase, "The inner freedom from the practical desire." All citations of St. JOHN of the Cross refer to E. Allison PEERS (Ed.), *The Complete Works of St. John of the Cross, Doctor of the Church*, London, 1934, Vol. 1. For his discussion of the purgation of desires from the soul, see pp. 20, 34-63.

⁴⁷ UNDERHILL, *Mysticism*, p. 211. The young Eliot had taken notes on an early edition of this work, and after 1930, they became friends. Childs identifies the BN experience with Underhill's first stage of the mystic way, "recollection". CHILDS, *Mystic, Son and Lover*, pp. 34-41, 195-196; MURRAY, *T.S. Eliot and Mysticism*, p. 85.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p. 206.

Be remembered; involved with past and future.
Only through time time is conquered.⁴⁹

Mystical illumination must therefore be sought, as Underhill affirmed, with full awareness of "the incarnational status of the human spirit", as in the life of the "inclusive mystic [who]... can find the inward in the outward as well as the inward in the inward."⁵⁰

'Burnt Norton', however, largely documents the frustration of this aim. The third movement finds the narrator in a tube station, reflecting on its unsuitability as an environment for the "inclusive mystic":

Here is a place of disaffection
Time before and time after
In a dim light: neither daylight
Investing form with lucid stillness...
Nor darkness to purify the soul
Emptying the sensual with deprivation
Cleansing affection from the temporal.⁵¹

The experience in the rose-garden was dependent on a chance ray of sunlight illuminating the empty pool. Alternatively, mystical experience could be sought by embracing "darkness to purify the soul"⁵². The fourteenth century *Cloud of Unknowing* speaks of God as concealed behind a "dark cloud", which must be entered by those who seek him, while created things are placed under a "cloud of forgetting"⁵³. Walter Hilton also wrote of the need for the mystic to pass through

⁴⁹ The protagonist is moved to mysticism by sensory perception, demonstrating Eliot's indebtedness to neo-Platonism, and also to the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas. See F.C. COPLESTON, *Aquinas*, Harmondsworth, 1955, pp. 27-30. Eliot's Thomist tendency may derive primarily from the mystics themselves. Eckhart quotes Aquinas regularly, and St. JOHN of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, p. 71, directly addresses the theme of sensory-perception and spiritual knowledge. (See also p. 139.)

⁵⁰ UNDERHILL, *Mysticism*, p. x. This did not presuppose an eremitical or cloistered life. Underhill stressed that "It is the peculiarity of the Unitive Life that it is often lived, in its highest and most perfect forms, in the world..." (p. 414.) In 1938 and 1939, she held an extensive correspondence with the Carmelite Sister Mary of St. John on this subject (*EU*, 1/13/18-1/13/26). GORDON, *Eliot's New Life*, p. 98, describes Eliot as a "solitary who yet saw it as his duty (as public figure or as Christian performing acts of charity) to partake in the world." Eliot would perhaps have found the Rule of Little Gidding (A.L. MAYCOCK, *Nicholas Ferrar of Little Gidding*, (1938), London, 1963, pp. 197ff) quite congenial. Richard ROLLE, (*The Fire of Love*, in Rishard MISYN (Trans.), *The Fire of Love or Melody of Love and the Mending of Life or Rule of Living*, London, 1920, p. 95), a determined hermit, asserted that it was impossible for one to live a life that is both active and contemplative at once. St. Teresa of Avila appears to have demonstrated that Rolle's thesis was incorrect.

⁵¹ *BN III*, pp. 173-174.

⁵² See GORDON, *Eliot's New Life*, p. 106.

⁵³ Abbot Justin McCANN (Ed.), *The Cloud of Unknowing and other Treatises by an English Mystic of the Fourteenth Century*, London, 1952. Fifth chapter, p. 13.

darkness in search of divine revelation, since by seeking Christ, it was necessary to confront "a dark and painful image of your own soul", remembering that "the darker the night, the nearer is the true day of the love of Jesus."⁵⁴ The tube station, however, offers neither this purgatorial darkness, nor the "daylight" of the rose-garden, but merely a "dim light" of worldliness, useless to the mystic⁵⁵. The travellers on the tube are "Distracted from distraction by distraction"⁵⁶, enchained to the temporal flux, and their world is characterised not by true detachment, but by "apathy". They are "whirled by the cold wind/ That blows before and after time", as paper scraps whirl in the wind created by tube-trains. The classification of men with "bits of paper", the reference to "unhealthy souls", the monotonous list of London tube-stops, and the observation that "the world moves/ In appetency, on its metalled ways", recall the Christendom Group's preoccupation with the mechanisation of modern culture, and Eliot adds the further frustrated observation, "Not here the darkness, in this twittering world." It is necessary to "Descend lower" if one is to achieve mystical detachment⁵⁷, seeking:

Internal darkness, deprivation
And destitution of all property,
Desiccation of the world of sense,
Evacuation of the world of fancy,
Inoperancy of the world of spirit...

The passage echoes St. John of the Cross, who calls for the "mortification of the sensual nature"⁵⁸, for the soul to be "annihilated and detached from all that belongs

⁵⁴ Walter HILTON, *The Scale of Perfection*, in COLLEDGE, *The Medieval Mystics of England*, New York, 1961, pp. 237, 239, 259. See also St. TERESA of Avila, *The Interior Castle*, in Raimundo PANIKKAR, *Teresa of Avila: The Interior Castle*, London, 1979, p. 45; JULIAN of Norwich, (Edited by Edmund COLLEDGE and James WALSH), *Showings*, New York, 1978, pp. 312-3. The theme is also taken up by ROLLE, *The Mending of Life*, p. 239.

⁵⁵ The "dim light" of *Burnt Norton* is comparable to the *Book of Privy Counsel's* "natural intelligence... as far removed from the very truth which appears when the spiritual sun shines as is the dim moonlight on a foggy night in the depth of winter, compared with the brightness of the sunbeam in the middle of Midsummer Day." COLLEDGE, *Medieval Mystics*, p. 169.

⁵⁶ This air of self reproach and frustration is explained by ROLLE, *The Fire of Love*, p. 140: "...some are distracted [from their devotion]... from unstableness of mind, because other men's words break and destroy their prayers; and this forsooth happens not to the perfect." See also St. TERESA, *The Interior Castle*, p. 39. St. JOHN of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, pp. 101-109, discusses further distractions caused by supernatural visions. Evagrius PONTICUS asserts that "Undistracted prayer is the greatest act of the intellect" (Harvey EGAN, *An Anthology of Christian Mysticism*, Minnesota, 1991, p. 53.)

⁵⁷ For examples of exhortations to detachment from created things, see: ROLLE, *The Fire of Love*, pp. 15-16: "from all earthly things be altogether turned in mind"; AELRED of Rievaulx, *The Mirror of Love*, in COLLEDGE, *Medieval Mystics*, p. 109; St. Edmund RICH, *The Mirror of the Holy Church*, *ibid.*, p. 137, 139; *The Book of Privy Counsel*, *ibid.*, pp. 171, 176, 194; Walter HILTON, *The Scale of Perfection*, *ibid.*, pp. 218, 232; JULIAN of Norwich, *Showings*, Short text pp. 132, 183; ECKHART, Sermon 15, *Meister Eckhart*, pp. 189-192.

⁵⁸ St. JOHN of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, pp. 65-6.

to its spirit,"⁵⁹ and for the mystic to turn away from spiritual "fancy"⁶⁰. Eliot also envisages a series of steps leading to mystical union with God: "destitution" of property and the "night of sense" allowing the soul to purge itself of created things, "Evacuation of the world of fancy" in which the soul turns even from the desire for spiritual experiences such as visions, and "Inoperancy of the world of spirit", Eliot's equivalent to the "night of spirit."⁶¹ At this point it becomes possible, as Eckhart preached, to love God while recognising that "your soul should be unspiritual and stripped of all spirituality."⁶²

'Burnt Norton' documents a further source of frustration for the mystic who is also a writer⁶³. The "penitential qualities" noticed by Lewis are immediately observable in the treatment of poesis itself, in which Eliot finds that the writer, too, is enchained to appetency:

... Words strain
Crack and sometimes break, under the burden
Under the tension, slip, slide, perish
Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place
Will not stay still.⁶⁴

Eliot's recognition of the impotence of language to communicate mystical experience was based on his deliberate attempt to do precisely that. This paradox was not unique to Eliot. St. John of the Cross's allegorical poetry, St. Teresa of Avila's calm discussion of the accompaniments to mystical experience such as locutions and visions, Julian of Norwich's vivid descriptions of similar experiences, and the sober advice of *The Cloud of Unknowing* all attest to the variety of literary responses to mystical experience, but also to the ultimate impossibility of describing the experience itself⁶⁵. Similarly, in 'Burnt Norton', the poet is humbled because his

⁵⁹ St. JOHN of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, pp. 88-89. The mystic should not desire "only sweetness and delectable communion with God", but "aridity, distaste and trial, which is the true spiritual cross." See also *Dark Night of the Soul*, pp. 371ff. GORDON, *Eliot's New Life*, p. 116, has also noticed that "Eliot despised a watered-down Christianity of sweet promises."

⁶⁰ St. JOHN of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, pp. 109-114, 127-138. Spiritual "fancy" may be paralleled with fanciness in literary and artistic terms. See ELLIS's comparison of *BN* with Gropius's observations on the Bauhaus (1935), with its stress on "the liberation of architecture from a welter of ornament." *The English Eliot*, p. 16.

⁶¹ St. JOHN of the Cross, *Dark Night of the Soul*, pp. 398ff.

⁶² ECKHART, Sermon 83, *Meister Eckhart*, p. 208. See also his *Counsels on Discernment*, Counsel 2, pp. 248-249.

⁶³ For a discussion of the continuation of this theme in the later poems, see PIETTE, *Imagination at War*, pp. 60-62.

⁶⁴ *BN V*, pp. 175-176.

⁶⁵ Mystics commonly choose a literary rather than theological form to describe their experiences. Eliot clearly recognised this phenomenon in St. John of the Cross. For discussions of this, see Frank

words always fall short of "the Word in the desert."⁶⁶ This is because words, too, are confined by temporal limitations: words, music⁶⁷ and desire all lead to frustration because they "move"⁶⁸, and the mystic seeks the "stillness" of the Platonic form or divine *logos*⁶⁹, symbolised by a "Chinese jar" which "moves perpetually in its stillness"⁷⁰. Yet 'Burnt Norton' closes with an affirmation which recalls once again Underhill's insistence on "the incarnational status of the human spirit":

Love is itself unmoving,
Only the cause and end of movement,
Timeless, and undesiring
Except in the aspect of time⁷¹
Caught in the form of limitation
Between un-being and being.

Eliot concludes that love, like the Incarnation and the Sacraments, is a means whereby the divine "stillness" becomes visible, since it is partly temporal, and partly eternal. Once again, 'Burnt Norton' bears comparison with Williams's memorandum, which insisted that "the vision [of the beloved] is not necessarily

Burch BROWN, *Transfiguration*, pp. 117-122; ISHAK, *Mystical Philosophy*, p. 112. Catholic mystics who discuss the subject include St. JOHN of the Cross, *Dark Night of the Soul*, p. 457; ECKHART, Sermon 53, in *Meister Eckhart*, p. 204. See also UNDERHILL, *Mysticism*, p. 42.

⁶⁶ See Ethel F. CORNWELL, 'The Still Point', p. 17, pp. 54-61.

⁶⁷ The *Quartets* were the product of Eliot's determination to "get... into verse" some of the qualities which he admired in Beethoven's A minor Quartet: "There is a sort of heavenly or at least more than human gaiety about some of his later things which one imagines might come to oneself as the fruit of reconciliation and relief after immense suffering..." (T.S. ELIOT to Stephen Spender, March 1931, cited in MURRAY, *T.S. Eliot and Mysticism*, p. 19.) The musical form of the *Quartets* was recognised by Eric Walker WHITE in his review of *EC*, 'Mr. Eliot's New Poem', in the *Guardian*, 25 October 1940, p. 513. A recent, and convincing, analysis of Eliot's dependence on Beethoven is offered by John HOLLOWAY, 'Eliot's Four Quartets and Beethoven's Last Quartets', in Vinod SENA and Rajiva VERMA, *The Fire and the Rose: New Essays on T.S. Eliot*, Delhi, 1992, 130-144. One possibility not raised by Holloway is that Eliot may have been interested in Beethoven's increasing deafness: a counterpoint to his criticisms of the poverty of imagery in Milton's poetry, caused by the latter's blindness.

⁶⁸ For ROLLE, who relished the metaphor of singing, it was also important to stress that his mystical song was not subject to movement, since "full far have I flown from outward melody to full inward." *The Fire of Love*, p. 134.

⁶⁹ This passage is implicitly linked with the epigraph from Herakleitos in *Burnt Norton* which asserts that "the Logos is common to all, but most men live as if they had an understanding of their own". The way of the mystic lies in apprehending this common Logos. See Morris WEITZ, 'T.S. Eliot: Time as a Mode of Salvation', *Sewanee Review*, 1952, p. 50, and GORDON, *Eliot's New Life*, pp. 97, 99. See also ELIOT, *The Rock*, (Chorus I), in *Complete Poems and Plays*, p. 147.

⁷⁰ GORDON, *Eliot's New Life*, p. 99, argues that Eliot sees not the *logos* or Love, but "art", symbolised by the Chinese jar as "one certain point of intersection with the timeless". The passages cited here seem to contradict this interpretation. Eliot chooses the Chinese jar over words, not love, because words have the quality of motion, and the jar the quality of stillness. Love, being both inside and outside time, possesses both motion and stillness. See ISHAK, *Mystical Philosophy*, p. 111: "The 'Chinese jar' is synonymous with the Aristotelian unmoved mover."

⁷¹ An earlier manuscript added at this point, "Under which all things are relative". *TSE*, V, 10, f8v.

everlasting, but is necessarily eternal."⁷² Eliot, the obedient Catholic whose broken marriage was "indissoluble", gave up hope of an everlasting worldly love, but clearly hoped, as Williams affirmed, that the vision was eternal, and that it could be reached by the negation as well as by the affirmation of images.

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'Burnt Norton' is introspective in its spiritual concerns, documenting the desire of an individual to regain a mystical experience. Eliot himself, however, had long been critical of individualistic types of mysticism, attacking the "romantic" elements of Counter-Reformation mysticism in his Clark Lectures of 1926⁷³. The intense individualism of such mystics provoked Eliot's charge that they were "voluptuaries of religion" whose peddling of "spiritual haschisch" such as Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*,⁷⁴ had also corrupted English literature: hence the conceit of Donne and Crashaw⁷⁵. 'Burnt Norton', with its tacit acceptance of the rose-garden experience, and of earthly love, as vehicles of the eternal, and the later *Quartets*, with their quotations of St. John of the Cross, represent a softening of this approach. It is probable, however, that Eliot remained uncomfortable with the expression, much associated with the metaphysical poets, of a purely individualistic mysticism. The *Quartets* written in wartime exhibit a marked change of emphasis; the individualistic mystical strain is now presented in the context of an ongoing tradition. Furthermore, deliberate parallels are drawn between mystical experiences and more generalised phenomena in a society at war. Critical appraisals of the *Quartets* rarely take account of this change, and a more convincing explanation is

⁷² WILLIAMS, 'Memorandum', f. 149.

⁷³ For a detailed discussion of Eliot's mysticism in relation to the Clark Lectures, see CHILDS, *Mystic, Son and Lover*, 152-185.

⁷⁴ T.S. ELIOT, *Lectures on the Metaphysical Poetry of the Seventeenth Century, with special reference to Donne, Crashaw and Cowley*, delivered at Trinity College, Cambridge, 1926 (The Clark Lectures), in Ronald SCHUCHARD (Ed), *The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry by T.S. Eliot*, Lecture V, p. 158; Lecture III, p. 106. Their writings were compared unfavourably with those of Richard of St. Victor, a "classic religious thinker" who expressed himself in "a clear, simple and economical style" (Lecture III, p. 102.)

⁷⁵ If the romantic mystics dealt in excess of "religious emotion", he argued, Donne and Crashaw dealt in an excess of imagery at the expense of meaning. Hence, "A conceit is the extreme limit of the simile and metaphor which is used for its own sake, and not to make clearer an idea or more definite an emotion." (Lecture IV, p. 138.) Eliot found Donne's style "wasteful", and described him as "a poet... of chaos." (Lecture V, p. 155, and see Lecture III, p. 109.) The full weight of Eliot's incredulity was reserved for Crashaw's description of the weeping Mary's tear: "Donne [in 'The Extasie'], you may remember, supplied a bank as a pillow for the drooping head of a violet; but Crashaw supplies a pillow, stuffed with down, and down from moulting angels at that, a pillow for the head - of a tear. One cannot conceive the state of mind of a writer who could pen such monstrosities." (Lecture VI, p. 172.)

required than the assumption that the poems were now adapted to the patriotic purpose of immortalising the British wartime spirit in verse.

In March 1939, the month in which Eliot delivered the lectures published as *The Idea of a Christian Society*, the annual Conference of the Christendom Group "devoted itself to the study of the relation of ascetical theology to Christian sociology... in the present situation of apparently imminent catastrophe"⁷⁶. Eliot, who had already in that year aligned himself firmly with liberal Catholicism in a statement in the Anglican *Guardian* co-signed by several of the authors of *Essays Catholic and Critical*⁷⁷, was an active Christendom Group member, contributing occasionally to *Christendom*, and acknowledging the influence of the "Christian sociologists" on his own social criticism⁷⁸. Mascall, with the general approval of the Conference, insisted that ascetical theology, with its individual emphases, must function in tandem with sociology with its corporate emphases.⁷⁹ Like the Eliot of 1926, he criticised Counter-Reformation mysticism for "its almost entire preoccupation with the individual". He affirmed that the corporate life of religious communities was "not an escape from the world, but a work performed for it", identifying *askesis* as an essential part of Anglo-Catholic social witness⁸⁰. Charles Williams also spoke to the Conference about 'The Christian facing Catastrophe'. Catastrophe originated in the Fall, as a result of which, individual and social life recurrently culminated in "a choice between two horrors." Catastrophes occurred because society, and the Church, were numbed to "the fundamental principles alike of divine and human relations". If the Church was to regain social influence, it must recreate an "order of co-inherent love", at harmony with these divine principles. His speech provoked an animated discussion which anticipated in some detail the

⁷⁶ M.B.R.K., 'The Christendom Group Conference, 1939', *Christendom*, IX, No. 34, June 1939, p. 133.

⁷⁷ 'The Liberal Catholic Tradition: a need of to-day and a new group', *Guardian*, January 20, 1939, p. 43. Its signatories included the *Essays Catholic and Critical* authors Wilfred Knox, E.G. Selwyn and Will Spens. The statement reiterated the non-oracular nature of Church authority, affirmed the doctrines of the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection as essential to an understanding of the Incarnation and invited "free discussion" of them, and supported the admission of divorced and remarried persons to the Sacrament.

⁷⁸ ELIOT, *Idea of a Christian Society*, London, 1939, p. 10. During the 1930s, he had also joined the Chandos Group, a more casual offspring of the Christendom Group, which assisted Philip Mairet in his editorship of the *New English Weekly*, the journal which first published the last three *Quartets*. See Peter MAYHEW, 'The Christendom Group: a History and an Assessment', B. Litt. Thesis, Oxford University 1977, pp. iv, 140; Peter ACKROYD, *T.S. Eliot*, London, 1984, pp. 221-222. Mairet was also influential in the Moot (see below, pp. 277ff).

⁷⁹ M.B.R.K., 'The Christendom Group Conference, 1939', p. 133.

⁸⁰ E.L. MASCALL, 'Ascetic Theology and Sociology' (Address to 1939 Christendom Conference), *Christendom*, IX, No. 36, December 1939, pp. 253, 259-261.

correspondence between individual and social concerns which would characterise the wartime *Quartets*:

MacKinnon pointed out [that]... Mr. Williams was in effect preaching a technique which can only help those who are aware of the nature of their responsibility. But because of the extent of the Church's unawareness the catastrophe cannot be met. Mr. Williams replied that any catastrophe was only a multiplication of private agonies, and that therefore every individual could act in face of it as he ought to act. But the Conference would not agree that there was no difference in kind between personal and communal disaster, and Mr. Williams was brought to admit that, since social catastrophe removes the background of sanity and the momentum of the normal which gives us the means to recover ourselves from our private tragedies, the difference did exist. Fr. Casserley reminded us that behind the most cosmic catastrophe is God's providential government of the world; that catastrophe may be a creative act, as history reveals... After this the discussion diverged to a reconsideration of the effect of the Fall upon nature... the Conference found itself considering how crocodiles got that way, and did they fall or were they pushed.⁸¹

MacKinnon's reference to the Church's abdication of responsibility, Williams's condensation of catastrophe into individual "private agonies", the generalised interest in "the effect of the Fall upon nature", and, most significantly, Casserley's attempt to restore harmony in the Christendom Group by the assertion that "catastrophe may be a creative act", would all find expression in the later *Quartets*.

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If Eliot had erected a private "scaffold" of self-denial in 1936⁸², 'East Coker', written during the Phoney War, captured the sober cultural mood of that period⁸³.

⁸¹ M.B.R.K., 'The Christendom Group Conference, 1939', p. 136.

⁸² GORDON, *Eliot's New Life*, p. 109, cites Virginia Woolf's observation of 16 February 1940 that Eliot looked "as if hung on a scaffold of heavy private brooding." See St. THOMAS of Avila, *The Interior Castle*, pp. 116-118, and St. JOHN of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, pp. 11-15 as well as Walter HILTON, *The Scale of Perfection*, in COLLEDGE, *Medieval Mystics*, p. 262: "The desire of Jesus felt in this shining darkness kills all impulses of sin."

⁸³ The resonance of the last three *Quartets* with the atmosphere of particular periods of the war has been noted by Angus CALDER, *The Myth of the Blitz*, London, 1991, pp. 145-146. See also BERGSTEN, "Poetry in Wartime" *The Contemporary Background of the Later Quartets*, in *Time and Eternity*, pp. 193-205.

The "Desiccation of the world of sense./ Evacuation of the world of fancy"⁸⁴ in 'Burnt Norton' gained a new, superficial significance, anticipating Don's private expectation of "the dislocation of normal life". Its philosophical introduction reduced to the single sentence, "In my beginning is my end," the new poem opened with the Eliotic speaker approaching the village from which his ancestor Andrew Elyot had departed for New England in the seventeenth century⁸⁵. He meditates on the theme of Ecclesiastes: the unending cycle of birth, reproduction, death and decay, as reflected in the building and demolition of houses. Life itself is not possible without decay. All must return to earth, which possesses the potential to reappear as "flesh, fur and faeces/ Bone of man and beast, cornstalk and leaf". A scene, borrowed on Eliot's admission from Williams⁸⁶, in which peasants are "daunsinge, signifying matrimonie"⁸⁷ around a fire at midnight, descends abruptly from its atmosphere of carnival and unity with nature to:

...Feet rising and falling.
Eating and drinking. Dung and death.

The opening of 'East Coker' thus reveals a poet preoccupied, like the Christendom Group, with the effects of original sin upon nature⁸⁸, and, in a significant passing reference, upon marriage⁸⁹. In the second movement, nature is portrayed with an eye for its imperfections: the snowdrops are "writhing under feet", and the "hollyhocks... aim too high", disappointments to the narrator who has come looking for "autumnal serenity/ And the wisdom of age", and has found "late roses filled with early snow". His sense of deflation is equated with that experienced by those who have abandoned liberal social optimism:

⁸⁴ BN III, p. 174.

⁸⁵ EC I, pp. 177-178. MURRAY, *T.S. Eliot and Mysticism*, p. 60.

⁸⁶ Charles WILLIAMS, *The Greater Trumps*, London, 1932, p. 95: "everything which exists takes part in the movement of a great dance... there is nothing at all anywhere but the dance." See MURRAY, *T.S. Eliot and Mysticism*, p. 171.

⁸⁷ See Ronald W. RUDE, *A Critical Edition of Sir Thomas Elyot's The Boke Named the Govenour*, New York, 1992, p. 92 (Bk1, Cap. xxi): "It is diligently to be noted that the company of man and woman in daunsinge, they both observynge one nombre and tyme in their mevynges, was nat begonne without special consideration, as well for the necessarye conjunction of these two persons, as for the imitation of sondry vertues: which be by them represented. And for as moche as by the joynyng of a man and a woman in daunsinge may be signified matrimonie, I could in declarynge the dignitie and commoditie of that sacrament make intier volumes... In every daunse of a most auncient custome, there daunseth to gether a man and a woman, holding eche other by the hande or the arme: whiche betokeneth concorde."

⁸⁸ For a discussion of the Puritan influence on Eliot's view of original sin see SMIT, *Poetry and Belief*, pp. 210-211. CHILDS, *Mystic, Son and Lover*, pp. 198-200, also finds references to original sin in BN.

⁸⁹ See Carl PLASA, 'Reading Tennyson in *Four Quartets*: the example of "East Coker"', *English*, 40, 1991, p. 250, for a discussion of "the transformation of the marriage dance into a funereal one - a dance of death".

...Had they deceived us,
Or deceived themselves, the quiet-voiced elders,
Bequeathing us merely a receipt for deceit...[?]
...There is, it seems to us,
At best only a limited value
In the knowledge derived from experience.⁹⁰

This passage, with its devastating conclusion that "every moment is a new and shocking/ Valuation of all we have been," has led critics to theorise about Eliot's neo-orthodox sympathies⁹¹. It is more illuminating to view 'East Coker' in the light of the controversy generated by the younger Catholics in the pages of *Theology* in 1940, determined as they were to overturn the wisdom of the liberal elders. Eliot's language possesses a comparable acidity to that with which MacKinnon launched his scathing attack on *Songs of Praise*, with its sentimental image of Christ "our hero strong and tender". MacKinnon had written of the scandal of the Church, and its attempt to be true to Christ in "the concrete actuality of historical situations"⁹²; Eliot wrote of the dangers of the middle way, "On the edge of a grimpen... menaced by monsters, fancy lights./ Risking enchantment."⁹³ MacKinnon saw the "return to dogma" as "an act of humility"⁹⁴ because man's "very futility ministers to the glory of God"⁹⁵; Eliot reported that "The only wisdom we can hope to acquire/ Is the wisdom of humility: humility is endless,"⁹⁶ and rebuked the elders for their "fear of

⁹⁰ EC II, pp. 178-179. See also St. JOHN of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, pp. 26, 93-94: "no creature and no knowledge that can be comprehended by the understanding can serve as a proximate means of Divine union with God." According to the Counter-Reformation mystic, as wood can only be ignited by means of heat, and not "with air or water or earth", so for the understanding to be united with God, "it must of necessity employ that means that unites it with Him." For Eliot the "wisdom of old men" fails because its bondage to "knowledge derived from experience" makes this union with God impossible. See ISHAK, *Mystical Philosophy*, p. 113, for an interpretation of "the quiet-voiced elders" as the spokesmen of "the Renaissance".

⁹¹ MURRAY, *T.S. Eliot and Mysticism*, pp. 111-112. By contrast, SMIDT, *Poetry and Belief*, p. 167, argues that Eliot is accepting a form of Bergsonism in this passage, an unnecessary conclusion in the passage is taken to discuss the sin of humanity. For a discussion of Eliot's early conversion to, and rejection of, Bergsonism, see CHILDS, *Mystic, Son and Lover*, pp. 7-32. Eliot may not have been influenced by neo-orthodoxy, but his description of rural scenes certainly influenced Nicodemus's *Midnight Hour*, published in the following year (see above, p. 61).

⁹² MACKINNON, 'Some Reflections for Passiontide, 1939', p. 257. See above, p. 105.

⁹³ The Grimpen Mire was the swamp which consumed the murderer Stapleton, in Sir Arthur CONAN DOYLE's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, (*The Illustrated Sherlock Holmes Treasury*, New York, 1976, p. 625.) Note that "Sherlock Holmes had, in a very remarkable degree, the power of detaching his mind at will." (p. 553). See also ISHAK, *Mystical Philosophy*, p. 114.

⁹⁴ D.M. MACKINNON, *The Church of God*, (Signposts No. 7, 1940), pp. 49-51.

⁹⁵ D.M. MACKINNON, *God the Living and the True*, (Signposts No. 2, 1940), pp. 22-23. See above, p. 112.

⁹⁶ See ELIOT, *Idea of a Christian Society*, p. 96. ISHAK, *Mystical Philosophy*, p. 113, interprets Eliot's use of "humility" as deriving more from Eastern than Christian mysticism. In the light of Eliot's Catholic context, it seems unnecessary to look so far afield. (For Catholic mystical passages that parallel Eliot's statement, "Humility is endless", see ECKHART, Sermon 15, *Meister Eckhart*, p.

fear and frenzy, their fear of possession, / Of belonging to another, or to others, or to God."⁹⁷ The rustic dancers of the first movement had demonstrated this: they were now *humus*, "Nourishing the corn". The Eliot who, on this basis, refutes "the wisdom of old men", is the same Eliot who described English society in 1934 as "worm-eaten with Liberalism"⁹⁸, and who would, at Malvern in 1941, demand of humanist educational theorists: "Why should we want a humane culture?... What is the sanction for your conception of social conscience or of political will as against that, for instance, now dominant in Germany?"⁹⁹ Perhaps one of Eliot's "old men" was Matthew Arnold, whose "Christian doctrine... was... vague, unsound and perhaps heretical", and whose uncritical belief in latent English Christianity was held responsible for the silent exclusion of God from educational thought¹⁰⁰.

To read a direct Barthian influence into 'East Coker'¹⁰¹ is largely to miss the point. Eliot possessed the necessary resources in the pages of *Christendom*, which was preoccupied in the late 1930s with "the uncompromising realism of contemporary [Catholic] theology" and its reaffirmation of the doctrine of original sin, and with, as MacKinnon picturesquely put it, the need to put an end to "Liberal Protestant slobber"¹⁰². Barthians were similarly preoccupied, but could hardly have recommended, as 'East Coker' does, the works of the Catholic mystics as providing a response to the problem of temporal futility. The third movement's funeral lament for "eminent men" as they "go into the dark" culminates in the statement:

I said to my soul, be still, and let the dark come upon you
Which shall be the darkness of God. ...¹⁰³

190; St. JOHN of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, p. 92; *Dark Night of the Soul*, pp. 354-355; St. TERESA of Avila, *The Interior Castle*, p. 43; and see also Charles WILLIAMS, *The Descent of the Dove: a Short History of the Holy Spirit in the Church*, London, 1939, p. 232.) Frank Burch BROWN even more perplexingly argues on the basis of Eliot's essay on Pascal's *Pensees* that at this point the speaker "does not yet try to possess the thought and the way of being that is fully Christian. Rather, he practices humility." (*Transfiguration*, p. 109.) For a discussion of Pascal's influence, see BERGSTEN, *Time and Eternity*, pp. 65-68.

⁹⁷ See Jitendra Kumar SHARMA, *Time and T.S. Eliot*, New York, 1985, p. 83.

⁹⁸ T.S. ELIOT, *After Strange Gods: a Primer of Modern Heresy*, London, 1934, p. 13.

⁹⁹ T.S. ELIOT, 'The Christian Conception of Education', in *Malvern, 1941: The Life of the Church and the Order of Society*, London, 1941, p. 208.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 210-213.

¹⁰¹ ELLIS, *The English Eliot*, p. 131, comes closer to a recognition that Eliot's exposure to Barth came through a Catholic filter: "The severity of Eliot's treatment of the temporal and natural realm owes a great deal to what Demant calls the 'Neo-Calvinist: transcendental supernaturalism' of the theologian Karl Barth." See V.A. DEMANT, *The Religious Prospect*, London, 1939, pp. 179ff; Ian GLENN, 'Karl Barth and T.S. Eliot', *Standpunkte*, 35, 1982, pp. 35-42.

¹⁰² D.M. MACKINNON, 'Recall - to What?', *Christendom*, VIII, No. 29, March, 1938, pp. 51-54.

¹⁰³ EC III, pp. 180-181. J.H. OLDHAM quoted this passage in his Editorial for the *CN-L*, No. 105, 29 October 1941, as an illustration of his assertion that: "The triumph of the human spirit over catastrophe can only be at a high cost. The condition of re-birth is that we should face the whole of our experience without fear in the confidence that God is the Ruler both of darkness and of Light. In

This is the darkness of *The Cloud of Unknowing* and Walter Hilton, in which the soul confronts its own sin in order to approach God, and places created things under the cloud of forgetting. It is Evelyn Underhill's "night of sense" which necessarily precedes the stage of "illumination" in the mystic way¹⁰⁴. Eliot interrupts his preparation for mystical darkness with comparisons to three modern experiences: the changing of the scenery in a theatre while "the lights are extinguished", the "growing terror of nothing to think about" which comes over the normally "twittering world" of the tube when the train "stops too long between stations", and the Prufrockian etherised patient, whose "mind is conscious but conscious of nothing"¹⁰⁵. The preparation for purgation from created things continues:

I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope
For hope would be hope of the wrong thing; wait without love
For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.
Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought.
So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing.¹⁰⁶

The repetition of the word "wait", and the accusatory "you are not ready", reflected at once the nerve-racking monotony of the Phoney War on the Home Front, and the agonies of the mystic who has known the joys of illumination, only to be plunged into the "dark night of the soul" which precedes union with God. Eliot was appropriating imagery of a mystical blackout, in which that most apophatic of all the mystics, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, had counselled that one must:

the active response to catastrophe there will not only be thought and act; but also an activity of waiting."

¹⁰⁴ Underhill derived the concept from St. JOHN of the Cross's *Ascent of Mount Carmel*. Note that MacKinnon also insisted that "the via negativa inevitably precedes the via eminentiae in the ordered process of our thoughts of God". 'Revelation and Social Justice, *Malvern 1941*, pp. 85-86, and see above, p. 94.

¹⁰⁵ This consciousness involves an awareness of one's own soul, for as ECKHART put it, "there is a power in the soul that touches neither time nor flesh." (Sermon 2, *Meister Eckhart*, p. 179.)

¹⁰⁶ "... during the time the union lasts the soul is left as though without its senses, for it has no power to think even if it wants to." Furthermore, "In loving, if it does love, it doesn't understand how or what it is it loves or what it would want." St. TERESA of Avila, *The Interior Castle*, pp. 86-87; see also p. 36. The mystic must not focus too much even on the "spiritual consolations" which God provides, since this can lead to spiritual gluttony. See St. JOHN of the Cross, *Dark Night of the Soul*, pp. 364-365, p. 450. The phrase "wait without thought" also recalls ECKHART, *Counsels on Discernment*, Counsel 6, *Meister Eckhart*, p. 253: "A man ought not to have a God who is just a product of his thought... because if the thought vanished, God too would vanish." He could also "praise detachment above all love... because love compels me to suffer all things for God's love, yet detachment leads me to where I am receptive to nothing except God." ('On Detachment', in *Meister Eckhart*, p. 286). See BERGSTEN, *Time and Eternity*, pp. 113ff.

... abandon
 all sensation and
 all intellection and
 all objects sensed
 or seen and
 all being and
 all nonbeing...
 released from all,
 aloft to the flashing forth,
 beyond all being, of the divine dark.¹⁰⁷

The movement closes with the *Quartets*' longest paraphrase of a Catholic mystical text, an exhortation to detachment by St. John of the Cross. The subtle transformations to which Eliot subjected the Carmelite's text suggest a guilty apprehension that the modern poet's attachment to created things is not so willingly relinquished. Eliot's "You must go by the way of dispossession" and "what you own is what you do not own", carry implications of the privations of rationing and commitment to a war effort - more involuntary motivations than those suggested by St. John's simple "Desire to possess nothing."¹⁰⁸ Whatever the motive, however, the mystical perspective, with its focus on an eternal present, provides relief from the depressing revelation of "Dung and death" documented in the first half of 'East Coker'. The protagonist has travelled to East Coker, expecting that place to evoke his ancestral past, and perhaps to nourish his patriotic spirit; instead, he finds a natural cycle hinging on decay¹⁰⁹. St. John of the Cross reveals his error: he has sought beatitude in a place rather than in the spiritual state in which "where you are is where you are not." The protagonist himself is implicated in the failure of the

¹⁰⁷ Pseudo-DIONYSIUS the Areopagite, *Mystical Theology*, in EGAN, *Anthology*, pp. 96-97. The passage in *EC* was interpreted by J.H. OLDHAM in his Editorial for the *CN-L*, 105, October 29, 1941: "In the active response to catastrophe there will not only be thought and act, but also an activity of waiting." Oldham then quoted the "I said to my soul" passage.

¹⁰⁸ St. JOHN of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, pp. 62-63: "In order to arrive at having pleasure in everything, / Desire to have pleasure in nothing. / In order to arrive at possessing everything, / Desire to possess nothing. / In order to arrive at being everything, / Desire to be nothing. / In order to arrive at knowing everything, / Desire to know nothing. / In order to arrive at that wherein thou hast no pleasure, / Thou must go by a way wherein thou hast no pleasure. / In order to arrive at that which thou knowest not, / Thou must go by a way that thou knowest not. / In order to arrive at that which thou possessest not, / Thou must go by a way that thou possessest not. / In order to arrive at that which thou art not, / Thou must go through that which thou art not." The allusion was first recognised by James Johnson SWEENEY in 1941, in "East Coker": A Reading", in BERGONZI, *T.S. Eliot*, pp. 49-50. For another analysis of Eliot's departures from the original text, see MURRAY, *T.S. Eliot and Mysticism*, p. 88ff.

¹⁰⁹ See ROLLE, *I Sleep and my Heart Wakes*, in COLLEDGE, *Medieval Mystics*, p. 146. Frank Burch BROWN, *Transfiguration*, p. 62.

"quiet voiced elders" to give equal credence to the claims of transcendence and immanence¹¹⁰.

The imagery of anaesthesia, resonating at once with mystical notions of detachment, the portrayals of spiritual sterility of Eliot's earlier poems, and the air of unreality engendered by the Phoney War, is continued in the lyrical fourth movement of 'East Coker'¹¹¹. "The wounded surgeon", whose identity is revealed by his "bleeding hands"¹¹², must exercise:

The sharp compassion of the healer's art
 Resolving the enigma of the fever chart.

The focus has shifted from the purgation of an individual to a divine surgical procedure, performed on a crisis-ridden society.¹¹³ The lyric's tendency towards paradox, with its "frigid purgatorial fires" and its perception that to "do well" means to "Die of the absolute paternal care/ That will not leave us, but prevents us everywhere", has as much in common with MacKinnon as with Barth, as does the implication that the debilitating effects of original sin are in fact part of the cure:

Our only health is the disease
 If we obey the dying nurse
 Whose constant care is not to please
 But to remind of our, and Adam's curse,
 And that, to be restored, our sickness must grow worse.

Eliot's "dying nurse" may be equated with MacKinnon's Church, charged despite its own fatal imperfections, with communicating "the terrible paradoxes of the Gospel"

¹¹⁰ This interpretation would seem to reconcile those of Graham Hough, who portrays the poems as communicating an immanent theology, and those of MURRAY, *T.S. Eliot and Mysticism*, pp. 78-79, who sees the poems as expressions of the theology of transcendence, not of immanence. See also Shira WOLENSKY, *Language Mysticism: The Negative Way of Language in Eliot, Beckett, and Celan*, California, 1995, p. 21; ELLIS, *The English Eliot*, pp. 122-123. Ellis compares the emphasis on transcendence in *Four Quartets* with the attack upon excessive immanentism in DEMANT, *The Religious Prospect*.

¹¹¹ *EC IV*, pp. 181-182.

¹¹² The image of the surgeon may be derived from St. TERESA of Avila, *The Interior Castle*, p. 62: "Humility is the ointment for our wounds because if we indeed have humility, even though there may be a time of delay, the surgeon, who is our Lord, will come and heal us." See also G.K.A. BELL, 'The Pope's Five Peace Points', Stoll Theatre, 10 May, 1941, in *The Church And Humanity*, London, 1946, p. 48.

¹¹³ The Bishop of Bradford appropriated Eliot's image of the "fever chart" in 1942 to assert that the "line of development [in human history] is like a fever patient's temperature chart, and the evil which God does not want is very powerful and very persistent." This was a very accurate, if unacknowledged, exposition of Eliot's lyric. Alfred BLUNT, *What the Church Teaches*, Harmondsworth, 1942, p. 19.

and preserving a Liturgy which communicates the death and resurrection of Christ "to a tortured world" whose very participation in his death had been the point at which the Church's "self-contradiction was most hideously manifest"¹¹⁴.

The culmination of the lyric in a graphic, almost repulsive, portrayal of the eucharist also reveals Eliot's Catholic perspective¹¹⁵:

The dripping blood our only drink,
The bloody flesh our only food:
In spite of which we like to think
That we are sound, substantial flesh and blood -
Again, in spite of that, we call this Friday good.¹¹⁶

A number of agenda are discernible here, all of them anathema to neo-orthodox Protestantism, but consistent with the early wartime writings of MacKinnon. The eucharist reminds its recipients that eternal realities are more "substantial" than our own "flesh and blood"¹¹⁷. The Articles of Religion in the *Book of Common Prayer* had plumbed the depths of doctrinal vagueness by rejecting transubstantiation but affirming that, "The body of Christ is given, taken and eaten... only after a heavenly and spiritual manner." Eliot responds, in neo-Platonist fashion, that spiritual reality outstrips physical reality; the flesh and blood of Christ in the eucharist makes our own seem insubstantial. The lyric displays the same determination to insist on the particular that had characterised MacKinnon's defense of the sacraments from the attempt of liberals to explain the eucharist from the "wrong end", referring it to an amorphous "universal, sacramental principle". Both writers' treatments of the

¹¹⁴ MACKINNON, *The Church of God*, pp. 24-30.

¹¹⁵ Eliot testified that this lyric was inspired by his own regular practice of praying the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary. The form of the lyric was derived from St. John of the Cross's *En una noche oscura*. See MURRAY, *T.S. Eliot and Mysticism*, pp. 65, 68. ELLIS, *The English Eliot*, p. 12, uses the lyric sections of the poems as examples of a general "Latinity of diction" throughout the entire cycle, indicative of Eliot's refusal to employ typically English modes of expression.

¹¹⁶ See Frank Burch BROWN, *Transfiguration*, pp. 61, 112ff. The passage has annoyed some critics, such as CALDER, *T.S. Eliot*, pp. 147-149, who finds the whole of the fourth movement of *East Coker* repellent, apparently because of its overt Catholicism, and dismisses the paraphrase of St. John of the Cross in the third movement as "silly". See also WARD, *T.S. Eliot Between Two Worlds*, p. 250; Stephen SPENDER, *T.S. Eliot*, New York, 1975, p. 174; BERGONZI, 'Introduction', *T.S. Eliot*, pp. 18-19. ISHAK, *Mystical Philosophy*, p. 115, interprets the "wounded surgeon" as "the Renaissance image". He recognises that the image is "reminiscent" of the crucifixion. See WILLIAMS, *Descent of the Dove*, pp. 57-58: "The Communion of the Eucharist, at once an image and a Presence, was necessary to both [the Affirmative and the Negative Ways]."

¹¹⁷ Compare with Evelyn UNDERHILL, *The Mystery of Sacrifice*, London, 1938, p. 43: The consecration of the Eucharist "brings home to us the plastic, half-real, half-finished character of the physical world; the fact that it points beyond itself and awaits at every level transformation in God..." See also UNDERHILL, *Mysticism*, p. 449: "We, deliberately seeking for that which we suppose to be spiritual, too often overlook that which is alone Real."

eucharist emphasise the sacrificial aspect - the presence of "flesh" and "blood" (Eliot compounds the effect by including the adjective, "dripping") - alongside the perception that human sin is responsible for the hideousness of the sacrifice itself¹¹⁸.

Eliot's criticism of the banal ease with which the English language speaks of "Good Friday", despite the grim realities of the sacrifice of Calvary, provides in the fourth movement a basis for a return to the 'Burnt Norton' theme of the inadequacy of words. The poet now finds that "every attempt" to use words ends in "a different kind of failure"¹¹⁹, yet something compels him to persevere. This dogged refusal to relinquish the role of poet is expressed in military terms:

... And so each venture
Is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate
With shabby equipment always deteriorating
In the general mess of imprecision of feeling,
Undisciplined squads of emotion. ...

The meaning is multi-layered: on the one hand, the war imagery suggests the confused state of a society preparing for bombardment, invasion or retaliation; on the other, the classicist poet laments the continual influx of romantic emotion, and the classical mystic laments his failure to ignore distractions from the *via negativa*. These failures must be conquered "By strength and submission", as they have been in the past "by men whom one cannot hope/ To emulate...", and again, the reader is left to decide whether Eliot is referring to great strategists, poets, or saints. Whatever reading is preferred, the "conditions" are now "unpropitious", whether through the degeneration of military ethics or of language, or the secularisation of culture¹²⁰, so that "For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business." This was the clearest possible enunciation of a Catholic theology of the ordinary and unspectacular¹²¹; an admission of unworthiness and a refusal to capitulate similar to

¹¹⁸ See MACKINNON, *The Church of God*, pp. 67-75: "Such language is admittedly harsh and shocking to the refinement of twentieth-century spirituality, but its harshness is the harshness of the Gospel, whose message again and again comes to rest upon the flesh of Jesus, and upon the shedding of his blood... Each celebration of the Eucharist sets before us sacramentally the bloody act of Calvary." (p. 70.)

¹¹⁹ *EC V*, pp. 182-183. Eliot's phrase, "Twenty years largely wasted", reflects an attitude which he had held at least since the mid-1930s. Asked by Bell to write a Pageant play, Eliot replied on 20 July 1935, "I am no longer young enough to be able to postpone things [even for the sake of a Pageant], especially as a great deal of my life has been wasted in the past." (*BELLP*, Vol. 156, 'Religious Drama 1934-1950', f. 94.)

¹²⁰ PIETTE, *Imagination at War*, p. 61.

¹²¹ This would seem a more logical conclusion, in the light of Eliot's Catholicism, than that drawn by CHILDS, *Mystic, Son and Lover*, pp. 208-209, that "The emphasis upon the present moment... and the emphasis on 'only the trying' are all pragmatic." It also preserves us from trying to imagine, as

the attitude of the whisky priest in Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory*. The protagonist embraces the mundane¹²²: "Home is where one starts from." This leads to a recognition that "As we grow older", negation and affirmation cannot be regarded as irreconcilable philosophies. The experience in the garden, "the intense moment/ Isolated, with no before and after", is an insufficient basis for spiritual life, but a life sequestered from the world and from tradition is also inadequate. The protagonist now seeks:

...a lifetime burning in every moment
And not the lifetime of one man only
But of old stones that cannot be deciphered.
There is a time for the evening under starlight,
A time for the evening under lamplight
(The evening with the photograph album).
Love is most nearly itself
When here and now cease to matter.
Old men ought to be explorers
Here and there does not matter...

He concludes that there is, after all, a doctrine of immanence which supplies a wisdom suitable for old men. "Love is most nearly itself" when it becomes transcendent, escaping the constraints of time and place, but the "incarnational status of the human spirit" recognises that there must be points at which eternity and time do transect¹²³. The language of Ecclesiastes, employed previously to highlight a desultory life-cycle, is now harnessed to the mundane image of the home, with its lamps and photograph albums. With Underhill's aspiring mystic, he discovers that there is illumination beyond the darkness of purgation:

We must be still and still moving
Into another intensity
For a further union, a deeper communion
Through the dark cold and empty desolation...¹²⁴

Childs bids us to do, the intellectual contortionism that would have been necessary for Eliot to have retained his "1916 pragmatic cast of mind alongside his Anglo-Catholicism".

¹²² "I am assumed to have an intimate and affectionate acquaintance with the limbo and lower regions in which the secular moves: a knowledge of objects towards which the theological mind is not often directed. My qualification is the eye of the owl, not that of the eagle." 'I by T.S. Eliot', in *Revelation*, London, 1937, p. 1. See MURRAY, *T.S. Eliot and Mysticism*, p. 72.

¹²³ BERGSTEN, *Time and Eternity*, pp. 103ff.

¹²⁴ GORDON, *Eliot's New Life*, p. 114 suggests that the "deeper communion" may also represent Eliot's justification for separation from Emily Hale. She argues (p. 134) that "Eliot's curt exposition of detachment is curiously flat." "The mystics," she argues, "show concurrent love for fellow beings, which is a convincing sign of their state of grace; Eliot's detachment is more rigid." Yet the mystics repeatedly stress that one's earthly love must never supplant one's quest for union with God. See, for example, the way in which Rolle treated his parents and his sister when he absconded to live the life

"Old men ought to be explorers"; the old man who has walked to East Coker must now consider how he should act in the course of the voyage.

*

Despite its American setting, 'The Dry Salvages', written in 1941, conveys a home-front perception of the Battle of the Atlantic. Throughout the first four movements, water is portrayed as the defeater, destroyer and transcender of human schemes. In the first movement, Eliot's description of the river¹²⁵, "a strong brown god", deliberately eschews any hint of the picturesque. Eliot personifies the river as a potentially malicious deity. In the past, it has been utilised but respected; now it is "Unhonoured, unpropitiated/ By worshippers of the machine, but waiting, watching and waiting." The sea into which it empties is equally remorseless, spitting out the remains of its own victims upon the beaches. These include remnants from the evolutionary process: "The starfish, the horseshoe crab, the whale's backbone", but in addition:

[The sea]... tosses up our losses, the torn seine,
The shattered lobsterpot, the broken oar
And the gear of foreign dead men.

The assortment of curiosities ejected by the sea, while it must have set its 1941 audience thinking of Dunkirk, also provides the protagonist with an opportunity to recall the opening of 'East Coker', with its juxtaposition of the brevity of human life with the unending natural cycle. "The tolling bell", mounted on a buoy that warns voyagers of the peril of the Dry Salvages¹²⁶, testifies to a similar transcendence of the human life cycle, measuring "a time/ Older than the time of chronometers". In the second movement, the eternal monotony of the "ground swell" is reflected in a lyric which explicitly connects the destructive power of the sea with the autumnal process of decay described in 'East Coker', and reintroduces the theme of the agony of mystical prayer in the midst of purgation:

of a hermit, leaving his sister to cry, "My brother is mad! My brother is mad!" *Legenda* of Richard ROLLE, in *The Fire Of Love*, Lession I, p. xivi and see p. 115: "Truly I fled into (the) wilderness because I could not accord with men..." The manner in which Angela of Foligno rejoiced in the early deaths of her intimate family members, including her children, (cited in UNDERHILL, *Mysticism*, p. 216, n. 3) took this tendency to callous extremes.

¹²⁵ *DS I*, pp. 184-185.

¹²⁶ Eliot's note explains that "The Dry Salvages - presumably *les trois sauvages* - is a small group of rocks, with a beacon, off the N.E. coast of Cape Ann, Massachusetts." (p. 184.)

Where is there an end of it, the soundless wailing,
The silent withering of autumn flowers
Dropping their petals and remaining motionless;
Where is there an end of the drifting wreckage,
The prayer of the bone on the beach, the unprayable
Prayer at the calamitous annunciation?¹²⁷

The sea breaks all that seemed "most reliable", presumably humbling the "worshippers of the machine"¹²⁸, but it provides the mystic with an object lesson. Life "amongst the breakage" reveals that it is precisely what is "reliable" which is "the fittest for renunciation". Renunciation, or detachment, leads the mystic to adopt an "unattached devotion which might pass for devotionless" in the midst of life, a voyage in "a drifting boat with a slow leakage".

The poet resumes his reflection, begun in 'East Coker', on lessons learnt "as one becomes older". The past can no longer be understood in terms of "sequence" or "development"; this is to succumb to "superficial notions of evolution". The sea has disgorged the products of evolution, and thereby dwarfed them in the perspective of eternity. However, the past is not meaningless; it possesses its own "pattern" which ought not to be disowned as it is by the "popular mind". Eliot now seeks to apply this perception to mystical experiences, "moments of happiness" and "sudden illumination" which recall the rose-garden at Burnt Norton:

We had the experience but missed the meaning,
And approach to the meaning restores the experience
In a different form, beyond any meaning
We can assign to happiness.

The fleeting experience in the rose-garden had provided a window on eternity under conditions which had been far from "unpropitious", in idyllic surroundings and with ideal company. Yet the meaning behind the experience is the access it provides to eternity, not the fleeting sense of beatitude, and 'Dry Salvages' now affirms that communion, not happiness, is the prerequisite for mystical illumination. Illumination must be regained by subduing one's individuality, since this "Is not the experience of one life only/ But of many generations". The mystic must face "the

¹²⁷ DS II, pp. 185-187.

¹²⁸ Compare with ELIOT, *The Idea of a Christian Society*, p. 62: "For a long enough time we have believed in nothing but the values arising in a mechanised, commercialised, urbanised way of life: it would be as well for us to face the permanent conditions upon which God allows us to live upon this planet." See also pp. 21, 98. The parallel between Eliot's river and that which dominates the scenery of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* has been noted by WARD, *T.S. Eliot Between Two Worlds*, pp. 253-254.

primitive terror", the revelation in history of original sin, and "discover that the moments of agony... are likewise permanent". The passage might be a poetic commentary on the discussion of Williams's paper in 1939. To seek the eternal is to cast out upon an ocean with its own hazards which, like the Dry Salvages themselves, may lead under unpropitious conditions to shipwreck. The dangers of the mystic way are only mitigated by a catholic collectivism, a fellowship of suffering which conveniently resonates with the notion of wartime solidarity:

... We appreciate this better
In the agony of others, nearly experienced,
Involving ourselves, than in our own.
For our own past is covered by the currents of action,
But the torment of others remains an experience
Unqualified, unworn by subsequent attrition.
People change, and smile, but the agony abides.

The mysticism which Eliot seeks must therefore encompass this collective experience of agony, if it is to achieve the "lifetime burning in every moment" which is the domain of the inclusive mystic. Eliot's mystic must, like MacKinnon's "true priest", suffer vicariously with the people, and be acutely aware, as the Christendom Group had been in 1939, of the difference between "personal and communal disaster", whilst recognising that co-inherence is the Christian way.

The third movement deals with a serious objection which could be raised in response to the discovery that "the currents of action" obscure mystical experience. Perhaps the mysticism advocated by Eliot is not Catholic mysticism after all¹²⁹, but a form of Quietism, or something more eclectic, derived partially from Eastern religions. Evelyn Underhill had explained that "Oriental mysticism", and the Buddhist's Nirvana, had added a further stage to the penultimate goal of the Catholic mystics, union with God. Eastern mysticism culminated in "the total

¹²⁹ DS III, pp. 187-188. Such a charge would be a disturbing one for Eliot, who affirmed that "I take for granted that Christian revelation is the only full revelation." (Introductory Essay in *Revelation*, Ed. J Baillie and H. Martin, New York, 1937, pp. 1-2. See also BERGSTEN, *Time and Eternity*, p. 47; 60-63; SMIT, *Poetry and Belief*, pp. 182-189.) A number of authors have not interpreted Eliot's treatment of Krishna as a rejection. For alternative arguments to that presented here, see GORDON, *Eliot's New Life*, p. 121; ISHAK, *Mystical Philosophy*, pp. 119-120, 122. BERGSTEN, *Time and Eternity*, pp. 224-229, admits that in its Christian context, the reference to Krishna is problematic. See also WARD, *T.S. Eliot Between Two Worlds*, pp. 261-262. For an exposition of the points of similarity between Buddhist and Christian mysticism, and a characterisation of the *Four Quartets* as exposing "a Christian apophatic mysticism with some Buddhist influence" (p. 104), see William JOHNSTON, *The Still Point. Reflections on Zen and Christian Mysticism*, New York, 1970. Further exposition of the passage may be found in: Harold F. BROOKS, 'Four Quartets: the structure in relation to the themes', in Graham MARTIN (Ed.), *Eliot in Perspective*, London, 1970, p. 142; SHARMA, *Time and T.S. Eliot*; GARDNER, *Composition*, pp. 56-57.

annihilation or reabsorption of the individual soul in the Infinite."¹³⁰ Underhill denounced Quietism as a degeneration of Catholic mysticism in which the genuine experience of "the Quiet" is pursued as an end in itself, and descends into "limp passivity"¹³¹. Eliot introduces Krishna as a possible interpreter of the object lesson provided by the river and the sea, and credits him with the same perception that has characterised the first two *Quartets*: "the way up [by affirmation] is the way down [by negation]". Eliot's Krishna also apprehends the truth of the surgery-lyric of 'East Coker': "time is no healer: the patient is no longer here." The patient must be anaesthetised, taken out of time, before the wounded surgeon can go to work. This state of spiritual anaesthesia¹³² is compared to the experience of voyagers, who occupy a sort of limbo between the hither and the nether shore. For voyagers at sea, "time is withdrawn", past and future can be appraised "with an equal mind", and the constraints of "action and inaction" become meaningless. Accordingly Krishna can counsel:

'... do not think of the fruit of action.
Fare forward.

O voyagers, O seamen,
You who come to port, and you whose bodies
Will suffer the trial and judgement of the sea,
Or whatever event, this is your real destination.
So Krishna, as when he admonished Arjuna
On the field of battle.

Not fare well,
But fare forward, voyagers.¹³³

For Krishna, voyagers can afford to be detached from action¹³⁴. If they are swallowed by the sea, so be it; "this is your real destination". Souls are destined for annihilation, consumption by an ocean, so why concern oneself with earthly action?

The counsel of Krishna may satisfy a certain logic, but it is appalling military advice. One will certainly not "fare well", if one obeys the command "fare forward", on a sea teeming with U-boats. The Marian prayer that follows the

¹³⁰ UNDERHILL, *Mysticism*, pp. 170-171; see also p. 40.

¹³¹ *ibid.*, pp. 320-321.

¹³² UNDERHILL points out that symptoms of "anaesthesia" commonly accompany the mystical state of contemplation, but stresses that the mystic's experience must move on from this if it is to achieve its goal. (*Mysticism*, p. 329.)

¹³³ Eliot wrote to his friend and private critic, John Hayward, 4 January 1941, to tell him that this was not intended as a reference to Browning: "I was thinking of the words of the sibyl to Alaric (wasn't it?) on his way to Rome. 'Not fare well, but fare forward'. This point bothers me." *TSE*, V. 14.

¹³⁴ *Bhagavad-Gita*, Ch. II, 47.

Krishna discourse¹³⁵ beseeches the Lady's intercession for "Women who have seen their sons or husbands/ Setting forth, and not returning:"

And pray for those who were in ships, and
Ended their voyage on the sand, in the sea's lips
Or in the dark throat which will not reject them
Or wherever cannot reach them the sound of the sea bell's
Perpetual angelus.

Critics who have found an eclectic Eliot in the third movement of 'The Dry Salvages' have not reckoned with the fact that the victims of Krishna's advice require this intercession. The dictum "do not think of the fruit of action" is not an adequate expression of detachment as practised by an inclusive Catholic mystic, who must accept his "incarnational status"¹³⁶. The third and fourth movements may therefore be interpreted as a dramatisation of Underhill's assertion:

The doctrine of annihilation as the end of the soul's ascent... is decisively rejected by all European mystics, though a belief in it is constantly imputed to them by their enemies: for their aim is not the suppression of life, but its intensification, a change in its form.¹³⁷

Eliot's reading of Underhill is implied in the final movement too, where he launches an assault on magic, another form of counterfeit mysticism¹³⁸. Eliot's youthful flirtations with magic are well documented¹³⁹, as, incidentally, are those of Underhill and Williams. The exhaustive catalogue of magical practices which Eliot provides in 'The Dry Salvages' betrays this more-than-passing acquaintance. Underhill devoted an entire chapter to defining the differences between magic and mysticism. She credited magic with a certain nobility, and warned churchgoers not to be too arrogant in their condemnations of it, since "All ceremonial religion contains some elements of magic." The prayer for rain, lurking in the *Book of Common Prayer*, was magical in its attempt to impose human desires upon the divine will. Where mysticism sought unity with the divine, magic sought to

¹³⁵ *DS IV*, p. 189.

¹³⁶ Eliot recognised this as early as 1930: "No mystical experience in and by itself can be for human beings the guarantee of anything, as it must be verified in daily life." Review of *God: Being an Introduction to the Science of Metabiology*, by J. Middleton Murry, in *Criterion*, 9.35, 1930, p. 334, cited in CHILDS, 'T.S. Eliot: From Varieties of Mysticism to Pragmatic Poesis'.

¹³⁷ UNDERHILL, *Mysticism*, p. 171. See also EGAN, pp. xviii-xix.

¹³⁸ *DS V*, pp. 189-190.

¹³⁹ CHILDS, *Mystic, Son and Lover*, pp. 7-18. For a summary of the magical imagery in *Four Quartets*, see MURRAY, *T.S. Eliot and Mysticism*, pp. 155-159; 167-168. Murray also cites Charles Williams as an "occult" influence on Eliot.

manipulate divine forces for individualistic ends¹⁴⁰. The error of Eliot's Krishna, and the errors of those who "fiddle with pentagrams"¹⁴¹, were thus opposite extremes of perverted mysticism; the one sought the extinction, the other the exaltation, of the individual. The one sought to transcend time completely, the other "searches past and future/ And clings to that dimension". Both thereby failed to be Catholic:

... But to apprehend
The point of intersection of the timeless
With time, is an occupation of the saint -
No occupation either, but something given
And taken, in a lifetime's death in love,
Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender.¹⁴²

The selflessness of the saint must be dynamic, active, and sacramental, an antithesis to the mysticism of Krishna and the mage, but the voice of Catholic realism breaks in to remind us that "most of us" are not saints, but distracted voyagers, who see only "hints and guesses" of the divine. This explains the importance of liturgy, "prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action", which seeks to perpetuate our apprehension of the divine during the less exalted moments¹⁴³. The poet affirms that "The hint half guessed, the gift half understood, is Incarnation", the moment at which time and eternity transect¹⁴⁴. Thus, contrary to Krishna, "right action is freedom/ From past and future also." This discovery is not restricted to the advanced mystic, it is the property of ordinary Catholics, "Who are only undefeated/

¹⁴⁰ UNDERHILL, *Mysticism*, pp. 149-164. See also WILLIAMS, *Descent of the Dove*, p. 87.

¹⁴¹ See also MACKINNON, *The Church of God*, p. 47.

¹⁴² See ROLLE, *The Fire of Love*, p. 188: "Therefore let us live and die in love." For a discussion of Eliot's use of Dante's concept of self-surrender, see Donald J. CHILDS, 'T.S. Eliot and Evelyn Underhill: An Early Mystical Influence', *Durham University Journal*, 1987, p. 88. This passage may also have been influenced by WILLIAMS, *Descent of the Dove*, p. 15: "Time has become the individual and catholic problem... How, and with what, do we fill time?... The apostates are only those who abandon the problem; the saints are only those who solve it."

¹⁴³ At the Christendom Group Conference in 1939, MacKinnon insisted "that behind what Fr. Mascal had said of the evils arising from a merely individualist spirituality lay precisely the meaning of the present revival of liturgical devotion." (M.B.R.K., 'The Christendom Group Conference, 1939', p. 134.) See also UNDERHILL, *The Mystery of Sacrifice*, pp. ix-x, and ELIOT, *Idea of a Christian Society*, p. 30. Among particularly advanced mystics, even these sensory aspects of religious life, the sacraments, and meditation on Christ's passion or on Christian virtues, are laid aside at the point where the soul finds union with God (COLLEDGE, *Medieval Mystics*, 'Introduction', p. 76).

¹⁴⁴ This argument differs from that of ISHAK, *Mystical Philosophy*, p. 110. For other interpretations, see Herman SERVOTTE, 'The Poetry of Paradox: "Incarnation" in T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*', *English Studies*, 72, 1991, pp. 377-385; F.O. MATTHEISSEN, 'The *Quartets*', in BERGONZI, *T.S. Eliot*, p. 97. A.D. MOODY, 'T.S. Eliot's Passage to India', in SENA and VERMA, *The Fire and the Rose*, p. 345, argues that "The *Geeta* significantly modifies the Christianity" of *DS*, since the poem avoids the Christian emphasis on transcendence. Such an interpretation ignores the Incarnational aspect of the *Quartets*, and the progression of the narrative throughout all four poems. The emphasis on divine union in this life rather than the next is in any case as dominant a theme among Catholic mystics as of the *Gita*.

Because we have gone on trying"¹⁴⁵. Ultimately, they too will nourish the soil adjacent to the yew tree, symbolic of death, but their lives will nevertheless have touched the divine, and have succeeded, like the soil, in being "significant".

*

The divine significance of the ordinary is the theme of 'Little Gidding' (1942), a poem evocative of the Blitz¹⁴⁶. The poem again exploits the resonance between the efforts of what Underhill called "ordinary unmythical men" to lead healthy spiritual lives, and the home-front war effort, to which ordinary civilians could contribute, as Eliot did by fire-watching on the roof of Faber and Faber. 'Little Gidding' attempts to versify the conviction expressed by the Anglo-Catholic interpreter of mysticism, Underhill, that:

... the germ of that same transcendent life, the spring of the amazing energy which enables the great mystic to rise to freedom and dominate his world, is latent in all of us; an integral part of our humanity. Where the mystic has a genius for the absolute, we have each a little buried talent...¹⁴⁷

The imagery of paradox, so significant in the earlier poems, predominates in 'Little Gidding', finding convenient expression in its attempts to evoke the atmosphere of the Blitz. The climatic extremes of the first movement give way to those of "water and fire" in the lyric of the second, which might serve as a verbal commentary on Leonard Rosoman's Blitz paintings¹⁴⁸. Thus the conditions of war force upon "ordinary unmythical men" the sense of paradox which Eliot has already characterised as a component of the purgation experienced when the mystic seeks illumination or divine union¹⁴⁹. The historical allusions of 'Little Gidding' focus on individuals who lived in periods of social turmoil comparable to that of England in the 1940's: Julian of Norwich and the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* from the

¹⁴⁵ For a discussion of the manner in which Eliot uses repetition to emphasise the role of persistence in his quest for the "perfect life", see GORDON, *Eliot's New Life*, pp. 96-97. A typical mystical exhortation to persistence occurs in ROLLE, *The Fire of Love*, p. 220.

¹⁴⁶ GORDON, *Eliot's New Life*, pp. 128-9. BERGSTEN, *Time and Eternity*, pp. 239-244. CALDER, *T.S. Eliot*, pp. 156-158. Eliot himself admitted to Hayward on 5 August 1941 that *LG* involves "'Autumn weather' only because it was autumn weather - it is supposed to be an early air-raid." *TSE*, V. 12.

¹⁴⁷ UNDERHILL, *Mysticism*, p. 445.

¹⁴⁸ See his 'A House Collapsing on two Firemen, Shoe Lane, E.C.4.', Imperial War Museum.

¹⁴⁹ GORDON, *Eliot's New Life*, pp. 109-110. Eliot's imagery of suffering and devastation is anticipated in *East Coker*, where the poet "must freeze / And quake in frigid purgatorial fires / Of which the flame is roses, and the smoke is briars."

century of the Hundred Years' War, and Nicholas Ferrar, who, with his household, "dedicated himself wholly to the service of God" in the period framed by the twin crises of the London plague of 1625, and the English Civil War¹⁵⁰. Crisis is portrayed as an opportunity for ordinary English people to uncover their latent Catholic Christianity.

'Little Gidding' begins, like 'East Coker', by recording the protagonist's impressions of a pilgrimage¹⁵¹. This time, the destination is Little Gidding, the then-deserted home of the seventeenth-century lay religious community headed by Ferrar. The poet experiences similar stimuli, but interprets them differently. There is, as before, much in the scenery which is mundane, even unpleasant: the "pig-sty" and the "dull façade"¹⁵². The sense of seasonal ambiguity, implied by the "late roses filled with early snow" in 1940, is replicated in the "Midwinter spring" of 1942. While the former journey evoked the pervasiveness of sin and death, on this occasion the scenery presents a divine epiphany. A snow-covered hedgerow supports:

... a bloom more sudden
Than that of summer, neither budding nor fading,
Not in the scheme of generation.

The vision is transcendent, "unimaginable" in the literal sense, and therefore not bound by the desultory life-cycle of 'East Coker'. East Coker had been a point of departure for Eliot's ancestors; Little Gidding represented the end of a voyage, a place at "the world's end". There is evidence here of the continuing influence of Williams. *Descent into Hell*, the novel championed by Eliot in 1937, described an empty cottage which functioned as a gateway between this world and heaven and hell - literally a place at "the world's end". Similarly, Little Gidding is for Eliot a place where the temporal and the eternal intersect:

Here, the intersection of the timeless moment
Is England and nowhere. Never and always.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ MAYCOCK, *Nicholas Ferrar*, pp. 3-4, 140.

¹⁵¹ *LG I*, pp. 191-192.

¹⁵² MURRAY, *T.S. Eliot and Mysticism*, p. 81: "Eliot almost never [sic] allows his imagination to rest - much less exult - in the 'barbarous' beauty of Nature."

¹⁵³ ELLIS, *The English Eliot*, pp. 26-27, points out that these lines reveal "the provisionality of earthly nations". One of the few critics to compare an aspect of *Four Quartets* with writings of another Christendom Group member, Ellis draws attention to Eliot's approval of Demant's description of nationhood as "a very recent and contingent experience". Demant had been criticising Churchill's life of Marlborough, and Trevelyan's *British History in the Nineteenth Century*; Eliot expressed his agreement in *The Criterion*, January 1934.

Moreover, the arrival at Little Gidding marks a point at which the pilgrim's motives are overturned:

... what you thought you came for
Is only a shell, a husk of meaning
From which the purpose breaks only when it is fulfilled
If at all. Either you had no purpose
Or the purpose is beyond the end you figured
And is altered in fulfilment.¹⁵⁴

The pilgrim's motives shift from mere antiquarian interest to that of "kneel[ing]/ Where prayer has been valid." He finds himself in a sacred space in which the dead really do speak, without resort to the methods of spiritualism criticised in 'The Dry Salvages', and "being dead", they are able to communicate, because they are freed from the obligation to use language, that essentially flawed means of expression¹⁵⁵. The prayers of the dead at Little Gidding are prayers of those who have finally achieved Underhill's "unitive life", and Eliot's pilgrim communes with them by immersing himself in the atmosphere of the place, as they have immersed themselves in God:

As none know the spirit of England but the English; and
they know it by intuitive participation, by mergence, not
by thought; so none but the "deified" know the secret life
of God. This, too, is a knowledge only conferred by
participation: by living a life, breathing an atmosphere.¹⁵⁶

It is not merely that the pilgrim's intentions have changed on arrival at Little Gidding; the mystic's motive for seeking God is also purified, in the "dark night of the soul"¹⁵⁷.

¹⁵⁴ ELIOT, *Idea of a Christian Society*, pp. 15-16: "Our point of departure is more real to us than our destination; and the destination is likely to present a very different picture when arrived at, from the vaguer image formed in imagination."

¹⁵⁵ "... prayer is more/ Than an order of words, or the sound of the voice praying." Compare with St. TERESA's warning against meaningless ritual prayers, *The Interior Castle*, p. 38, and Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *The Mystical Theology*, III, in EGAN, *Anthology*, p. 101: "on the point of entering the Dark... rational discourse will not merely become more brief; it will disappear in the total cessation of word and thought."

¹⁵⁶ UNDERHILL, *Mysticism*, p. 420.

¹⁵⁷ This purgatorial darkness is described in St. JOHN of the Cross's *Ascent of Mount Carmel* and *Dark Night of the Soul*. It is the darkness that "souls begin to enter when God calls them forth from the state of beginners... to the end that, after passing through it, they may arrive at the state of the perfect, which is that of the Divine union of the soul with God." (*Dark Night of the Soul*, p. 350.) Eliot's concept of "purification of the motive" is also a prominent theme of Catholic mysticism. *The Book of Privy Counsel*, in COLLEDGE, *Medieval Mystics*, p. 157, advises: "... see that nothing

The lyric in the second movement recalls the language of 'East Coker'. The natural progress towards dissolution is enhanced by the destruction caused by incendiaries, and the protagonist once more appears in the guise of an old man:

Ash on an old man's sleeve
Is all the ash the burnt roses leave
Dust in the air suspended
Marks the place where a story ended.
Dust inbreathed was a house -
The wall, the wainscot and the mouse.¹⁵⁸

This wanton destruction is paired with the decomposition resulting from the modern world's spiritual apathy, to which the ruins of Little Gidding are material testimony:

Water and fire shall rot
The marred foundations we forgot,
Of sanctuary and choir.¹⁵⁹

However, the poet now recognises that these manifestations of human sin may also present opportunities for spiritual enlightenment¹⁶⁰, and indeed, it is in just such a scene of devastation that Eliot stages his meeting with the "compound ghost", who begins the process whereby the protagonist reconciles himself to purgation¹⁶¹. The time is "the uncertain hour before the morning", the threshold between the dark

remains in your active mind but a naked intention reaching up to God..." See also St. TERESA of Avila, *The Interior Castle*, pp. 51-52.

¹⁵⁸ LG II, pp. 192-195. Eliot himself explained: "During the Blitz the accumulated debris was suspended in the London air for hours after a bombing. Then it would slowly descend and cover one's sleeves and coat with a fine white ash. I often experienced this effect during the night hours on the roof [of Faber and Faber]." Quotation from GARDNER, *Composition*, p. 166. See PIETTE, *Imagination at War*, p. 59.

¹⁵⁹ Eliot's combined use of images of bomb devastation and the decay caused by neglect, have a pictorial parallel in John Piper's wartime paintings of ruined churches, some of which had been bombed, and others of which had simply been abandoned. (See below, p. 315.)

¹⁶⁰ This is not to deny that such an expectation may have been wishful thinking in the midst of something so terrifying as the Blitz. Eliot noted in 1933 ('Catholicism and International Order', p. 183) that: "In face of any naturally horrifying phenomenon like war we must measure the suffering, direct and indirect, against the spiritual good which may come of suffering. We may find that the proportion of futile suffering, and of that kind of suffering which makes men worse rather than better, which abates their human dignity, and deadens their sense of responsibility, is far too high and that the effect is at best one of futility." It was this realisation which had caused Williams to capitulate in his argument with MacKinnon in 1939; in 1942, Eliot is, as PIETTE (*Imagination at War*, p. 58) recognises, attempting to find "some way to redeem the burning."

¹⁶¹ This section imitates DANTE, *Inferno*, XV. See, for example line 28 ("What, you here...?") See also St. JOHN of the Cross, *Dark Night of the Soul*, p. 414: "the soul that God sets in this tempestuous and horrible night is deserving of great compassion." For a description of other literature which finds "that wartime London was conducive to thoughts upon encounters with the supernatural", see PIETTE, *Imagination at War*, pp. 56-58.

night of the soul and what lies beyond. The ghost is encountered after an air-raid in which a "dark dove" has delivered its pentecostal fire and "passed below the horizon of his homing", leaving only the shrapnel blowing in the wind, rattling "like tin/ Over the asphalt." It is the ghost, apparently a compound of Virgil, Dante and Yeats, who will "disclose the gifts reserved for age", and expound the lessons learned in each of the *Quartets*. The quest to regain the experience at Burnt Norton had offered merely:

...the cold friction of expiring sense
Without enchantment, offering no promise
But bitter tastelessness of shadow fruit...

The unpleasant surprises at East Coker had released:

... the unconscious impotence of rage
At human folly. ...

Finally, the ocean voyages of 'The Dry Salvages' had exposed:

...the shame
Of motives late revealed, and the awareness
Of things ill done to others' harm
Which once you took for exercise of virtue.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this is a reference to appeasement, itself a blunder like that of Krishna, issuing in "others' harm". Now, war has come in any case, and in the midst of the Blitz, the ghost supplies his own wisdom:

From wrong to wrong the exasperated spirit
Proceeds, unless restored by that refining fire
Where you must move in measure, like a dancer.¹⁶²

The results of human folly, once set in motion, may yet serve a redemptive purpose, if they are understood as purgation¹⁶³. The ghost articulates a conviction held by

¹⁶² See PIETTE, *Imagination at War*, pp. 65-66: "One can choose to believe that the only pentecost, apocalypse and purgatory one can expect are those dropped on us from the skies by enemy aircraft, or one can choose to believe that there exists another plane of reality in which Pentecost, Apocalypse and Purgatory drop from the heavens in the name of Love... This did not mean identifying the German raids with God's mysterious ways; but exploring how the raids could truly be resisted in spiritual terms."

¹⁶³ By "purging and illumining" the soul, writes St. JOHN of the Cross, "He prepares it for the union of love with God" (*Dark Night of the Soul*), pp. 406, 422-428. To achieve this union, one "must be burned and purified from all that is creature, in the fire of the love of God." (*Ascent of Mount Carmel*, p. 20.) ROLLE observes: "This fire of God's love, due to the limitations of human love,

Eliot as early as 1933, when he wrote of the possibility of a European war: "I should not enjoy the prospect of abolishing suffering without at the same time perfecting human nature."¹⁶⁴

The speaker now recognises the distinction between the "Attachment to self and to things and to persons" - exemplified in 'The Dry Salvages' by the quests of magic - and true mystical detachment. More importantly, he distinguishes detachment from indifference¹⁶⁵. He becomes reconciled to his memories of self-forbidden love. Memory is retained "For liberation", so that love can reach "beyond desire" into eternity. Detachment from earthly loves has brought him into contact with divine Love¹⁶⁶. The "faces and places" are now "transfigured"; the emphasis has shifted from death to the world beyond it. In this context, Julian of Norwich's insistence that "Sin is Behovely"¹⁶⁷ makes sense, since the results of sin may yet issue in beatitude:

All shall be well, and

finds its expression in suffering: "Forsooth either, in this life, the fire of God's love shall waste the rust of our sins and cleanse our souls to make them able to flee to bliss, or else, after this life, the fire of purgatory shall punish our souls, if it happen we escape the fire of hell. Or else, if the strength of love be not so mickle in us that it can altogether burn us, it behoves us to be cleansed with tribulation, sickness and dis-eases." *The Fire of Love*, pp. xlix, 40. See also CATHERINE of Genoa, *Purgation and Purgatory*, in EGAN, *Anthology*, pp. 409-410. GORDON, *Eliot's New Life*, p. 124.

¹⁶⁴ ELIOT, 'Catholicism and International Order', p. 183. PIETTE, *Imagination at War*, p. 55, notes Eliot's 1940 criticism of Yeats's play, *Purgation* (1939): "I wish he had not given it this title, because I cannot accept a purgatory in which there is no hint, or at least no emphasis upon Purgation." ELIOT, 'Yeats', in *Poetry and Poets*, London, 1957, p. 258.

¹⁶⁵ LG III, pp. 195-196. Compare the "indifference" of LG with the "tumid apathy" of BN III. St. JOHN of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, p. 23, makes a similar distinction between attachment and indifference. The effect of detachment is not like that of "a man who desires to shut his eyes" to block out sensory perception of created things, rather, "we are treating of the detachment from them of the taste and desire." See also ECKHART, Sermon 2, *Meister Eckhart*, p. 177, and *Counsels on Discernment*, Counsel 7, pp. 254-255: "If I were so rational that there were present in my reason all the images that all men had ever received... and if I could be without possessiveness in their regard... [so that] I stood in this present moment free and empty according to God's dearest will, performing it without ceasing, then truly I should be a virgin..."

¹⁶⁶ The journey begun in BN is thus completed. The protagonist who, in EC, found it necessary to "wait without love", is now "ready" for Love. Compare with Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 264: "By that synthesis of love and will which is the secret of the heart, the mystic achieves a level of perception in which the whole world is seen and known in God, and God is seen and known in the whole world." GORDON, *Eliot's New Life*, p. 98, wonders why Eliot feels that "love must turn so entirely to 'dust'." Perhaps the explanation lies in Eliot's portrayal of Love as being caught "between un-being and being". Love as Platonic form is not subject to decay, but love as earthly manifestation is transitory. The dichotomy is stressed by many mystics, for example: St. TERESA of Avila, *The Interior Castle*, p. 103, and St. JOHN of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, p. 33; St. TERESA of Avila, *The Interior Castle*, pp. 51-52

¹⁶⁷ JULIAN of Norwich, *Showings*, Short text p. 148; Long text p. 225. WILLIAMS, *Descent of the Dove*, p. 137.

All manner of thing shall be well¹⁶⁸.

The same conclusion had been offered by Casserley as a means of reconciling the arguments of MacKinnon and Williams in 1939: "catastrophe may be a creative act." Eliot's thoughts return to Little Gidding, a community comprising ordinary people "not wholly comendable/ Of no immediate kin or kindness", and at this point, he twice employs a word characteristic of Underhill:

But some of peculiar genius,
All touched by a common genius,
United in the strife which divided them...

Underhill wrote that "the mystic has a genius for the absolute"; Eliot reaches for her conviction that "we have each a little buried talent", and applies it to the English people as represented at Little Gidding, and on the streets of a blitzed London¹⁶⁹. This common genius is expressed in the unity which transcends "strife". The people of Little Gidding and the Puritans who destroyed their community are now "folded in a single party" and leave behind "a symbol perfected in death"¹⁷⁰, recalling Williams's doctrine of "Co-inherence", which, he told the Christendom Group in 1939, is made effective through "substituted love":

'He saved others; himself he cannot save', is not only the central truth about the Passion. It is the truth about the right relations of men to each other. It must be the definition of all Church action.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ JULIAN of Norwich, *Showings*. Short text p. 149, 151, 157; Long text p. 177, 225, 229, 232, 248-249, 253, 342. See GARDNER, *Composition*, p. 70.

¹⁶⁹ GORDON, *Eliot's New Life*, p. 136. Compare with Eliot's "ambition of a Christian society... not a society of saints, but of ordinary men, of men whose Christianity is communal before being individual." (*Idea of a Christian Society*, p. 59; see also p. 60). See also WILLIAMS, *Descent of the Dove*, p. 232: "... what is there anywhere but ignorance, grace, and moral effort? Of our moral effort the less said the better; grace is always itself alone, and demands only our adoration; and therefore it is between our ignorances that our courteous Lord might cause exchange to lie."

¹⁷⁰ At this point, an earlier manuscript includes a prayer for purgatorial cleansing: "Fire from the heart of Christ, incinerate them." (GARDNER, *Composition*, p. 206.) ELLIS, *The English Eliot*, p. 75, notes of this passage: "[Eliot] suppresses any notion of internal diversity into the one unity of England and of classic English: a unified England becomes a type of a united hereafter. We can indeed talk of the *Quartets* as a 'patriotic' poem, as imbued with an all-pull-together, 'wartime' spirit, yet... they disengage themselves from, and indeed attack, other current notions of England too, especially [those which]... raise patriotism to an absolute, rather than a severely relative, value."

¹⁷¹ M.B.R.K., 'The Christendom Group Conference, 1939', reporting Charles Williams's speech, p. 135.

Eliot, MacKinnon, Mascall and Williams were united in their refusal to rule out the possibility of individual martyrdom¹⁷². 'Little Gidding' applies this conclusion, as Williams had desired, to a society and a Church which reaps in war the rewards of its "apostasy", as MacKinnon put it in his sceptical response to Williams in 1939¹⁷³. The ultimate goal must be "purification of the motive", precipitated by the catastrophe, and this can only be achieved in Christ, Julian's "ground of our beseeching"¹⁷⁴. This provides deliverance from magic, because purgation brings the mystic's verbal prayer into harmony with the divine.

The fourth movement returns to the image of the bomber as a pentecostal dove, affirming that it enforces the choice between "pyre or pyre - / To be redeemed from fire by fire." Yet now the "torment" can be attributed to divine Love, which must purify before it can embrace¹⁷⁵. Perhaps Eliot thought of St. Teresa who, when beset by physical suffering, heard God say, "Teresa, so do I treat my friends", and replied "That's why you have so few."¹⁷⁶ Eliot confronts the reader with the practical consequences of the "scandal of particularity" which MacKinnon had described as the basis of the Catholic doctrine of the Incarnation, and, in the final movement, draws an identical conclusion: "any action/ Is a step to the block, to the fire, down the sea's throat"¹⁷⁷. The consequences of emulating Christ, however dire, must not be evaded: the protagonist now has his "lifetime burning in every moment", and agonising as it may be, it is the gateway to lasting mystical

¹⁷² PIETTE, *Imagination at War*, p. 67: "[Little Gidding] is one of the finest examples, during the war, of thinking that took on board the strange desires of self-immolation which occurred when Londoners watched their city burn." Examples from the theologians abound: "we must even be ready, as many of our fellow Christians have already found out, for the supreme *askesis* of martyrdom." (MASCALL, 'Ascetic Theology', p. 260.) "The victory of Gethsemane is perhaps the only victory we shall know in our generation." (MACKINNON, 'Christianity and Justice', *Theology*, XLII, 1941, p. 352, and see above, pp. 77, 113, and below, p. 332.)

¹⁷³ Compare with T.S. ELIOT, 'Thoughts after Lambeth', *Selected Essays*, New York, 1950, p. 342. See CORNWELL, *The Still Point*, p. 17; WEBB, *The Dark Dove*, pp. 234-236. Eliot asserted in 1939 that "the only hopeful course for a society which would thrive and continue its creative activity in the arts of civilisation, is to become Christian. That prospect involves, at least, discipline, inconvenience and discomfort: but here as hereafter the alternative to hell is purgatory", (*The Idea of a Christian Society*, p. 24; see also SMIT, *Poetry and Belief*, pp. 202-203). Compare with Graham GREENE, 'At Home' (October 1940), in *The Lost Childhood and other Essays*, New York, 1952, p. 191.

¹⁷⁴ JULIAN of Norwich, *Showings*, p. 249: "Beseeching is a true and gracious, enduring will of the soul, united and joined to our Lord's will..." Such prayer is discussed again on p. 254. ROLLE, *The Fire of Love*, p. 54; *The Mending of Life*, p. 228.

¹⁷⁵ LG IV, p. 196.

¹⁷⁶ Raimundo PANIKKAR, 'Preface' to *The Interior Castle*, p. xvii. See also St. TERESA of Avila, *The Interior Castle*, pp. 108-115. See UNDERHILL, *Mysticism*, p. 20: "Pain... plunges like a sword through creation, leaving on the one side cringing and degraded animals and on the other side heroes and saints..."

¹⁷⁷ LG V, p. 197.

experience¹⁷⁸. History must not be erased from the memory; to do so is to deprive a people of the possibility of redemption through pain, because "history is a pattern/ Of timeless moments"¹⁷⁹. The glimpse of beatitude at Burnt Norton was one such moment; the fire delivered by "the dark dove with the flickering tongue" is another, because ultimately, "the fire and the rose are one." Eliot's pilgrim, ironically, makes an identical discovery to that of Lewis's *Pilgrim's Regress*:

...the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

It now becomes clear, however, why the bird had warned that "human kind/ Cannot bear very much reality." The quest for the vision of reality by means of the *via negativa* reduces the pilgrim to:

A condition of complete simplicity
(Costing not less than everything)...¹⁸⁰

He has come to a comparable conclusion to that of MacKinnon's true priest, aware of his own moral unworthiness, acutely conscious of suffering, and prepared to sacrifice everything to the absolute demands of Catholic Christianity, but he has also experienced beatitude, and responded, like the anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* to "the drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling"¹⁸¹.

¹⁷⁸ BROWN, *Transfiguration*, p. 67.

¹⁷⁹ Note that Casserley remarked in 1939 that "catastrophe may be a creative act, as history reveals" (my italics), M.B.R.K., 'The Christendom Group Conference, 1939', p. 136. The finding of 'Little Gidding' that "A people without history is not redeemed from time", has its precursor in Eliot's 'Thoughts after Lambeth', p. 4. The "historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones," but with a sense of the "simultaneous existence... [and] simultaneous order" of all English literature. "This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal, and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional," but it also gives him consciousness of "his own contemporaneity." See CORNWELL, *The Still Point*, p. 18.

¹⁸⁰ This simplicity costs "everything" because, as St. JOHN of the Cross asserts, "All the being of creation... compared to the infinite Being of God, is nothing." (*Ascent of Mount Carmel*, p. 25).

¹⁸¹ *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 6: "What weary wretched heart and sleeping in sloth is that, the which is not wakened with the drawing of this love and the voice of this calling? Beware now, wretch... and hold thyself never the holier nor the better, for the worthiness of this calling and for the singular form of living that thou art in; but the more wretched and cursed, unless thou do that in thee is goodly, by grace and by counsel, to live according to thy calling." St. TERESA of Avila, *The Interior Castle*, p. 116, notes that one of the signs that God is "calling" the soul is the expression of love through pain. On a more prosaic note, Eliot told Hayward (2 September 1942) "My purpose [in adding the quotations from Julian and the *Cloud*] was this: there is so much 17th century in the poem that I was afraid of a certain romantic Bonnie Dundee period effect and I wanted to check this and at the same time give greater historical depth to the poem by allusions to the other great period, i.e. the 14th century. Juliana and *The Cloud of Unknowing* represent pretty well the extremes or, one might say, the male and female of this literature. I might have dragged in Walter Hilton and Richard Rolle, I

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In terms of his own spiritual experience¹⁸², Eliot's attempt to emulate Underhill's "inclusive mystic" may only have taken him so far as the state of "illumination", the third of a series of five steps which she delineated in the mystic's path to divine union, and one which she characterised as a typical domain of poets. While there may have been nothing particularly remarkable in Eliot's testimony to illumination, the dependence of *Four Quartets* upon so wide a range of mystical texts, dealing with all of the stages of the mystic way, and the continued appropriation and reappraisal of those texts throughout a period of acute historical crisis, suggest that mystical discipline was an important tributary to the reservoir of Catholic spirituality from which Eliot continued to draw sustenance throughout the 1940s. That the resulting poetry was, to many, merely esoteric, need not be denied, despite its belief in the latent mystical genius of ordinary people. Eliot appealed in his poetry to a similar audience to that which partook of his social criticism: an educated élite who may or may not have been aware of his dependence on mysticism, but who shared his classical education and his carefully qualified patriotism. For all the suggestions of detective fiction implied by a title such as *Murder in the Cathedral*, Eliot was not a writer who targeted a popular audience. It was Dorothy L. Sayers who possessed the requisite zeal, and the populist qualifications, for the task demanded by Mascall at the Christendom Group Conference in 1939: to "direct our prophecy at the most real evil of the existing social order, which is not just that it causes suffering, but that it makes God incredible to men."¹⁸³ Yet Lewis's portrayal of Eliot as a Galahad¹⁸⁴, obsessed with moral and literary purity, missed the central assertion of their mutual friend, Charles Williams, that the "way up" and the "way down", the ways of affirmations and negations, were means to the same end: the apprehension of the divine, immanent

daresay, but for one thing I don't know them so well and for another I think that would be overdoing it." *TSE*, V. 12.

¹⁸² Frank Burch BROWN, *Transfiguration*, p. 80, finds in the *Quartets* "the experience not of an aspiring mystic but simply of a thoughtful and sensitive human being and poet whose life includes moments of special and seemingly transcendent significance". He finds Eliot to have more in common with Pascal whose *Pensees* are: "an exploration that culminates in faith" (pp. 73-89). However, Eliot's experience of "the purification of the motive" is not a diluted form of mysticism, as Brown implicitly admits when he claims that the poems are "able to move beyond theology, or formal religious reflection, to reach into the silence." (p. 73.) See also CHILDS, *Mystic, Son and Lover*, p. xii.

¹⁸³ M.B.R.K., 'The Christendom Group Conference, 1939', p. 134.

¹⁸⁴ According to WILLIAMS, *Descent of the Dove*, p. 116, however, such a use of Galahad was misguided: Galahad was the result of the "exchange" between the "two great Ways": "He has no concern with any mortal affirmations, and yet he is the child and climax of the greatest of mortal affirmations, of a passionate, devout, and tragic double love."

and transcendent. If this point was obscured in 'Burnt Norton', the same criticism can hardly be levelled at 'Little Gidding', which portrays a Catholic mysticism in which, in the words of MacKinnon, the two ways are held in "a spiritual tension that is well-nigh intolerable"¹⁸⁵ in the midst of acute personal and public suffering and danger. Eliot wrote to Bell in 1954 that MacKinnon's treatment of 'Little Gidding' in his Hobhouse Lecture was "very accurate"¹⁸⁶; it is not difficult to imagine why such an interpreter should have pleased him. If Eliot had a parallel in Williams's poetry, it was surely not Galahad, but Taliessin, the poet of Logres and prophetic witness to its degeneration, vowed to celibacy, compelled to look upon - but not permitted to touch - the adored Dindrane, composing poetry for Guinevere in her rose garden, and inwardly lamenting:

... bitter is the brew of exchange.
We buy for others; we make beauty for others;
and the beauty made is not the beauty meant:
shent is pride while the Rose-King bleeds at Carbonek.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ D.M. MACKINNON, 'Revelation and Social Justice', pp. 107-109. CHILDS, *Mystic, Son and Lover*, p. 221, finds another "tension" operative in the poems: that "between the momentary mystical experience of belief as absolutely powerful and valid and the daily experience of belief as a series of propositions that (from the pragmatic point of view) do not absolutely work." His identification of the experience as merely "momentary" does justice to *BN*, but not to *LG*. It becomes increasingly difficult to isolate the scepticism that Childs finds in the poems as the cycle proceeds beyond *BN*, and the phenomena that he identifies as evidence that the "propositions" of the Catholic faith "do not absolutely work" might also be interpreted as evidence that the faith is irreconcilable with the means of modern warfare, and may demand martyrdom instead of acquiescence. Note that Eliot made his own protest against obliteration bombing (see *BELLP*, Vol. 70, f. 29), and signed a petition seeking the Church's guidance on the ethics of the atomic bomb (see below, p. 310, n. 12). Viewing the *Quartets* in this Catholic context, it is possible to absolve Eliot of the charge of intellectual schizophrenia levelled by Childs, who writes of "the disagreement between the Christian Eliot and the pragmatic Eliot" (p. 224).

¹⁸⁶ T.S. ELIOT to George Bell, 3 June 1954, *BELLP*, Vol. 208, f. 42.

¹⁸⁷ Charles WILLIAMS, 'Taliessin in the Rose-Garden', *The Region of the Summer Stars* (1944), *Arthurian Poets*, p. 115.

Chapter

5

"The Oecumenical Penguin":
Dorothy L. Sayers and the popularisation of Christian
dogma

On Christmas Day in 1938, B.B.C. listeners were treated to a nativity play for voices, written by a woman who had made her living as a detective novelist, and had recently turned to religious drama. *He That Should Come* had been purged of "any touch of the ecclesiastical intonation or of 'religious unction'", and avoided the archaisms of the King James Bible, in favour of modern verse. The simplicity of the language did not prevent its listeners from being subjected to a lesson in Catholic Christology. Dorothy L. Sayers would employ this device repeatedly during the 1940s, and its principal element, an emphasis on the centrality of the Incarnation to Christian dogma, was already well developed¹. *He That Should Come* began by recreating a discussion between the Magi, on their way to visit the infant Jesus, which raised concerns which were familiar to English listeners in the year of the Munich Crisis. Caspar came looking for wisdom, and hoped to find it in the new child. Melchior was "not interested in dogma", but wanted "a religion that works":

What I look for is good government,
A reasonable way of life, within the terms of the illusion.
If there is nothing at the end of it, be it so - there is
nothing;
But in the meantime, can we not achieve a little decency,
A little dignity,
A pattern of some kind...?
We have wasted too much time in quarreling and asking
questions;
Let us put our trust in a personality
Capable of commanding our loyalty...²

He wanted power, "power to abolish suffering" and to restore human dignity, such as might be wielded by a commanding personality like Israel's expected Messiah. He hoped for a political solution to temporal problems, achieved by "good government", the establishment of a "pattern", even if it were to end ultimately in "nothing". Balthasar, however, was less of a social optimist:

¹ The theme initially arose in connection with her Canterbury Festival play *The Zeal of Thy House*, London, 1937. Her articles 'The Greatest Drama Ever Staged is the Official Creed of Christendom' and 'The Triumph of Easter' also preceded the writing of *He That Should Come*.

² Dorothy L. SAYERS, *He That Should Come*, London, 1946, pp. 17-18. See also Barbara REYNOLDS, *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul*, London, 1993, p. 290.

I look out between the strangling branches of the vine and
see.
Fear in the east, fear in the west; armies
And banners marching and garments rolled in blood.

Sayers was making much of the similarity between Palestine in the first century AD and Europe in 1938, but Balthasar rejected Melchior's optimism not by wallowing in pessimism, but by hoping for a Divine participation in human tragedy:

Yet this is nothing, if only God will not be indifferent,
If He is beside me, bearing the weight of his own creation;
If I may hear His voice among the voices of the
vanquished,
If I may feel His hand touch mine in the darkness,
If I may look upon the hidden face of God
And read in the eyes of God
That He is acquainted with grief.³

In the conflicting hopes of Balthasar and Melchior, B.B.C. listeners were being reminded that the conflict between liberal social optimism and "neo-orthodoxy" was nothing new. Balthasar's speech prepared the audience for a drama which took a Catholic dogma as its central theme: God's self-subjection to the particularities of a historical existence, and his acceptance of the suffering this entailed⁴.

During the late 1930s and early 1940s, Sayers, resolutely ignoring the official impediments to women engaging in theological activity, was concerned to promote a popular understanding of the Christian dogmas asserted by the Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, and, in particular, to explain in "non-theological" terms the

³ SAYERS, *He That Should Come*, pp. 18-19.

⁴ Dorothy L. Sayers's personal religious preferences were strongly Catholic. Not everyone was pleased with her growing prominence as an Anglican voice. Cosmo Lang felt that the Church "tended to... put her too much on its front-window." (Lang to George Bell, 16 May 1941, *BELLP*, Vol. 208, f. 248.) Bell's inquiries led J.A. Bouquet to remark that Sayers, like G.K. Chesterton, was "a theoretical Catholic" (J.A. Bouquet to George Bell, *BELLP*, Vol. 208, ff. 246-7), by which he presumably meant that she was a potential convert to Rome. Her correspondence reveals that this was incorrect (Sayers to V.A. Demant on 2 October 1941, Barbara REYNOLDS (Ed.), *The Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers, Volume 2: 1937-1943 from Novelist to Playwright*, Cambridge, 1997, p. 306). In any case, she had the support of Dom Bernard Clements, vicar of All Saints, Margaret Street, who enlisted her help in setting up a Guild of Catholic Writers in 1938 (Reynolds, *Life and Soul*, 331ff. See also pp. 351-2 for a discussion of her links with the Christendom Group). Reynolds argues that Sayers's earlier biographers have taken insufficient notice of her Anglo-Catholicism. See, for example, pp. 141-142. Beyond any suspicions surrounding the fact that Sayers was a woman speaking publicly about theology, doubts among fellow Anglicans appear to have arisen because of her ecumenical leanings. These were not shared by Bell, Temple, or, indeed, by J.W. Welch of the Religious Broadcasting Division of the B.B.C.

implications of orthodox Christology⁵. This agenda, she felt, ought to cut across denominational boundaries, and could be well served by a popular writer and speaker such as herself. The radio plays, beginning with *He That Should Come* and culminating in the series *The Man Born to Be King*, presented one such opportunity, since the Religious Broadcasting Division aimed to cater for Roman Catholic and Free Church, as well as for Anglican, audiences. Writing these plays, and afterwards, defending them against conservative Evangelical charges of irreverence, was seen by Sayers as an act of wartime service, reminding the British people that the culture they were defending was undergirded by Christianity. The wartime proliferation of her speaking engagements as a Christian apologist also implied that dogmatic instruction would result in moral strengthening in the face of crisis. A further proposal was still more revealing of Sayers's agenda: she wanted, in the early 1940s, to produce an "Oecumenical Penguin", an affordable paperback, (on a par, perhaps, with the *Signposts*, which she had read and enjoyed⁶), with an agreed statement of basic Christian doctrine by an interdenominational panel of theologians, explained in terms that could be understood by non-theologians⁷. The Oecumenical Penguin was never completed, and the reasons for that failure are revealing in themselves. However, the evidence provided by Sayers's letters and memoranda, in addition to her writings and speeches on doctrinal matters and her dramatic works, make it possible to reconstruct the kind of project she had in mind, and to pinpoint the deficiencies in the Churches' presentation of dogma which she was seeking to redress. These sources demonstrate the conscious link that Sayers made between dogmatic orthodoxy and artistic integrity, providing an insight into the thought of a creative artist who sought to apply theology to artistic practice, social theory and aesthetics.

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⁵ This chapter is summarised in my 'Dorothy L. Sayers and the Oecumenical Penguin', *VII: An Anglo-American Literary Review*, Vol. 14, 1997, 17-32.

⁶ The exception was BENTLEY's *Resurrection of the Bible*, (*Signposts* No. 4, 1940), "which seems to be unnecessarily fundamentalist" (Letter to Patrick MacLaughlin, 28 August 1940, *Letters*, pp. 175-176). Sayers continued to recommend *Signposts* to non-Christian enquirers. See, for example, her letter to L.T. Duff, 10 May 1943, *ibid.*, p. 360. See above, Chapter 2, *passim*.

⁷ Sayers clearly had in mind the "Penguin Specials", aimed primarily at educated but non-specialist audiences, published in the early years of the war. This series encompassed a wide range of topics, from agriculture to psychology, from politics to map-reading for the Home Guard, and a number of religious publications were included, such as F.C. Beales's *The Catholic Church and International Order* (1941), John Hadham's works of Liberal apologetics, Bell's *Christianity and World Order* (1940), Temple's *Is Christ Divided?* (1943), and other books on Christian doctrine written by Anglican bishops. Another possibility was publication by Methuen (see letter to Rev. Neville Gorton, 24 September 1941, *Letters*, p. 297, p. 297).

Sayers's plans for an Oecumenical Penguin were brought to the attention of Bishop Bell of Chichester in November 1941, when she sent a memorandum to Mrs. Bell, originally addressed to the Theological Literature Association, emphasizing the crying need for "books which present Christian doctrine in a form that can be assimilated by adult pagans..."⁸ It was evident to Sayers that such "pagans" were almost as common within Anglicanism as without; a perception corroborated by Bell himself, who, in an early Wartime Pastoral, called for "Much clearer and simpler teaching of the faith" in his Diocese, observing that "Men's ignorance of the meaning of Christianity is often abysmal... A determination to teach the faith simply and vividly must mark our ordinary preaching; and direct our religious education..."⁹ Archbishop Temple, concluding his radio series, *The Archbishop Speaks to the Services*, asked for letters from listeners with questions to be answered in a further broadcast, but received "a very disappointing haul":

10 letters or postcards from men and women in the Forces, of which only three were from people serving abroad.

57 letters from civilians, of which a high percentage were personal problems or cranks, and a few reasonable letters posing useful questions.

1 letter from a civilian of the Gold Coast who regards the Archbishop as the "Head of the Idle Rich who are the cause of all this trouble" (a simplification of the Problem of Evil which is attractive but unsatisfactory!)¹⁰

Henson, too, summarised the climate of opinion in 1943 with the observation that "Religion is throughout England being silently and steadily excluded from popular concern."¹¹ Such conclusions were to be supported in 1947, by a Mass Observation report on popular religious attitudes based on a survey of 500 people from "Metrop", a representative London borough, appropriately titled *Puzzled People*¹². It

⁸ Copy of a memorandum to the Theological Literature Association, sent by Sayers to Mrs Bell, 28 November, 1941, *BELLP*, Vol. 208 (Eliot-Shaw), ff. 250-251.

⁹ *Chichester Wartime Pastorals*, five points by George Bell, *BELLP*, Vol. 72 (War 1939-45), f. 39. Bell also called for, "Much more fellowship... Reform of Church Services... Giving lay men and women a purpose in life... Re-dedication of ourselves."

¹⁰ Eric FENN, notes on public correspondence related to the Archbishop's General Forces Programmes, *WT*, Vol. 69, ff. 318-319.

¹¹ *HHHJ*, 11 April 1943, Vol. 88, p. 5. HENSON commented in his last book of sermons that "Sermons counted for much in English life forty years ago. Congregations were larger, more intelligent and theologically better educated than they are now." (*Last Words in Westminster Abbey*, London, 1941, p.12.)

¹² The report had been produced at the request of the Ethical Union, and was prefaced by remarks from the Union's General Secretary, clearly no defender of Christian orthodoxy: "The report reveals... the explosion, or disintegration, of orthodox beliefs [which] has left a vacuum which will be filled, and will be filled by worse if it is not soon filled by better." H.J. BLACKHAM (General Secretary,

documented in some detail the public apathy and ignorance about religion¹³. Religious ideas were found to "deviate very widely, even among churchgoers, from the orthodox dogma of the Church", and this was "particularly true of those attached to the Church of England..."¹⁴

Whether or not "Metrop" was representative of the country as a whole, these post-war findings confirmed Sayers's observations in the late 1930s and early 1940s. "The brutal fact is," she told an audience in Derby in May, 1940, "that in this Christian country not one person in a hundred has the faintest notion what the Church teaches about man or society or the person of Jesus Christ. If you think I am exaggerating, ask the army chaplains..."¹⁵ The regular recital of the creeds had not produced "a number of people who knew all about Christian doctrine and disliked it"; rather, an overwhelming majority "heartily dislike and despise Christianity without having the faintest notion what it is." The central themes of her religious dramas, drawn from Catholic dogma, were taken by many to be "astonishing and revolutionary novelties, imported into the Faith by the feverish imagination of a playwright." In response to her first play for the Canterbury Festival, *The Zeal of Thy House*,¹⁶ a chronicle of the pride, fall and restoration of William of Sens, architect of the rebuilt choir of Canterbury Cathedral, many assumed that she had invented the notion that "the Church considered Pride to be sinful, or indeed took notice of any sin beyond the more disreputable sins of the flesh":

I protested in vain against this flattering tribute to my powers of invention, referring my enquirers to the Creeds, to the Gospels, and to the offices of the Church... The explanation was, however, not well received; it was felt that if there was anything attractive in Christian philosophy I must have put it there myself.¹⁷

the Ethical Union), 'Ethical Union's Preface', in MASS OBSERVATION, *Puzzled People: A study in popular attitudes to religion, ethics, progress and politics in a London Borough*, London, 1947, p. 7

¹³ One-quarter of those questioned, who attended Church of England services, did not "believe in an after-life", yet "one-fifth of those who don't go to church at all do believe." MASS OBSERVATION, *Puzzled People*, p. 18.

¹⁴ MASS OBSERVATION, *Puzzled People*, p. 42. Informed criticism of religious dogma was rarely encountered; disillusionment was expressed, primarily with "organised religion", by those who were "least interested" (pp. 53, 59, 60, 23, 157).

¹⁵ SAYERS, 'Creed or Chaos', address given in Derby, 4 May 1940, in her *Creed or Chaos? and Other Essays in Popular Theology*, London, 1947, p. 28, and see her letter to Rev. A.R. James, 10 March 1939, *Letters*, p. 119.

¹⁶ Before this, Sayers had written a detective play, *Busman's Honeymoon*, first performed in 1936. For a detailed description of the process by which *The Zeal of Thy House* was commissioned, see REYNOLDS, *Life and Soul*, pp. 273-281. See also Ann LOADES (Ed.), *Dorothy L. Sayers: Spiritual Writings*, London, 1993, p. 51.

¹⁷ SAYERS, 'The Dogma is the Drama', in *Creed or Chaos?*, pp. 20-24, and see her letter to Fr. Herbert Kelly S.S.M., 7 February 1938, *Letters*, p. 68. Kelly compared the concerns of *The Zeal of*

In a speech written for May 4, 1940, Sayers elaborated on the typical Anglican theme of Catholic dogma as a corrective to Nazism and to totalitarian tendencies within British society itself¹⁸. The war was not about "economics" or "power politics", or even about preserving "freedom and justice and faith", but about "what economics and politics are to be used for; whether freedom and justice and faith have any right to be considered at all... it is a violent and irreconcilable quarrel about the nature of God and the nature of man and the ultimate nature of the universe; it is a war of dogma."¹⁹ Moreover, "It is our own distrust of dogma that is handicapping us in the struggle," at a time when the German rulers "have seen quite clearly that dogma and ethics are inextricably bound together." English people had fallen into the trap of assuming that Germany still accepted the same code of ethics²⁰, and "is only very naughty in her behaviour"²¹. Hence appeasement, the assumption that "if we granted certain German demands which seemed fairly reasonable, she would stop being naughty". Hence too the continuing sense of shock at the German disregard for "the standard of European ethics", when in fact, "what we believe to be evil, Germany believes to be good." Sayers had identified the Nazi reversal of Christian ethics with the "sin against the Holy Ghost", which cannot be forgiven because the sinner is no longer aware of the sinfulness of his actions²². The generalised British acceptance of a broadly Christian standard of conduct had lost contact with the dogma upon which the ethics were founded:

'Never mind about theology', we observe in kindly tones, 'if we just go on being brotherly to one another it doesn't matter what we believe about God.' We are so accustomed to this idea that we are not perturbed by the man who demands, 'If I do not believe in the Fatherhood

Thy House with those of the Athanasian Creed, thereby providing Sayers with her favourite theme in the early 1940s, the dramatic power of Christian dogma. (See REYNOLDS, *Life and Soul*, pp. 287-289, and her 'The Just Vengeance: "It's the best thing I've done"', *Dorothy L. Sayers Society: Proceedings of the 1996 Seminar*, July 1996, p. 5ff.) Sayers had been recommended as playwright for the Canterbury Festival by Charles Williams, whose own play on Cranmer had been performed there in 1936.

¹⁸ A similar theme was the subject of William TEMPLE's broadcast for the B.B.C. Series: *The Archbishop Speaks to the Services*, '2. Does it matter what a man believes?', *WT*, Vol. 69, f. 295-296, in which he advanced Creeds as correctives to Nazi dogmas. Oliver Quick, soon to be Regius Professor of Theology at Oxford, related the persecution of the Jews to the Nazis' rejection of "the divine, the other-worldly and the eternal." (Quick, *Doctrines*, 23.)

¹⁹ 'Creed of Chaos', pp. 25-27.

²⁰ See Manfred SIEBALD, 'Dorothy L. Sayers and Germany', in *The Dorothy L. Sayers Society: Proceedings of the 1996 Seminar*, June, 1996, pp. 17-27.

²¹ 'Creed of Chaos', p. 26.

²² Dorothy L. SAYERS, *Begin Here: A Wartime Essay*, London, 1940, p. 90, and see her letter to her son, 6 November 1938, *Letters*, p. 97. REYNOLDS, *Life and Soul*, pp. 295-296, suggests that *Begin Here* was influenced by Eliot's *Idea of a Christian Society*.

of God, why should I believe in the brotherhood of man?' That, we think, is an interesting point of view, but it is only talk - a subject for quiet after dinner discussion. But if the man goes on to translate his point of view into action, then, to our horror and surprise, the foundations of society are violently shaken, the crust of morality that looked so solid splits apart, and we see that it was only a thin bridge over an abyss in which two dogmas, incompatible as fire and water, are seething explosively together.²³

For Sayers, as for other Catholic Anglicans, the moral ambivalence that led to Nazism must be counteracted with Christian dogma because, as A.G. Hebert, of the Society of the Sacred Mission, had put it in 1935, "There is no freedom except in allegiance to the truth," a position which demanded acceptance of the authority of the Church and of its creeds.²⁴ This theme preoccupied Sayers throughout the war, and in her 1947 play for Lichfield Cathedral, *The Just Vengeance*, she personified the tendency to avoid speaking in terms of "truth" in Caiaphas's extreme pragmatism and in Pilate's ambivalence at the trial of Jesus. "You said yourself that truth was not important -" Caiaphas says to Pilate, "Opinion is,"²⁵ and Pilate later observes:

One is always at the mercy of events and the world-situation;
One takes the thing as one finds it and makes the best of it;
I do not believe there are any ultimate standards.²⁶

The average English audience might sympathise with Pilate's predicament, and be repelled by Caiaphas's use of propaganda and manipulation, but the difference between Pilate's ambivalence and Caiaphas's pragmatism in *The Just Vengeance* and *The Man Born to Be King* is one of degree rather than kind. Indeed, Sayers found a certain perverse logic in Nazism, since "It is idle to complain that a society is infringing a moral code intended to make people behave like St. Francis of Assisi if the society retorts that it does not wish to behave like St. Francis, and considers it more natural and right to behave like the Emperor Caligula." Behind the moral "code" of Christianity there must also lie a moral "law", which is not a series of regulations to be kept or ignored as one sees fit, but a statement "of fact about men

²³ SAYERS, 'Creed of Chaos', p. 28, pp. 89-90.

²⁴ A.G. HEBERT argued that "the Creed, which is man's act of allegiance to God and his acknowledgment of the authority of God's revelation in Christ, is our charter of freedom." (*Liturgy and Society: The Function of the Church in the Modern World*, London, 1935, pp. 110-111.)

²⁵ SAYERS, *The Just Vengeance: The Lichfield Festival Play for 1946*, London, 1946, p. 62.

²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 68.

and the universe", which deems that "a society of Caligulas is more likely to end in catastrophe than a society of Franciscans". Such law cannot be abolished "by edict", though it may be defied, just as one "may defy the law of gravitation by jumping off the Eiffel Tower". For Sayers, the Christian creeds were of the same order as the natural law, being not "arbitrary edicts", but "statements of fact", and "The proper question to be asked about any creed is not, 'Is it pleasant?' but, 'Is it true?'"²⁷ Sayers repeatedly represented the authority of the Church and its interpretation of the Creeds as offering a "rational explanation of the universe"²⁸. Thus, those who agreed with Pilate that there were no "ultimate standards", must also ask with him, "What is truth?", and admit the relativism that made it possible to act like Caiaphas - or, indeed, to act like a Nazi. In this context, Sayers produced her preparatory notes for the Oecumenical Penguin, urging that the Christian revelation was "the historic sanction for common morality" in the face of the rising "ideologies which deny the morality of *communis sensus*":

There seems really little reason why we should not assume and take for granted the whole "ethic of good men", so long as it is made clear that it is *the theology alone which entitles us to make this assumption*: ie., provides the assurance that the morality of the *communis sensus* is in fact in accordance with the way the universe is made.²⁹

In 1941, Sayers was aligning herself with the revived orthodoxy of Anglican Catholicism. For Hebert, moral relativism was the result of the belief of the nineteenth-century moralists that "a Christian standard of morals could still be upheld without the Christian faith in God"³⁰. Temple argued that those who wanted the Church to drop its dogmas and its liturgical concerns in favour of "a programme of action" were in fact trying to convert the Church into a political party³¹, while beyond Anglicanism, John Whale reminded students at Cambridge that "an undogmatic Christianity is a contradiction in terms; the Church is now paying dearly for its latter day contempt for dogma."³² Sayers sardonically attacked the notion that

²⁷ SAYERS, *The Mind of the Maker*, London, 1941, pp. 8, 12.

²⁸ SAYERS, 'The Church's Responsibility', in Archbishop of York's Conference, *Malvern, 1941: The Life of the Church and the Order of Society*, London, 1941, p. 57. The same phrase is used in 'Creed or Chaos', p. 28.

²⁹ Set of notes by Dorothy L. Sayers on "Relations between Christianity & (a) natural morality, (b) natural religion. *BELLP*, Vol. 208, ff. 277-282.

³⁰ HEBERT, *Liturgy and Society*, p. 29.

³¹ William TEMPLE, B.B.C. Series: *The Archbishop Speaks to the Services*, '6. How the Church does its job', *WT*, Vol. 69, f. 304.

³² John WHALE, *Christian Doctrine: Eight Lectures delivered in the University of Cambridge to undergraduates of all Faculties*, Cambridge, 1941, p. 107.

worship was independent of dogma, perhaps revealing a dislike, shared with MacKinnon, for Percy Dearmer's *Songs of Praise*:

Christ, in His Divine innocence, said to the Woman of Samaria, 'Ye worship ye know not what' - being apparently under the impression that it might be desirable, on the whole, to know what one was worshipping. He thus showed Himself sadly out of touch with the twentieth century mind, for the cry to-day is: 'Away with the tedious complexities of dogma - let us have the simple spirit of worship, no matter of what!' The only drawback to this demand for a generalized and undirected worship is the practical difficulty of arousing any sort of enthusiasm for the worship of nothing in particular.³³

Sayers blamed this state of affairs on "Jesuanism" - the tendency to accept the teachings of Christ whilst denying his divinity, or to subscribe to "the Lowest Common Denominator of 'Christian' agreement as a basis for instruction", summed up by such vacuous statements of Christian idealism as "To believe in God and follow the teachings of Christ - in a spirit of love". These statements, Sayers maintained, could only "achieve agreement by refusing to define their terms". She wanted to know what was meant by "Belief", and "God", and what were the "theological implications" of the title "Christ". Christian orthodoxy was fighting "a triangular duel" with those who rejected Christ and his teaching on the one hand, and with "Jesuanists" who claimed to accept his teaching in some amorphous and humanistic sense on the other. There were two alternatives for Christians: alliance with Jesuanists "on a purely humanist and ethical front", or, as Sayers hoped, a "shorter but stronger front of orthodox Christians, acknowledging... the full divinity of Christ, and offering to the world a 'Highest Common Factor of Consent' as regards all the doctrines springing from that central assertion of belief."³⁴

³³ SAYERS, 'The Dogma is the Drama', pp. 20-24. Compare with MASS OBSERVATION, *Puzzled People*, pp. 72, 109, 76, 66, 75.

³⁴ SAYERS, "Memorandum for the possible formulation of a statement of Oecumenical Doctrine based on the Highest Common Factor of Consent among the Christian Churches", 1941, *BELLP*, Vol. 208, ff. 257-269. The Bishop of Truro, J.W. HUNKIN's *The Gospel for Tomorrow*, Harmondsworth, 1941, perhaps typified Sayers's "Lowest Common Denominator". He anticipated a new Christian "synthesis", recommending that the recital of the creeds should be "made optional" (p. 51). His "six outstanding points", derived from a comparison of the Apostles and Nicene creeds, omitted all reference to the Incarnation or the actual events of Christ's life (p. 52). H.F. KIRKPATRICK, in his approving review of Casserley and Reckitt's *The Vocation of England in the Church Quarterly Review*, 1942, p. 253, criticised "the weak-kneed immanentism of the Bishop of Truro's 'Penguin' *The Gospel for Tomorrow*, a Gospel which one may hope will be - like the White Queen's jam - never a Gospel for to-day." A further example of "Jesuanism" would be provided by Lionel Curtis, who did not believe in the resurrection, but presented Christian ethics as essential to a healthy civilisation.

Sayers was not alone in calling for a credal defence of orthodoxy. In 1935, Hebert had advocated a liturgy which would "exhibit the aim and meaning of human life in the light of the Incarnation", supported by "theology, far more theology, from the pulpit... theology that will help the common man to understand the theological language of the New Testament, and see it in relation to his own daily life". It must be expressed in language as simple as that of the parables of Jesus³⁵. Bell, writing his Penguin Special at the outbreak of the war, wanted "builders of bridges between the official doctrine of the Church and the life of the lay world": people with informed knowledge of Christian doctrine and ethics, with their fingers on the pulse of "industrial and economic and political life". Such interpreters of the Gospel could only be found "by the men of theory meeting and discussing continually with the men of practice."³⁶ Yet if the creeds ought to form the basis of this teaching, it must be admitted that they had become worn with over-familiarity, and needed to be reinterpreted for presentation to an audience uneducated in theology.

Several other Anglican individuals and groups were discussing the creeds in the late 1930s and early 1940s. The Archbishops' Commission on Christian Doctrine³⁷ had pondered as to which phrases of the creeds might be interpreted in a "symbolic" sense, and which required a more literal reading³⁸. The Commission, for all the latitude it allowed, maintained that the "broad tradition concerning Jesus" must be "accepted as historical". The Church must proclaim that in Jesus "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."³⁹ The broad character of the creeds, expressing the historical reality of the Incarnation, must not be lost. In response, several discussions of the creeds were published, including some which approached

(See the controversy in the normally undoctinal *CN-L*. Nos. 185-197, 30 June - 28 July 1943; J.H. OLDHAM, 'Belief in the Resurrection', *CN-L* Supplement, No. 192, 6 October 1943; CURTIS, 'Faith and Works', No. 201, 9 February, 1944.) Sayers would have been happier with another Penguin: the Bishop of Bradford, Alfred BLUNT's *What the Church Teaches*, Harmondsworth, 1942, which insisted that "On the foundation-truths of the Christian Faith 95 per cent. of those who within the Church of England speak and teach in its name are in essential concurrence." However, Blunt could only claim to speak for Anglicanism.

³⁵ HEBERT, *Liturgy and Society*, p. 159. See Alistair MASON, *SSM: History of the Society of the Sacred Mission*, Norwich, 1993 pp. 166ff.

³⁶ BELL, *Christianity and World Order*, p. 58. The phrase "builders of bridges" was fortunate, in that it is echoed in "Bridgeheads" the title of a series of books on Christianity planned by Sayers, Muriel St. Clare Byrne and Helen Simpson. St. Anne's society also saw its role as being that of building bridges between Christian thought and educated secular thinkers.

³⁷ See above, pp. 22ff.

³⁸ R.C.D. JASPER, *The Development of the Anglican Liturgy 1662-1980*, London, 1989, p. 164.

³⁹ 'Prolegomena: the Sources and Authority of Christian Doctrine', *Doctrine in the Church of England: The report on the Commission on Christian Doctrine Appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in 1922*, London, 1938, p. 38.

them from a Catholic standpoint⁴⁰. W.J. Phythian Adams, for example, published a plea in *The Church Quarterly Review* for "a new Summary of the Catholic Faith which will rehearse... as concisely, simply, unambiguously, and above all evangelically as possible, the essential truths which we as Christians are to confess before the world." This would be designed to "lead us not to speculate but to worship", but would require some "criticism of the traditional Creeds... not for the sake of 'Modernism' but of Orthodoxy itself." Adams, wanting to avoid "an emasculated substitute for the Catholic Faith", offered a strongly Trinitarian statement drafted by himself⁴¹. In conscious departure from the 1930 Lambeth Conference Report on *The Christian Doctrine of God*, and from the Doctrine Commission Report, Adams's credal statement stressed not "doctrine" but "Dogma". "GOD" was capitalised, and thus distinguished from the God of Islam or of Judaism. The proposal was not taken up, perhaps in part because Adams's proposed statement was clumsily phrased, used legalistic-sounding words such as "wherein", and lamentably omitted the word "catholic".⁴² It was questionable, however, whether a revised Creed was really what was needed in order to bolster Catholic orthodoxy.

More refined was the approach taken by Oliver Quick, who felt that reinterpreters of the gospel must avoid the temptation to embrace "a poor sort of 'modernism' which can only revive heresies which the Church of Athanasius and Augustine had already tried in the balance and found wanting"⁴³. In a memorandum to the Bishops⁴⁴, he argued that the traditional creeds of Christendom were "negative statements" formulated in response to Arian and Gnostic heresy, and were still valid because these heresies had persisted in various forms. "Dogmatic theology [is]... meant to be authoritative; what it lays down must be accepted at least by all who teach in the Church's name", but this left room for a "speculative theology" to work "within the limits that dogma sets". There was therefore no need to revise the creeds; they afforded all the freedom that was necessary. Instead, he advocated revising the Articles of Religion to take account of modern conditions. Yet Quick incurably spoke in a theologian's language. The publishers of *Doctrines of the Creed* boasted that "technicalities have been avoided," but the book did assume a knowledge of basic Greek vocabulary, and, as one reviewer remarked, "a sentence

⁴⁰ The most substantial Catholic critique of the Doctrine Report was A.G. HEBERT's *Memorandum on the Report of the Archbishop's Commission on Christian Doctrine*, 1939.

⁴¹ See Appendix 5, below, p. 369.

⁴² W.J. PHYTHIAN ADAMS, 'Gospel and Creed', *The Church Quarterly Review*, Vol. 131 (1940-1941), pp. 192-212.

⁴³ Oliver Chase QUICK, *Doctrines of the Creed: Their Basis in Scripture and Their Meaning To-Day*, London, 1938, p. 8. Temple saw Quick's book as his own version of the Doctrine Report.

⁴⁴ See Appendix 6, below, pp. 371-384.

such as '... much of Christ's teaching about the kingdom... can only be made consistent with an exclusively eschatological outlook by a strained and artificial exegesis' can hardly be thought to convey much to a reader largely unversed in theological study." This was the fundamental problem with attempts by theologians to interpret the creeds for lay audiences: "So many of the words which enter into the simplest conversations of a theologian mean absolutely nothing to those who... do not read much theology."⁴⁵ Quick and his fellow theologians may have contributed to an understanding of Christian orthodoxy based on the creeds, but they were not the "builders of bridges" that Bell had called for. As far as the "common man" was concerned, they effectively spoke a different language. As Sayers put it, the prevalence of such "ignorance and misconception" among those who sought to oppose Christianity was "largely due to the fact that the technical vocabulary of theology has become unintelligible to them."⁴⁶

By the end of 1941, Sayers was writing to the Bishops about the problem. "The whole thing gives me the feeling of struggling with an octopus in a jungle," she told Bell in November. There were two obstacles to be overcome: firstly, "the public's ignorance of what the accepted doctrine is", and secondly, its inherent "distrust of orthodoxy"⁴⁷, a situation for which Sayers was "inclined to blame the orthodox."⁴⁸ The aim must be to present orthodoxy "in an assimilable form", and then, when people assumed that what was being presented was something novel, to explain "that this is not a new gospel of our own invention, and that it differs from the regulation diet in nothing but in being served up in plain English and without slop-sauce or sectarian skewers." This evangelistic strategy was hampered by the fact that one could not simply attract "the sheep to the church door" and then "hand them over, saying: 'Go in, you'll find all the stuff there,'" because "they won't go in, and half the time the stuff isn't there, but something that looks quite different."⁴⁹ Sayers argued that a successful presentation of Christian dogma must avoid the trappings of religiosity, the "slop-sauce", and rid itself of "sectarian skewers" in order to demonstrate that there was a body of doctrine to which any Christian with

⁴⁵ H.M. WADDAMS, Review of O.C. QUICK, *Doctrines of the Creed*, in *The Church Quarterly Review*, Vol. 127 (1938-1939), pp. 146-147.

⁴⁶ SAYERS, "Memorandum for the possible formulation of a statement of Oecumenical Doctrine based on the Highest Common Factor of Consent among the Christian Churches", 1941, *BELLP*, Vol. 208, ff. 257-269; SAYERS, Memorandum to Theological Literature Association, 28 November, 1941, *BELLP*, Vol. 208, ff. 250-251.

⁴⁷ SAYERS, Memorandum to Theological Literature Association, 28 November, 1941, *BELLP*, Vol. 208, ff. 250-251.

⁴⁸ SAYERS, 'The Dogma is the Drama', pp. 20-24.

⁴⁹ SAYERS, Memorandum to Theological Literature Association, 28 November, 1941, *BELLP*, Vol. 208, ff. 250-251.

orthodox beliefs could subscribe. It must, in short, be "oecumenical"⁵⁰, and it must not use theological jargon. Who better for the task than a writer with ten years' experience in advertising?⁵¹

One theologian had addressed the problem of the "technical language of theology", and had been courageous enough to suggest that if words such as "propitiation" and "expiation", presented without exposition, "only succeed in veiling the light of God's glory on the face of Christ", their use "should be abandoned"⁵². More significantly for Sayers, John Whale, whose lectures at Cambridge in 1941 were published as *Christian Doctrine*, was not an Anglican, but the Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council. The book left Sayers still more convinced that it ought to be possible to produce an Oecumenical Penguin. For a Free Churchman, Whale spoke very like a Catholic. He expressed distaste for Protestant doctrines of the "vicarious punishment" of Christ on the Cross, defending his position on soteriology with Trinitarian theology⁵³. He expounded a Catholic ecclesiology, asserting that "all Christians believe in the authority of their Holy Mother, the Church... True Christian experience is always ecclesiastical experience." Furthermore, he claimed that on this point, 'Cyprian in the third century and Calvin in the sixteenth, speak almost precisely the same language.' The fact that the Church was "an extension of the Incarnation" was not an excuse for extreme authoritarianism, but nor was the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers to be used as "an unscriptural egalitarian cliché."⁵⁴ On the question of the relationship between reason and revelation, Whale seemed closer to Maritain than to Barth, and could not accept that "philosophical theology is a contradiction in terms". "Surely," he said, "human reason has been and is a valid instrument of religious enquiry," demonstrating that at least one Free Churchman in England did not subscribe to neo-

⁵⁰ A precedent for the acceptance by Anglo Catholics of such an idea may be seen in A.E.J. RAWLINSON's contribution to *Essays Catholic and Critical*, 3rd Edition, London, 1929, p. 97: "The weight of rational authority will be at its maximum in the case of such statements of doctrine as are commonly ranked as 'ecumenical'..."

⁵¹ Sayers began working for Benson's advertising agency in 1921, and wrote such slogans as, "My Goodness/ My Guinness" and invented the "Mustard Club", a ruse which succeeded in promoting a seemingly unpromotable product. See David COOMES *Dorothy L. Sayers: A Careless Rage for Life*, Oxford, 1992, pp. 97ff; Janet HITCHMAN, *Such a Strange Lady: An Introduction to Dorothy L. Sayers (1893-1957)*, London, 1975, pp. 59ff.

⁵² WHALE, *Christian Doctrine*, p. 96.

⁵³ *ibid.*, pp. 83-84. "... do not say that Christian soteriology makes God the Father an Oriental Tyrant, unless you wish to expose yourself to a charge of theological illiteracy. Such a contention is a pathetic caricature of the very truth which the doctrine of the Trinity is meant to conserve... the doctrine of the Trinity is not unintelligible; it is fundamental to Christian soteriology." pp. 94-95.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

Calvinism⁵⁵. He echoed Maritain too, in his rejection of idealism, which made "Christian faith no more than a splendid illustration of the philosophy of moral values"⁵⁶. Some Catholics might even have accepted his understanding of the Eucharist as symbolic of the Incarnation of Christ in history, by virtue of its use of specific elements, bread and wine, and not of "gilded cloud or flower", and with Christ as "the fountain head of this living tradition"⁵⁷. Whale's book was strongly "oecumenical", claiming that despite the enormous differences between the churches "the essential and constitutive facts are the same,"⁵⁸ and painting a picture of Calvin as a "High Churchman... more in line with the Oxford Movement than is always realized."⁵⁹ In his attempt to interpret the Gospel to Cambridge undergraduates, Whale bridged the gulf between Protestantism and Catholicism by means of an Incarnational Christology⁶⁰.

Sayers was impressed, and said so to the Theological Literature Association. *Christian Doctrine* was "almost classic in its dogmatic orthodoxy," she enthused, even if Whale had his reservations about dogmatic theology and the "resentment and hostility" which it aroused. Such hostility was generally provoked in its "most violent form by any assertion that Jesus was fully God", a point on which Whale had allowed no compromise. Sayers felt that "on this point Christians would do well to stick to their guns and take whatever hostility is coming to them... If the battle of Nicea has to be fought all over again, it might as well be fought now, without any further attempts at appeasement".⁶¹ In any case, Whale's book ought to dispose of the misconception that, "because of the quarrels between the various Christian communions, ...there is, in fact, no agreement between them on any body of doctrine." The employment of words such as "battle" and "appeasement" in such a context suggests that Sayers's concern for ecumenism was linked to a concern for

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 20-22. Whale dealt with this issue in detail, arguing in answer to Barth: "Christian doctrine asserts that divine revelation would be utterly impossible if there were no affinity or point of contact between man and God... Man asks questions about God to which revelation is the answer, but the answer is intelligible only because the questions are intelligible." pp. 28-29.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 30-31. The debt to Maritain is underlined by Whale's treatment of Marx.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p. 156.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 131-132.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 144-149. Charles WILLIAMS, *The Descent of the Dove: A Short History of the Holy Spirit in the Church*, London, 1939, p. 174, was of the same opinion. Gregory Dix observed that "Dodd and Flew and Micklem and Whale have forced our people [Anglicans] to look at the scriptures and there discover the Church not as a debating society or an ethical endeavour league but an intensely dogmatic institution..." (Letter to Bévenot, 1 April 1942, cited in Simon BAILEY, *A Tactful God*, Herefordshire, 1995, p. 104.)

⁶⁰ WHALE, *Christian Doctrine*, p. 169. Christian orthodoxy, whether Protestant or Catholic, asserted that God was not merely "an impersonal Absolute transcending history", because by means of the Incarnation of Christ, "the eternal is known as temporal."

⁶¹ SAYERS, Memorandum to Theological Literature Association, 28 November, 1941, *BELLP*, Vol. 208, ff. 250-251.

national unity in the face of the Nazi domination of the rest of Europe. Her memorandum to the Bishops on the possibility of formulating a statement of "Oecumenical Doctrine" also alluded to Whale:

...those who have given intelligent thought to the matter are perfectly aware that there exists a very large body of doctrine indeed to which the instructed of all communions do, in fact, adhere, and which is recognisable as oecumenical Christian tradition (as an Anglican priest said to me, "Its enemies, at any rate, recognise it instantly.") From a reading of J.S. Whale's book *Christian Doctrine*, it is evident that this body of Oecumenical consent is a good deal larger than "Catholic" opinion may have been inclined to suppose.⁶²

Before reading Whale, Sayers had remarked in an address in 1940 that "there is a very large measure of agreement among Christian denominations on all doctrine that is really oecumenical. A rigidly Catholic interpretation of the Creeds, for example - including the Athanasian Creed - will find support both in Rome and in Geneva." Moreover, she had urged "that certain fundamentals should be restated in terms that make their meaning... clear to the ordinary uninstructed heathen to whom technical theological language has become a dead letter."⁶³ In November 1941, Sayers endorsed the demand for a "statement about oecumenical Christian doctrine (not 'Christian principles') to be issued by leading theologians of all the great communions, both as a basis for school instruction, and also as a reply to the common allegation... that it's no good the Churches' demanding instruction in doctrine, because they can't agree about what the doctrine is." In fact, she confided, "I have hopes that something may be about to materialise in this field, if all goes well with a plot that is a-hatching at the moment."⁶⁴

The plot was being hatched by Sayers herself, in co-operation with J.W. Welch, Director of the Religious Broadcasting Division of the B.B.C. In October, 1941, Welch informed Sayers that he had been speaking to Father John Murray, S.J., the representative of the Cardinal on the subject of religious broadcasting⁶⁵, about "your interesting idea that we should try to get the Cardinal, the Anglican Archbishops, the Moderator of the Free Churches, the Moderator of the Church of

⁶² SAYERS, "Memorandum for the possible formulation of a statement of Oecumenical Doctrine based on the Highest Common Factor of Consent among the Christian Churches", 1941, ff. 257-269.

⁶³ SAYERS, 'Creed or Chaos', p. 36.

⁶⁴ SAYERS, Memorandum to Theological Literature Association, 28 November, 1941, *BELLP*, Vol. 208, ff. 250-251.

⁶⁵ This was in the absence of Father D'Arcy, who was in America at the time.

Scotland (if possible), and the Archbishop of Thyatira, to approve and sign an agreed statement of Christian doctrine." Welch had acknowledged to Murray that it would be impossible to reach an agreement with the Roman Catholics "on the nature of authority and on the Church", but hoped there might be scope for a written agreement on the fact "that the Christian faith cannot be lived apart from a community of believers, on Natural Law, on Revelation, on the Purpose of Life..., on the objectivity of certain values such as justice and truth, on the main facts of Our Lord's Life and on the main tenets of Our Lord's teaching, and so on." Murray had been "thrilled", advising Welch to write to the Cardinal⁶⁶. In the meantime, Sayers courted the Bishop of London for support. His reservations were to prove prescient:

...apart from the difficulty of getting the various party leaders to agree, there was the difficulty of knowing how far the Free Churches... would agree with the views of their own leader, Dr. Whale; and a Methodist, to whom I mentioned the matter, took the same line, saying that he thought he and I, for instance, should be in much closer agreement, than I should be with Low Church Anglicans.

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The temptation, in the face of such dogmatic party divisions, would be to allow the statement to focus on ethics. This was anathema to Sayers, who told Welch that the people needed "a statement about agreed *dogma*, and not only about moral principles; though there could and should be a statement about the system of ethics which is based on the dogma". The Deity of Christ must be upheld, if the "Lowest Common Denominator" was to be prevented from making its "muffled and unsatisfactory appearance". At all costs, the statement must avoid saying: "We can't decide whether Christ is God or not, but we are quite sure that we should do what He tells us about mercy and justice and the great Christian principles."⁶⁸ An Oecumenical statement must stand, or fall, on dogma.

Sayers's next task was to produce her Memorandum for the benefit of the Cardinal. In it, she alluded to Whale's book, testifying that in her own public speeches on Christianity, she invariably gave a "catholic" interpretation of the creeds. ("The word I should have preferred to use is 'Oecumenical'", she quipped, "but since nobody knows what it means, this would have been a waste of time.")

⁶⁶ WELCH to Sayers, 22 October 1941, *WT*, Vol. 39, f. 229. At this early stage, Welch was already suggesting a number of theologians whom Sayers could contact about her idea, including John Whale, Oliver Quick, John Baillie (Church of Scotland) and the teacher Spencer Leeson.

⁶⁷ SAYERS to Welch, 24 October 1941, *WT*, Vol. 39, f. 230.

⁶⁸ SAYERS to Welch, 31 October 1941, *WT*, Vol. 39, f. 231.

She had always refused to be drawn into public discussion of the differences between Anglicanism, Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, concentrating her attack, instead, on "paganism, Rumanism, and vaguely ethical Jesuanism, in the name of the 'undivided Church'." In response, she had encountered protests from "semi-illiterate Bible-thumpers... [and] educated Arians occupying pulpits", but had also experienced a "quite surprising level of approval from orthodox Christians, both clerical and lay, of all communions." It was this core of "catholic" or "Oecumenical" dogma, the source of the popularity of her public speeches on Christianity, which she hoped would be the subject of the new statement:

Agreement must be sought, not in the spirit of men setting out to see how much they can afford to jettison in order to keep an empty hulk afloat, but in that of men avidly contriving how much of their common stock of food and gear they can squeeze into the lifeboat and still leave room for the crew.

The lifeboat metaphor was particularly evocative in the last months of 1941; Sayers implicitly linked the portrayal of England as the last bastion of European democracy with the maintenance of Christian tradition through theological education. She hoped that a statement giving an oecumenical interpretation of the Creeds could form the basis of a curriculum of religious education for schools. The statement would need to retain various theological terms, but these should be explained⁶⁹.

Welch called the Memorandum "admirable", was convinced that it "will certainly move any cardinal of English parentage!", and was evidently encouraged by the fact that the Christian Education Council were supporting Sayers's scheme. He hoped that "late in December or early in January we can get the professional theologians of the four confessions together, lock them in a room, and refuse to let them out until they have reached the Highest Common Factor of Consent"⁷⁰. Sayers's Memorandum had come at a propitious moment. Almost simultaneously, Canon Cockin had independently written a letter to *The Times* about a similar idea. In August 1941, Archbishop Lang and a delegation of Anglican and Free Church

⁶⁹ SAYERS, "Memorandum for the possible formulation of a statement of Oecumenical Doctrine based on the Highest Common Factor of Consent among the Christian Churches", 1941, ff. 257-269. Sayers hoped "that in this way... [children] would be led to envisage Christianity as an exercise for adult minds - at least on a level with Biology or the plays of Shakespeare." She revived it in her article, 'The Lost Tools of Learning', *The Hibbert Journal*, Vol. XLVI (1947-1948), pp. 81-83, where her "neo-Medieval" curriculum includes a "Grammar of Theology".

⁷⁰ WELCH to Sayers, 5 November 1941, *WT*, Vol. 39, f. 232. This letter also mentions that Gorton of Blundells was "an enthusiast but is chasing the idea of a series of religious Penguins rather hard at present". It is possible that this idea caught Sayers's attention.

representatives had met with the President of the Board of Education, R.A. Butler, to discuss the future of religious education, an encouraging development for the prospect of further oecumenical initiatives⁷¹. Welch reported to Sayers in December that the Incorporated Association of Headmasters would be discussing her proposed statement at their Annual Executive Conference that month⁷². Still more promising were the reports of a committee meeting to discuss religious education, held at the Presbyterian Church House on November 27th, 1941, and attended by Anglicans such as the Bishops of London and Chichester, Eleanora Iredale and T.S. Eliot, by Free Churchers of various denominations, and by the Roman Catholic Sword of the Spirit representatives, Christopher Dawson and A.C.F. Beales. Then, on January 24th 1942, the Commission of the Churches and the Sword of the Spirit jointly called upon Christians "to maintain the Christian tradition and to act together... [in order]... to oppose the present tendencies to set Christianity aside and to treat it as a matter of private concern without relevance to the principles which should guide society"⁷³.

In the midst of this ecumenical atmosphere, Welch was optimistic about Sayers's Memorandum. Sayers had her own sources on the Roman Catholic side, however, and could foresee various difficulties. The ecumenical impulse was balanced in the churches by "the people who want an emphasis on the internal unity of each separate communion... - lest all should melt into one mush of nothing-in-particular." Sayers sympathised with this position, but hoped that it would be possible to procure an agreed statement which could be used as a basis from which the different communions could express their uniqueness. She was concerned with the impression given to those outside the churches; the agreed statement would help to ensure that the "differences of emphasis can be recognised as differences of *emphasis*, and not as antagonisms."⁷⁴ Her misgivings were well-founded. Cardinal Hinsley told Welch that he was "frankly frightened" that such a statement would lead the public to assume that the Roman Catholic Church was "abating... its claims", and was also worried about the implications for the funding of Roman Catholic Schools, should the Board of Education choose the statement as a guide for religious instruction in State schools. There was also a more fundamental concern about the nature of doctrine, which for Roman Catholics "is given direct by Christ

⁷¹ Adrian HASTINGS, *A History of English Christianity, 1920-1985*, London, 1986, pp. 392, 418-9.

⁷² WELCH to Sayers, 1 December 1941, *WT*, Vol. 39, f. 235. The questions to be asked were: "(1) What is the nature of the Agreement likely to come from the Churches? (2) What bodies authoritatively express this statement? (3) Are the headmasters going to be in charge of their own schools or will the right of entry into all schools of the clergy upset the apple cart again?"

⁷³ *WT*, Vol. 39, ff. 239, 240.

⁷⁴ Sayers to Welch, 27 November 1941, *WT*, Vol. 39, f. 233.

through the Pope to his people, and... must be accepted *in toto*", and which in Reformed Churches, "is so often 'a matter of private judgement and the agreement of one's reason.'" The possibility of a gathering of theologians from the Roman Catholic and other churches was not ruled out, but the remainder of Sayers's proposal was being treated with stifling caution⁷⁵.

Sayers was prepared to be quite accommodating in order to gain Roman Catholic co-operation. She told Welch that she understood the Cardinal's "insistence on 'the whole Faith'," but pointed out that "what we aim at is a statement of FACT", that certain doctrines are actually held in common by all Christian churches. Furthermore, Roman Catholic apologists frequently "do when addressing a general audience... confine themselves to the consideration of such major doctrinal points as are not disputed except by the heathen." The statement would not be taken as a summary of "everything that a Christian ought to believe; but as a statement of what all the Communions *do*, in fact, agree in believing". It followed in terms of its usefulness as an educational resource that it would at least provide secular schools with a guide to the bare minimum that children should be taught about "what Christian doctrine *is*." The project would give Roman Catholics an opportunity to educate the non-Catholic public, who had been "led to suppose that the 'disputed' doctrines are *more* fundamental and important than the others, because of the to-do about them." Sayers claimed that she constantly had to disabuse "the average heathen Protestant" of a series of "grotesque" misconceptions about what Roman Catholics actually believed; she was tired of pulling "Rome's chestnuts out of the fire for her". For example, many people assumed that Rome did not teach the full humanity of Christ; that Mary and the Pope had somehow usurped the office of Christ as mediator. An oecumenical statement, affirming the full humanity and divinity of Christ, might go a long way towards dissolving such assumptions. The lengths Sayers was prepared to take in conciliating the Roman Catholics are revealed by her insistence that the Free Church and Church of England representatives "should refrain from saying: 'This is what we deduce from a study of the Scriptures' or anything of that sort." The statement must instead say, "This is what we receive as right doctrine, revealed in Christ, handed down by the Church, confirmed by the Great Councils..."⁷⁶ Here was a problem which Sayers, from her own perspective as a Catholic Anglican, may well have underestimated: while a Catholic might be prepared to accept the latter statement, an Evangelical might well be disposed to insist on the former. Even with these efforts to woo the Cardinal, there remained a

⁷⁵ WELCH to Sayers, 28 November 1941, *WT*, Vol. 39, f. 234.

⁷⁶ SAYERS to Welch, 4 December 1941, *WT*, Vol. 39, f. 236.

good deal of reticence about Sayers's project on the Roman Catholic side, and A.C.F. Beales of the Sword of the Spirit sent her two discouraging letters in early 1942. He also sent an article from *The Clergy Review* by the Roman Catholic theologian William Butterfield, which quoted the Bull *Mortalium Animos*⁷⁷ in an attack on "the error of fundamentalism", by which Butterfield meant any movement towards oecumenism which "believes that there is such a thing as a 'common Christian basis of belief'." Co-operation between the churches, he asserted, could not proceed along doctrinal lines; it must be restricted to an admission "that we have some common ends, purposes, desires, objects..." Christians could work together to maintain the observance of Sunday or to fight against blasphemy, but there could be no statement of dogmatic agreement between Roman Catholics and other Christians⁷⁸.

A stalemate had been reached with the Roman Catholics, and in the meantime, conservative Protestants were drawing their swords against *The Man Born to Be King*. Sayers was embattled on all sides. At this point, her Memorandum fell into the hands of Bell, who, like Sayers, had a tireless capacity for getting things done⁷⁹. Bell was "in almost complete agreement" with Sayers's thesis, and thought that a statement of agreed doctrine "would make a tremendous difference". He proposed to send her Memorandum to the Archbishop of Canterbury, "and ask him whether he would be prepared to invite the theological faculties of Oxford and Cambridge to do just such a statement." It would, he warned, be "a ticklish business", but theological faculties included theologians of different denominations, and therefore seemed a natural place to start⁸⁰. Sayers hoped that Welch's efforts with the Cardinal had not done too much harm, and told Bell that "A really big move by the Archbishop would be magnificent." She added that:

Dr. Welch envisaged a kind of Nicaea, with myself sitting at the table, like an uneasy Constantine, understanding very little Greek and praying for peace! This hilarious suggestion is not to be taken seriously, needless to say...⁸¹

⁷⁷ *Mortalium Animos* was the Papal Encyclical which effectively silenced the Malines Conversations, between Anglicans and Roman Catholics, in January 1928. See HASTINGS, *History of English Christianity*, pp. 208-211; For a history of the Conversations, see Bernard BARLOW, 'A brother knocking at the door: The Malines Conversations, 1921-1925', Norwich, 1996.

⁷⁸ Extract, copied by A.C.F. Beales and sent to Dorothy L. Sayers, from an article in *The Clergy Review*, by the Roman Catholic theologian William Butterfield, *WT*, Vol. 39, ff. 246-247. See also HASTINGS, *History of English Christianity*, p. 396.

⁷⁹ Perhaps Bell had learned this from Davidson, who credited his old mentor with a similar capacity. See his own *Life of Davidson*, Vol. I, pp. 205-206.

⁸⁰ BELL to Dorothy L. Sayers, 6 May 1942, *BELLP*, Vol. 208, f. 252.

⁸¹ SAYERS to George Bell, 7 May 1942, *WT*, Vol. 39, f. 228.

Temple did take it seriously, and contacted Oliver Quick in his capacity as Regius Professor of Theology at Oxford, who took on the role of attempting to organise the theologians. He saw the importance of recruiting Roman Catholic theologians (there were none on the Boards of the Faculties of Theology in Oxford or in Cambridge), and this meant enlisting the help of his opposite number at Cambridge, Charles Raven, who "is *not* an ideal person for this particular purpose; he is quite unsympathetic to the R.C. point of view"⁸². Quick also regarded the proposal to use the statement as a basis for teaching in schools as a stumbling block to the Roman Catholics, and brought Victor White O.P. onto the panel of theologians, on the proviso that this part of Sayers's suggestions was withdrawn⁸³.

It was at this point that the notion of an Oecumenical Penguin seems to have occurred to Sayers:

As regards the form of the thing, this seems to fall into two main parts. The first is an actual agreement by the theologians on the doctrine itself - on whatever authority - and the expression of this in some kind of theological language. The second is the explanation of this agreed doctrine in language understood of the multitude.

She proposed to write the second half herself, anonymously, because "that the Churches should publish a statement of Agreed Doctrine bearing on its title page the name of a detective novelist seems to me neither dignified nor wise." There were three other conditions of her involvement: "We want to keep the continuity with the language of the Bible and of the Fathers - not give the impression that we are 'bringing Christianity up to date', or 'rewriting the creeds to suit modern conditions'" - an Eastern Orthodox theologian must be involved, and Sayers would need to be paid⁸⁴. Temple agreed to pay Sayers £50⁸⁵, and on July 20th, 1942, the first meeting was held in Oxford between Sayers and a provisional panel of

⁸² Oliver QUICK to William Temple, 16 May 1942 (Quick's italics), *WT*, Vol. 39, f. 249. See also Temple's reply, 15 May 1942, f. 250. Quick's initial enthusiasm for the project may be accounted for by his own interest in making Christian dogma more accessible, evidenced by his publication of *Doctrines of the Creed* and his interest in revising the Articles of Religion.

⁸³ QUICK to Temple, 20 May 1942, *WT*, Vol. 39, f. 251. White later explained that he would only be able to "express a private Catholic opinion on what must be an Anglican-cum-Free Church project." (Victor WHITE O.P. to Oliver Quick, 22 April 1943, *BELLP*, Vol. 208, f. 293.)

⁸⁴ SAYERS to Rev. Canon Oliver Quick of Christ Church, Oxford, 8 June 1942, *BELLP*, Vol. 208, f. 254.

⁸⁵ This was the figure recommended by the literary agents, Pearn, Pollinger and Higham Ltd., to Oliver Quick, *BELLP*, Vol. 208, f. 273. For Temple's response see f. 274.

theologians⁸⁶. Victor White suggested that the best way to gain Roman Catholic approval would be to draft the statement and then submit it to the Catholic authorities in the hope that they would write a post-script "to say, with certain safeguards and cantelae (as, e.g. that the R.C. Church alone has the *right to teach* the faith), that the document does in fact contain nothing contrary to what the R.C. Church teaches."⁸⁷ At this point, however, negotiations broke down, not on some difficulty with the ecumenical aspect, but because of a misunderstanding as to what the relative duties of Sayers and the theologians ought to be. The document was to be published under the names of the theologians, omitting White, but according to Quick, Sayers was to draft the entire 40000 words, which would then be "examined and amended" by the Oxford and Cambridge theologians. Quick was immediately inclined to give up; "between us we have so far failed to get the ball rolling at all," he admitted.⁸⁸ Sayers wrote despairingly to Temple:

You see, they don't *want* to play... Flew [the Methodist] has flown, presumably, and as for Whale, where is that Leviathan whom thou hast made to take his pastime therein? Anyhow, he has already done his bit; and if indeed the others look forward to producing only "barren and vague platitudes" it would be better they should not try.

She suggested to Temple that she might bring together a group of her own choosing - she had in mind a group of working priests and the theologians at St. Anne's, Soho, as well as C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams and an unnamed Orthodox theologian - to help her to draft the initial document, after which "the academics could sit upon the result - in every sense of the words, no doubt."⁸⁹ Temple told her, "you had better merely tell Canon Quick that you will do your best to prepare a draft; then follow your own method of getting it prepared."⁹⁰

⁸⁶ The first meeting lasted three and a half hours. The theologians present were "Micklem, Hodgson, Newton Flew and Father Victor White O.P.", as well as Quick himself. H.H. Farmer was delayed from attending. QUICK to Temple, 21 July 1942, *WT*, Vol. 39, f. 253. See also R. Norton FLEW to Oliver Quick, *BELLP*, Vol. 208, f. 271.

⁸⁷ QUICK to Temple, 21 July 1942, *WT*, Vol. 39, f. 253.

⁸⁸ QUICK to Sayers, 12 Feb. 1943, *WT*, Vol. 39, f. 259.

⁸⁹ SAYERS to Temple, 16 February 1943, *WT*, Vol. 39, f. 258. St. Anne's Society in Soho was a "Centre for Christian discourse" set up by the Bishop of London in 1943, on the site of the ruined Church of St. Anne, which had been destroyed in an air-raid in 1940. It aimed to present Christian arguments to secular intellectuals. Sayers, T.S. Eliot and the *Signpost* writer Partick MacLaughlin were among the first to lecture there. See also John S. PEART-BINNS, *Maurice B. Reckitt: A Life*, London, 1988, pp. 152-154; COOMES *Dorothy L. Sayers: A Careless Rage for Life*, pp. 184ff, R.D. HACKING, *Such a Long Journey: A Biography of Gilbert Shaw, Priest*, London, 1988, pp. 64-67.

⁹⁰ TEMPLE to Sayers, 18 February 1943, *WT*, Vol. 39, f. 260.

Sayers continued to circulate her working notes on the project⁹¹ until, in 1944, Quick died, and discussions ceased. In 1947, Bell made a final valiant attempt to resuscitate the project, after having received a letter from I.A. Iremonger complaining that "The difficulty... about many of the appeals which the Bishops are making about 'evangelism' is the prevailing uncertainty about *what exactly the evangel is...*" and calling for "a new survey of what the gospel included"⁹². Bell wrote to Sayers that it would be "a great pity" for her project to go uncompleted⁹³, and on June 10th 1947, she replied, "The 'Oecumenical Penguin' is not dead, but sleepeth." She remarked that the "bunch of people at Oxford... did not seem to have the requisite zest for taking a subject on the mat and worrying it," lamented their inability to involve an Eastern Orthodox theologian, and said that Victor White had been "so cautious that one felt that he would never put his name to anything for fear of offending his bishop." Her friends at St. Anne's had "more knowledge of the conditions under which doctrine has to be presented to the men and women who live in the present day world," but Charles Williams, upon whose contribution Sayers had been depending, had died. She could not help but notice the change in emphasis in Bell's letter: the agreed statement now needed to be written not to educate the public, but to educate the clergy, yet surely, "it is not so much the Gospel which the clergy need to have expounded to them as the World!"⁹⁴ It seemed that not even Bell could arouse the Oecumenical Penguin from hibernation.

It is necessary to turn to Sayers's preliminary notes on the agreed statement, and to supplement these with her other writings, if we are to reconstruct what Sayers hoped the Oecumenical Penguin would contain⁹⁵. The guiding principle behind the work, and behind all of Sayers's theological thinking, was the Catholic doctrine of the Incarnation. It had, after all, been Whale's treatment of this subject which had given Sayers reason to think that a meaningful oecumenical statement was possible. Whale saw the Incarnation as the culmination of a process witnessed to by the Hebraic tradition and by the Bible, whereby the will of God was "purposive and

⁹¹ QUICK to [Leonard] Hodgson, 8 April 1943, *BELLP*, Vol. 208, f. 291.

⁹² I. A. IREMONGER to George Bell, 28 May 1947, *BELLP*, Vol. 208, ff. 296-297.

⁹³ BELL to Dorothy L. Sayers, 6 June 1947, *BELLP*, Vol. 208, f. 299. See also BELL to Hodgson, 2 June 1947), f. 298. Iremonger had suggested a book of 52 chapters for daily reading, in order that clergy might revise their knowledge of the Christian doctrines in one year.

⁹⁴ SAYERS to George Bell, 10 June 1947, (f. 300). Sayers commented that Welch and her friend V.A. Demant "continually say how horrified they are by the extent to which the elder clergy are out of touch with what the average man of to-day is thinking and feeling." This was borne out by MASS OBSERVATION, *Puzzled People*, p. 142, which documented the scepticism among clergy about "their own capacity to do anything much towards changing people's attitudes."

⁹⁵ It is likely that the remainder of the material gathered by Sayers for the "Oecumenical Penguin" disappeared along with other archival material from St. Anne's at Soho, in a recent car-theft (*pers. comm.*, Christopher Dean, Dorothy L. Sayers Society).

continuously active in history."⁹⁶ Consequently, "Christian faith lives on historical realities and refuses to disown them... [or] to reduce the Gospel to a general philosophic truth," and time "is an actual part of eternity because it has been taken up into eternity by God himself."⁹⁷ Sayers was typical of Anglican Catholicism in presenting the Incarnation as the essential and unique element in Christian doctrine. Hebert called it "the central principle of Christianity: the manifestation of the Divine Goodness in the flesh, in Jesus as the Son of God first, and then through the Holy Spirit in the members of His mystical Body," and defined heresy as any attempt to weaken this doctrine⁹⁸. For him, Christ was the Platonic archetype of sacrifice "descended to earth"⁹⁹ The Archbishops' Commission on Christian Doctrine maintained that the doctrine of the Incarnation was the basis of the Church's belief in "the activity of God in history", and that it demanded the synthesis of belief in the deity and the humanity of Christ. In this doctrine, "we have the only adequate explanation of the facts of life and of the problem of the universe."¹⁰⁰ Yet Sayers, like many Catholic Anglicans in the late 1930s and the 1940s, wanted to expound a doctrine of the Incarnation which differed radically from that proposed by liberal Protestant "Incarnationalism". Hebert had given a typical Anglo-Catholic response to Incarnationalism of this type in 1935:

It is true that Modernism, believing itself to be the true Christianity, has often sought to 're-state' the old formulae, and has seemed to accept, for instance, the doctrine of the Incarnation. But upon examination it is found that this doctrine of the Incarnation means that Jesus is simply the most divine of men... It is recognized on both sides to be a different belief from the traditional Christian belief.¹⁰¹

Liberalism, with its modifications of the doctrine of Christ's deity, was what Sayers had called "Jesuanism" in its most refined form. As a result of it, she claimed, "...we have allowed the incarnate Son to be dissociated from the eternal Son..."¹⁰² It was its popular expression - or at least the popular confusion it had caused - that the Oecumenical Penguin would be designed to combat.

⁹⁶ WHALE, *Christian Doctrine*, pp. 30-31

⁹⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 60, 62.

⁹⁸ HEBERT, *Liturgy and Society*, p. 95.

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 50. Charles WILLIAMS argued that in the doctrine of the Incarnation, Christianity had gone further than other religions by asserting that the "Omnipotence" had become "what himself had made". *He Came Down From Heaven*, London, 1938, p. 141.

¹⁰⁰ 'Part I: The Doctrines of God and of Redemption', *Doctrine in the Church of England*, pp. 73-76.

¹⁰¹ HEBERT, *Liturgy and Society*, p. 35.

¹⁰² SAYERS to Rev. Canon Oliver Quick of Christ Church, Oxford, 8 June 1942, *BELLP*, Vol. 208, f. 254.

Sayers recognised that the deity and humanity of Christ were the subjects of a daunting array of public misconceptions.¹⁰³ In her experience, the doctrine of the Trinity was rarely understood, even by highly educated people: "the word 'God' conveys a *picture* of God the Father only, and not of the whole Trinity perpetually present and active in all human events and divine actions". A publisher had asked her whether the Holy Ghost was "still considered to form part of the Trinity". Sayers explained to the Oxford and Cambridge theologians that the "common man" normally held one of two misconceptions about Jesus. He was either:

- (a) a God masquerading as a man and only pretending to be astonished, disappointed, passible etc. [or]
- (b) an ignorant and potentially fallible man, not different in any unique manner from himself, except as having a larger dose of "spirituality" in his make-up.

The Mass Observation survey would later find numerous exponents of position (b), but Sayers could also testify, on the strength of the opposition to *The Man Born to Be King*, "that position (a) - which is pure Docetism - is extremely wide-spread... among the more bigotedly 'Protestant' members of the community: it is destructive of all sense of reality."¹⁰⁴ Sayers criticised the Anglican tendency to preach "Jesus" without preaching "Christ", so that "the ordinary man simply does not grasp at all the idea that Jesus Christ and God the Creator are held to be literally the same person." For most people, God the Father and Jesus Christ were two "quite separate personalities"¹⁰⁵. There was a strong element of Catholic distaste for Protestant representations of the vicarious punishment of Christ in Sayers's thought here¹⁰⁶. She argued that the tendency to "divide the substance" had resulted in a popular misconception of the Gospel in which "the whole Jesus-history becomes an unmeaning anecdote of the brutality of God to man"¹⁰⁷. More importantly, Sayers criticised the assumption that dogma is "hopelessly irrelevant to the life and thought of modern man":

¹⁰³ MASS OBSERVATION, *Puzzled People*, pp. 42-43. The Mass Observation survey of 1947 would reveal that among Church of England attenders, "forty-four per cent. of men and 60 per cent. of women said they thought [Christ]... was more than a man; 38 per cent. of men and 21 per cent. of women said he was 'only a man', the rest being undecided or uninterested."

¹⁰⁴ Set of notes by Dorothy L. Sayers on "Relations between Christianity & (a) natural morality, (b) natural religion." *BELLP*, Vol. 208, ff. 277-282. Sayers's fullest exposition of the Doctrine of the Trinity, based on an extended analogy with artistic creativity, is given in *The Mind of the Maker*.

¹⁰⁵ 'Creed or Chaos', p. 36.

¹⁰⁶ See also her letter to Fr. Herbert Kelly, 6 October 1937: "... you'll notice that I've left out [of *The Zeal of Thy House*] all those disgusting ideas about 'satisfaction' and 'paying-off.'" (*Letters*, p. 54.)

¹⁰⁷ 'Creed or Chaos', p. 36. It is likely that Sayers would have endorsed the section on the Cross in Blunt's Penguin (*What the Church Teaches*, pp. 46-50.)

The central dogma of the Incarnation is that by which relevance stands or falls. If Christ was only man, then He is entirely irrelevant to any thought about God; if He is only God, then He is entirely irrelevant to any experience of human life.¹⁰⁸

The Oecumenical Penguin would therefore need to restate the doctrine of the Incarnation in non-theological terms, emphasising both the deity and the humanity of Christ. However, as Sayers argued in 1940, such statements as, "Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man," could not go unexplained. The average "John Brown or Tommy Atkins" would assume that this meant that "God the Creator... fathered upon the Virgin Mary something amphibious, neither one thing nor t'other, like a merman..." - a modern version of Nestorianism, which must be counteracted with a statement that "the God who lived and died in the world was the same God who made the world". In turn, the apologist must insist that Christ was also "perfect man" in order to save Atkins and Brown from the Eutychian heresy, and that Christ had a "reasonable soul", "human flesh" and a limited "human knowledge and intellect" in order to rescue them from Apollinarianism¹⁰⁹. In other words, the Athanasian Creed must be expounded to the masses - a notion that would have horrified Bishop Henson, who complained in his journal of the tedium of recitals of the *Quicumque vult* in Anglo-Catholic parishes¹¹⁰. Sayers wanted the Oecumenical Penguin to elaborate on the statement that Jesus Christ was "perfect God and perfect man"¹¹¹. With regard to the divinity of Christ, Bell asked whether it would be sufficient for the panel writing the initial theological statement to "secure agreement on the word *Kurios*". Sayers replied "that we should still be in confusion unless we

¹⁰⁸ SAYERS, 'Creed or Chaos', p. 31

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 33-34. The choice of the names of archetypal infantrymen may have implied a particular interest in the doctrinal education of those serving in the forces.

¹¹⁰ See, for example, his Journal entry for Christmas Day, 1942: "The Athanasian Creed was read, and struck an incongruous note in the service. Its recitation by the choir boys could hardly have been intelligent or edifying but it advertized the punctilious orthodoxy of the incumbent [Moulds], and the discriminating character of his obedience to the Rubrics, which he disregards unhesitatingly when they conflict with his 'Romanizing' proclivities." *HHHJ*, Vol. 87, p. 84. Compare with Sayers's own testimony to her childhood fascination with the language of the Athanasian Creed in her letter to T.A. O'Neil and A.M. Slack, 21 March 1940, *Letters*, pp. 155-156. BLUNT, *What the Church Teaches*, pp. 54-58, defended the Athanasian Creed's exposition of Trinitarian doctrine.

¹¹¹ Sayers's proposed translation of the theologians' statement in the "Oecumenical Penguin" might have been in similar style to the following passage from 'The Greatest Drama Ever Staged is the Official Creed of Christendom', in *Creed or Chaos?*, pp. 1-5: "That Jesus Bar-Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth, was in fact and in truth, and in the most exact and literal sense of the words, the God 'by whom all things were made'. His body and brain were those of a common man; His personality was the personality of God, so far as that personality could be expressed in human terms. He was not a kind of demon or fairy pretending to be human; He was in every respect a genuine living man. He was not merely a man so good as to be 'like God' - He was God."

could get acceptance for the word *theos*," since it was at this point that "Christianity either becomes one way of life among many or else a rational account of the structure of the universe."¹¹² The statement must concur with Whale that "in the coming of Jesus Christ into human life, God gave us nothing lower and nothing less than himself..."¹¹³ With regard to Christ's humanity, Sayers wanted the theologians to answer the question, "Are the miracles of Jesus primarily the work of the Son of God or of the Son of Man?"¹¹⁴, a line of enquiry which had also been anticipated in 'Creed or Chaos?'¹¹⁵ She hoped that they would reach an agreement that the miracles of Christ were "the sort of thing that perfect manhood ought to and would accomplish if his whole relation with material nature had not been upset and dislocated by the Fall..." A primary aim of the Oecumenical Penguin would be to affirm, as Whale had done, that Christ "is what God means by 'Man'. He is what man means by 'God'."¹¹⁶

Sayers decided that the Oecumenical Penguin should also discuss the Virgin Birth, in order to stress its dogmatic significance as an expression of the Incarnation. The Doctrine Commission had recorded some differences of opinion on the subject, but its participants had agreed "in recognising that belief in our Lord's birth from a Virgin has been in the history of the Church intimately associated with its faith in the Incarnation of the Son of God."¹¹⁷ It was clear, however, that the usefulness of the doctrine was not appreciated by the English public¹¹⁸. Sayers informed her theologians that:

Almost every non-Christian, together with a great many Christians, believe that this doctrine implies a total condemnation of sex and marriage as being in themselves dirty, disgusting and defiling. This makes decent and

¹¹² SAYERS to Rev. Canon Oliver Quick of Christ Church, Oxford, 8 June 1942, *BELL?*, Vol. 208, f. 254.

¹¹³ WHALE, *Christian Doctrine*, p. 123.

¹¹⁴ SAYERS, "Notes: 3rd Set", *BELL?*, Vol. 208, ff. 284-290.

¹¹⁵ "...we must take a hint from Christ Himself and suggest that the miracles belong to the Son of Man as well as to the Son of God..." SAYERS, 'Creed or Chaos', in *Creed or Chaos?*, p. 32.

¹¹⁶ WHALE, *Christian Doctrine*, p. 104.

¹¹⁷ 'Part I: The Doctrines of God and of Redemption', *Doctrine in the Church of England*, pp. 81-82. Some members of the Commission felt that "a full belief in the historical Incarnation is more consistent with the supposition that our Lord's birth took place under the normal conditions of human generation," and thus rejected a literal doctrine of the Virgin Birth, whilst accepting its historical role as an expression of the supernatural element in the Incarnation.

¹¹⁸ Mass Observation discovered that one quarter of Anglican churchgoers in its sample did not believe in the Virgin Birth. Moreover, of those who did not believe in the existence of God, one sixth did believe that Jesus was born of a Virgin: a statistic which reveals how far the doctrine had become dissociated in the public mind from its dogmatic foundations. *Puzzled People*, pp. 43-44.

normal people quite sick. It is at the bottom of a very great deal of violent hostility to Church Faith.

The Church had failed to give the idea of virginity "any positive content", and the doctrine of the Virgin Birth had come to be seen as a vehicle for the Church's sexual conservatism. Yet Sayers had discovered that even among those who confessed to "an unconquerable repugnance" for the doctrine, there was a tendency to accept John Whale's assertion that: "The meaning of the Virgin Birth is ultimately dogmatic: it is one of the many ways in which the New Testament asserts that the Son of God came into history; he did not come out of it." Sayers's plans for the Oecumenical Penguin left no room for the liberalising tendencies allowed by the Doctrine Commission; rather, she hoped to demonstrate the value of the doctrine of the Virgin Birth to an understanding of the Incarnation, while disposing of the popular notion that it must "involve something unpleasant to do with sex."¹¹⁹

A reconstruction of the contents of Sayers's Oecumenical Penguin must take account of her attempts in her radio and stage plays to emphasise the reality of the Incarnation of Christ. *The Man Born to Be King*, broadcast in "Children's Hour" between December 1941 and October 1942, apart from being the Religious Broadcasting Division's most ambitious and controversial evangelistic project of the war years, was also an epic portrayal of what it meant in real terms for God to become man¹²⁰. Sayers remarked in her introduction to the collected play cycle:

There is a dialectic in Christian sacred art which impels it to stress, from time to time, now the eternal, and now the temporal elements in the Divine drama. The crucifix displays in one period the everlasting Son reigning from the tree; in another, the human Jesus disfigured with blood and grief.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ SAYERS, "Notes: 3rd Set", *BELLP*, Vol. 208, ff. 284-290 (Sayers's italics). Sayers quoted WHALE, *Christian Doctrine*, p. 109. Blunt's Penguin also emphasised that the chief significance of the Virgin Birth was its "suitability" to the Incarnation (*What the Church Teaches*, p. 41).

¹²⁰ For a detailed discussion of the production process for *The Man Born to be King*, and of evangelical Protestant resistance to the programmes, see Kenneth M. WOLFE, *The Churches and the British Broadcasting Corporation 1922-1956: The Politics of Broadcast Religion*, London, 1984, pp. 214-237. Other discussions may be found in REYNOLDS, *Life and Soul*, pp. 317ff; HITCHMAN, *Such a Strange Lady*, pp. 146ff; COOMES, *Careless Rage for Life*, pp. 11ff. See also Rosamond Kent SPRAGUE, 'Sayers' Incarnation of the Incarnation in *The Man Born to be King*', Dorothy L. Sayers Society: *Proceedings of the 1997 Seminar*, February 1998, pp. 18-27. There were other dramatic presentations of Biblical stories on the B.B.C. which took their cue from Sayers's plays. See for example Seton POLLOCK and Wilfrid GRANTHAM, *Men of God: A Series of Six Plays for Broadcast devoted to the Story of the Hebrew Prophets*, London, 1947.

¹²¹ SAYERS, 'Introduction', *The Man Born to be King: A Play-Cycle on the Life of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, London, 1946, p. 17. On 1st March 1940, SAYERS had complained in the *Guardian* (p. 128) that "At the name of Jesus, every voice goes plummy, every gesture becomes

The Man Born to Be King's capacity to shock - and, on occasion, to convert - derived from Sayers's decision to emphasise the "temporal" aspect: to portray a divine Christ who ate and drank with his friends, experienced weariness and pain, and was subject to the limitations of a fully human nature. Sayers wanted to "drag out the Divine Drama from under the dreadful accumulation of slipshod thinking and trashy sentiment heaped upon it", even at the risk of shocking "the pious"¹²². The historical setting of the Gospels was recreated in the plays, but the disciples spoke in regional English accents, in order to emphasise the reality of the conditions in which Christ lived¹²³. The story of Christ's life must be subjected to the rigorous test of a dramatic portrayal, and the resilience of the dogma must be demonstrated by the degree to which it translated into a satisfying work of art¹²⁴. Sayers wrestled with the problems of characterisation, insisting that Judas "cannot have been the creeping, crawling, patently worthless villain that some simple-minded people would like to make out", on the grounds that in dramatic terms this would leave Jesus looking like a fool for trusting him¹²⁵. The figure of Christ must not be portrayed with a kind of pious "insipidity"¹²⁶. Sayers chronicled the growing realisation, amongst the family and disciples of Jesus, that he was both God and Man. Mary, shortly after his birth, testifies that:

I feel as though I were holding the whole world in my arms - the sky and the sea and the green earth, and all the seraphim. And then, again, everything becomes quite simple and familiar, and I know that he is just my own dear son. If he grew to be wiser than Moses, holier than

pontifical, and a fearful creeping paralysis slows down the pace of the dialogue... The Bible is appointed to be read in churches, where the voice struggles helplessly against the handicap of an Elizabethan vocabulary, a solemn occasion, and acoustics with a two-second echo... In a sense not contemplated by the Evangelist, we feel it to be true that never man spoke as this man, for by this time the words have lost all likeness to the speech of a living person."

¹²² SAYERS, 'The Dogma is the Drama', pp. 20-24. BLUNT's attempt to convey the importance of the humanity of Christ was confined to just two pages (*What the Church Teaches*, pp. 44-45).

¹²³ "... it may assist us to know what we are doing if the original drama is shown to us again, with ourselves in the original parts." SAYERS, 'Introduction', *The Man Born to be King*, p. 23. Regional accents were rarely heard at all on B.B.C. broadcasts of the period, except for in comedies.

¹²⁴ Sayers found the character of Jesus very satisfying: "It is precisely the paradox and the contradiction that make us certain that the records are records of a real person. No writer of fiction, not even the writer of *Hamlet*, could ever have fabricated a character so individual in its diversity." This Christ was, however to be distinguished from "The fashionable Christ of the moment", who "sits immovably on the mount of the Beatitudes, and is seldom heard to utter those confusing and startling statements about fire in the earth, swords, and hatred of life for life's sake that were spoken at other times and in other places." SAYERS, 'Is This He That Should Come?', *CN-L*, No. 8, December 1939.

¹²⁵ SAYERS, 'Introduction', *The Man Born to be King*, p.31, and see her letter to Welch, 23 July 1940: "If we can get a coherent Judas we can probably get a coherent plot." (*Letters*, p. 173.) See COOMES, *Careless Rage for Life*, p. 16, HITCHMAN, *Such a Strange Lady*, p. 148.

¹²⁶ SAYERS, 'Introduction', *The Man Born to be King*, p.37.

Aaron, or more splendid than Solomon, that would still be true. He will always be my baby, my sweet Jesus, whom I love - nothing can ever change that.¹²⁷

When he is being led to Golgotha, Mary Magdalen calls him "Our master", John calls him "Our friend", Mary Cleophas calls him "The Holy one of Israel"; but for Mary the Virgin he is:

My child. When he was small, I washed and fed him; I dressed him in his little garments and combed the rings of his hair. When he cried, I comforted him; when he was hurt, I kissed away the pain; and when the darkness came, I sang him to sleep. Now he goes faint and fasting in the dust, and his hair is tangled with thorns. They will strip him naked to the sun and hammer the nails into his living flesh, and the great darkness will cover him. And there is nothing I can do. Nothing at all. This is the worst thing; to conceive beauty in your heart and bring it forth into the world, and then to stand by helpless and to watch it suffer...¹²⁸

There is more than a suggestion of Sayers's own experience as a mother in this and several other passages in the radio plays dealing with Mary¹²⁹. This emphasis on parenthood and the pain of watching a child suffer, beside its role in emphasising the humanity of Jesus, was also a device for alerting the average Atkins or Brown to the fact that Jesus's sufferings were real in the same sense as were those of modern soldiers, or of modern civilians in the Blitz. In the eyes of the disciples, and of several other characters, the knowledge of the human Jesus is combined with a growing awareness of his divinity. Simon, recounting the miraculous haul of fish, describes the "shock of knowing that he wasn't - that he wasn't ordinary," and Matthew feels morally dwarfed by the fact that Jesus "Laughs and talks and eats with you - and all the time you know you're not fit to touch him."¹³⁰ Proclus, the Roman soldier, searching for a way to describe him, imagines that, "When Apollo the All-Healer took human shape, he might have looked like that,"¹³¹ but when Pilate, nervous about the thought of having Jesus crucified, remarks that "the gods have

¹²⁷ SAYERS, 'Kings in Judea', *The Man Born to be King*, pp. 56-57.

¹²⁸ SAYERS, 'King of Sorrows', *The Man Born to be King*, pp. 294-295.

¹²⁹ Sayers had a son, John Anthony, born out of wedlock on 3 January 1924, but tended not to speak of him even among close friends. She later married Oswald Atherton Fleming, a divorcee with two daughters, in 1925, but he refused to allow John Anthony to live with them. (Reynolds, *Life and Soul*, 141ff.)

¹³⁰ SAYERS, 'The Heirs to the Kingdom', *The Man Born to be King*, p. 121.

¹³¹ *ibid.*, p. 125.

walked the earth before now," Flavius tells him, "Pull yourself together", since there is human blood on Christ's face, "Not the celestial ichor that runs in the veins of the immortals."¹³² Throughout the cycle, the particularity of Christ's earthly existence and his human traits are continually contrasted with his manifest otherness and holiness, climaxing in a scene in which Pilate's wife, Claudia, who has been in awe of Jesus for some time, has a nightmare in which the words, "Suffered under Pontius Pilate" are repeated "in all tongues and all voices... even the little children with their mothers."¹³³ A powerful reminder of the "scandal of particularity", the scene converts into dramatic form Hebert's comments on the Apostles' Creed:

The Apostles' Creed corresponds to the pagan myths of the saviour-gods. It repeats the age-long theme of the dying god. But the startling words in it are the words 'suffered under Pontius Pilate'. This salvation myth was enacted in the full light of history. This saviour-God really died and rose again.¹³⁴

Sayers's stated aim in writing *The Man Born to Be King* was to depict the Incarnation in the context of "a world casual, inattentive, contemptuous, absorbed in its own affairs and completely unaware of what was happening: to illustrate, in fact, the tremendous irony of history", and to show that Jesus "was born, not into 'the Bible', but into the world." The plays were thus the fulfilment of an objective shared with the Oecumenical Penguin: the presentation of the orthodox dogma of the Incarnation in a form which would promote popular understanding of the creeds. Sayers realised that, "There will always be a few voices raised in protest against the introduction of 'reality' into religion"¹³⁵, and the opposition of organisations such as the Lord's Day Observance Society and the Protestant Truth Society is well documented¹³⁶. However, support was forthcoming from a range of Christians

¹³² SAYERS, 'The Princes of this World', *The Man Born to be King*, p. 285.

¹³³ SAYERS, 'King of Sorrows' *The Man Born to be King*, p. 310.

¹³⁴ HEBERT, *Liturgy and Society*, p. 48.

¹³⁵ SAYERS, 'Note to Producers', *He That Should Come*, pp. 9-10. See also her 'Is This He That Should Come?': "... when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the King... He was not born into a Christmas card full of holly and robins... but into the Roman province of Palestine, racked by the remembrance of civil wars, the expectation of revolt and the furious conflict of religious and political ideologies..." The Inn, she added, was filled with disgruntled "people who had been disturbed from their homes and business to go and fill up census papers..."

¹³⁶ H.H. Martin wrote to the B.B.C. protesting against the proposal to "impersonate" Christ on the radio, claiming that, "It is a contemplated violation of the Third Commandment which forbids taking the Name of God in vain." H.H. MARTIN to the B.B.C., 12 December 1941, published in advertisement: 'Radio Impersonation of Christ! A Protest!', by the Council of the Lord's Day Observance Society, in *The English Churchman and St. James's Chronicle*, 18 December 1941. E.L. Langston, Chairman of the Conservative Evangelical Keswick Convention, complained to Bishop Garbett about the use of modern language in the plays. E.L. LANGSTON (Chairman of the Keswick Convention), to C.F. Garbett, 13 December 1941, CFG, COLL. 1973/1/B. Other letters of protest to

including Bishop Garbett¹³⁷, Welch¹³⁸, Karl Barth¹³⁹, and William Temple, who offered her an honorary Doctorate of Divinity, on Welch's testimony that through the plays "the Gospel has been made to mean something to people totally divorced from the Churches to whom the Christian Gospel has little relevance or meaning."¹⁴⁰ In defending the orthodox dogma of the Incarnation from "Jesuanism" and liberal "Incarnationalism", Sayers incurred the wrath of extreme Protestant groups, but the official sanction of *The Man Born to be King* grew steadily more assured as the ecclesiastical authorities became aware of the extent of its influence.

Sayers also wished, in the Oecumenical Penguin as in her plays and other writings, to explore the "doctrine of Man". In June 1942, Sayers told Quick that this, along with a discussion of the relation between Law and Gospel, would be necessary "to combat the doctrine of human perfectionism - a thing which the Fathers, contemplating Mankind with a steady and unillusioned eye, seem never to have thought of..."¹⁴¹ In March 1943, she added that "the nature of man and sin" was "one of the most necessary and important things to tackle", and felt that the Oecumenical Penguin could afford to discuss the articles of the Creed out of their proper order, so that a discussion of this subject early in the book could be used "in order to establish why it is necessary to believe anything." The "doctrine of human

Bishop Garbett included those from J.A. Kensit (Protestant Truth Society), A.R. Emdin (Engineer Rear Admiral -ret.), Arthur B. Wilkinson (the Fellowship of Evangelical Churchmen), Stanley Wharton (City Treasurer of Winchester), Fred Denison, H.V. Hedderly, A. Garton, H.R. Thompson, Henry Bentley (British Bible Union), D.J. Matheson (Northern Presbytery of Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland), Maud Steele. Alexander Hardinge of Buckingham Palace also wrote to say that the King and Queen had been receiving protest letters.] C.S. LEWIS expected similar mail to be received by J.B. Phillips in response to his paraphrase of Colossians, from "all the 'cultured' asses who say you're only spoiling 'the beauty' of A.V. - all the people who objected to... *The Man Born to be King* and who are always waffling about reverence. But we must kill that!" (Letter to J.B. Phillips, 3 August 1943, *CSL*, M.S. Eng. Letters c 220/2, f. 5.) See also *Letters*, pp. 335ff.

¹³⁷ 'Bishop Defends Radio Life of Christ', *Daily Telegraph*, 2 February 1942.

¹³⁸ "There is so much 'cotton wool' between us and what really happened that many of us are now incapable of listening to the true story of Christ." J.W. WELCH, 'Foreword' to SAYERS, *The Man Born to be King*, p.16.

¹³⁹ George BELL to SAYERS, 12 June 1947, *BELLP*, Vol. 208, f. 302.

¹⁴⁰ "My serious judgement is that these plays have done more for the preaching of the Gospel to the unconverted than any other single effort of the churches or religious broadcasting since the last war..." WELCH to Temple, 18 June 1943, *WT*, Vol. 39, f. 267. Oliver QUICK told Temple, "I'm all for Dorothy Sayers being given a D.D., & shd like C.S.Lewis to have one too." 24 July 1943, (f. 269). Sayers would have been the first woman ever to have received the degree (TEMPLE to Sayers, 4 September 1943, f. 273), but she refused it on the grounds that "any good I can do in the way of presenting the Christian Faith to the common people is bound to be hampered and impeded the moment I carry any sort of ecclesiastical label." The only advantage she could see to giving such degrees to a writer was that such an action might help "to establish the orthodoxy of his doctrine". (SAYERS to Temple, 7 September 1943, f. 273; 24 September 1943, f. 278.) More detailed quotations from the correspondence on this subject are given in REYNOLDS, *Life and Soul*, pp. 328-330; COOMES, *Careless Rage for Life*, pp. 160-162.

¹⁴¹ SAYERS to Rev. Canon Oliver Quick of Christ Church, Oxford, 8 June 1942, *BELLP*, Vol. 208, f. 254.

self-sufficiency", already shaken by the war, must be completely demolished, so that the common man could "make the connection between the shipwreck of his hopes for mankind, and the thing called sin."¹⁴² This was a common theme in Sayers's wartime apologetic and dramatic writings, and was often introduced in the context of discussion of the war itself. In *Begin Here*, Sayers charted the deterioration of the concept of man from the mediaeval period to the twentieth century, from the notion of man as the image of God ("theological man"), through intermediate stages in which humanist, rationalist, biological, sociological and psychological interpretations were advanced, to the modern conception of "Man the response to the means of livelihood (economic man)". Sayers argued that the development of scientific knowledge had coincided with the loss of human understanding of the meaning of existence¹⁴³, and an erosion of the sense of "individual importance", culminating in the growth of totalitarian ideologies¹⁴⁴. Like MacKinnon, she found herself borrowing from the language of neo-orthodoxy in her condemnation of the "delusion of the mechanical perfectibility of mankind", which she characterised as being "far more pessimistic than Christian pessimism, because, if science and progress break down, there is nothing to fall back upon." Christianity, by comparison, is "fiercely and even harshly realistic [and] the Christian Church now finds herself called upon to proclaim the old and hated doctrine of sin as a gospel of cheer and encouragement". She complained, as Chavasse and the Commission on Evangelism would later¹⁴⁵, about the tendency to blame human failings on "The influences of heredity and environment, of glandular make-up and the control exercised by the unconscious, of economic necessity and the mechanics of biological development"¹⁴⁶.

Sayers preferred to speak of "Judgement... the inevitable consequence of man's attempt to regulate life and society on a system that runs counter to the facts of his own nature"¹⁴⁷. War was "a judgement that overtakes societies when they

¹⁴² SAYERS to Rev. Canon Oliver Quick, 31 March 1943, *BELLP*, Vol. 208, f. 276. Blunt may have come to similar conclusions, since the doctrine of man and sin is discussed immediately after the chapter on the existence of God, and before any discussion of the Incarnation, in his own Penguin on Christian dogma (*What the Church Teaches*, pp. 17-24).

¹⁴³ Sayers's stance on science was certainly calculated to engage sharply with public attitudes. The Mass Observation team discovered that "Overlying people's attitudes there is an almost mystical sense of science as the potential universal panacea." MASS OBSERVATION, *Puzzled People*, pp. 134, 135.

¹⁴⁴ SAYERS, *Begin Here*, pp. 73-74.

¹⁴⁵ ARCHBISHOP'S COMMISSION ON EVANGELISM, *Towards the Conversion of England*, London, 1945, p. 5; "Personal failings are dismissed as the result of repressions, or as due to the action of the ductless glands."

¹⁴⁶ SAYERS, 'Creed or Chaos', pp. 39-41.

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p. 42.

have been living upon ideas that conflict too violently with the laws governing the universe."¹⁴⁸ Sayers's support of the area bombing policy and D.R. Davies's demand for reprisals to the flying bombs may both be related to these writers' common emphasis on the sinfulness of humanity¹⁴⁹, but the similarity between Sayers's comments and Davies's pronouncements on original sin should not be over-emphasised. She occasionally used the word "Germany" in contexts in which Bell would have insisted on the phrase "the Hitlerite State"¹⁵⁰, but her acquiescence in the bombing of civilians had more in common with the attitude of William Temple than with Davies's advocacy of reprisals. Her sense of modern sinfulness was enhanced by a romantic distaste for scientific development, shared with her friend C.S. Lewis, and a nostalgia for the pre-industrial past typical of the Christendom Group in the 1930s. Like Bell, she quoted Eliot's assertion that "A wrong attitude towards nature implies, somewhere, a wrong attitude towards God, and the consequence is an inevitable doom."¹⁵¹ Sayers's repudiation of theological liberalism¹⁵², and her acceptance of the Just War tradition, were in any case common features of Catholic wartime discourse. There are therefore strong reasons to suppose that Sayers would have gained acceptance among her group of theologians and friends at St. Anne's for a strongly worded passage in the Oecumenical Penguin on original sin and judgement.

In order to highlight the sin of humanity, the Oecumenical Penguin may well have emphasised, as Whale had done¹⁵³, the sinlessness of Christ. This was Sayers's

¹⁴⁸ SAYERS, 'Why Work?', in *Creed or Chaos?*, p. 48. See Jane Valerie CRASKE, 'Women and Violence: A Feminist Theological Ethical Study', Ph.D. Thesis, University of Durham, 1995, p.72. William TEMPLE, in his B.B.C. Series: *The Archbishop Speaks to the Services*, Replies to questions: '5. The Church and War', *WT*, Vol. 69, ff. 332-333, added that "The war is a judgement on the Church. It shows how little the Church has penetrated and moulded the civilisation in which it has been placed."

¹⁴⁹ For a full discussion of Sayers's application of Just War theory, including her response to the obliteration bombing campaigns, her portrayal of soldiering in her novels, *The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club* and *Gaudy Night*, and her discourse on justice in her Lichfield Cathedral play, *The Just Vengeance*, see CRASKE, 'Women and Violence', pp. 73-75. For a contrast to Sayers's support of Just War theory, see Craske's evaluation of Vera Brittain's wartime Christian pacifism, inspired at least in part by Dick Sheppard (pp. 31-35).

¹⁵⁰ *The Just Vengeance* may also be read as an attempt to exorcise some of the moral tension engendered by having supported bombing during the war. If Sayers was not as well informed as Bell about the German Resistance, she was still less informed about the sheer extent and ferocity of Allied bombing campaigns, and hardly more prepared for Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

¹⁵¹ SAYERS, 'Creed or Chaos', p. 42.

¹⁵² "It is impossible to have a Christian doctrine of society *except* as a corollary to Christian dogma about the place of man in the universe... The attempt to abolish wars and wickedness by the moral law is doomed to failure, because of the fact of sinfulness." *ibid.*, p. 46.

¹⁵³ Whale's *Christian Doctrine* affirmed the doctrine of original sin, and did so by means of a comparison between Jesus Christ and other human beings: "Those who argue... that Jesus Christ is 'like us' are silenced as soon as they are asked 'like which of us?' The truth is that his likeness to us -

method in the radio plays, in which Judas defined hell-fire as "the light of God's unbearable innocence that sears and shrivels you like flame. It shows you what you are..."¹⁵⁴ The behaviour of the crowd in 'The Princes of This World', too, provides an illustration of Hebert's insistence that "...the Passion of Jesus seems to call out all that is ugliest and worst in human nature... There was no halo of glory about the actual crucifixion."¹⁵⁵ Such themes are further enlarged in *The Just Vengeance*, the Lichfield Festival Play for 1946, a "miracle-play of Man's insufficiency and God's redemptive act"¹⁵⁶, which Sayers later described as her response to the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki¹⁵⁷. In the opening scene, an airman who has been killed in action meets with the spirit of the Quaker, George Fox. Fox, defending his pacifist ethic, tells the airman, "When a man smote me I turned the other cheek;/ He was abashed." The airman's response, "Was he? it takes more than that/ To abash some people,"¹⁵⁸ represents a defense of his own involvement in war on the basis of his knowledge of the evil of the Nazi enemy. "We try to do right," laments the airman:

And someone is hurt - very likely the wrong person;
 ...We drop a bomb
 And condemn a thousand people to sudden death,
 The guiltless along with the guilty. Or we refuse
 To drop a bomb, and condemn a thousand people
 To a lingering death in a concentration camp
 As surely as if we had set our hands to the warrant.
 Should we have waited for judgement? We did wait,
 And innocent people died. *We* are the judgement.

Throughout the play, the airman struggles to come to terms with his ambivalence about his involvement in war, and to reconcile his belief in human perfectibility and progress with his knowledge of human evil. Challenged to present his personal creed, he tells the recording angel: "I believe in man, and in the hope of the future"¹⁵⁹, but at other times he finds himself admitting that there is "nothing;/ Only a crawling of maggots among carrion/ In a muddle of petty squalors."¹⁶⁰ His attempt to blame the problem of evil on the people of the past recoils upon him when he is reminded that he himself is "the dead and the past". He demands "to know why there is no justice,/ And why it is that everything we do/ Turns to a horror we never

'the likeness of sinful flesh' - only accentuates his qualitative and fundamental unlikeness to us, in that his relation to God is unlike anything that our race has seen." WHALE, *Christian Doctrine*, p. 70.

¹⁵⁴ SAYERS, 'The Princes of this World', *The Man Born to be King*, p. 275.

¹⁵⁵ HEBERT, *Liturgy and Society*, pp. 53, 57

¹⁵⁶ SAYERS, 'Introduction', *The Just Vengeance*, p. 9.

¹⁵⁷ REYNOLDS, 'The Just Vengeance: "It's the best thing I've done"', p. 10.

¹⁵⁸ SAYERS, *The Just Vengeance*, p. 16

¹⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p. 27.

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p. 23.

contemplated..."¹⁶¹, but comes to realise that to receive justice is to receive condemnation for human sinfulness, when Eve asks him:

You that cry out so loud for right and justice,
Do you mean *justice*?...
 ... Children, take heed,
And do not pray for justice: you might get it.¹⁶²

Sayers aimed, in the Oecumenical Penguin as in *The Just Vengeance*, to demolish the doctrine of human self-sufficiency as a prelude to a discussion of redemption through suffering. For Sayers, Christianity was inherently superior to other religions because it "is the *only* religion which gives value to evil and suffering", and the conditions of the Second World War made its teaching on the subject all the more pertinent¹⁶³. It is reasonable to suppose that Sayers's own writings on redemption and its relation to the Incarnation of Christ were influenced by Quick's *Doctrines of the Creed*. Quick, concerned to trace the development of the doctrine of the Incarnation in early Christianity, argued that the early Jewish Christian believers first came to see Jesus as "a divine person" because of his claim to forgive sin. Thus "it was through the realization of the atonement that Jewish Christians felt their way towards a full doctrine of the incarnation."¹⁶⁴ For St. Paul, too, the doctrine of the Incarnation was reached through an understanding "of what God in Christ has done, is doing, and will do,"¹⁶⁵ and the Incarnation itself could not be understood once it was removed from the context of the essential stages of salvation: "First, the Christ veiling his glory in the form of a servant crucified for men: next, the word of atonement and forgiveness, and Christ speaking in the half-darkness to the spiritual ears of believers whom he guides: finally, the day broken, and the Christ seen face to face in a wholly transfigured and glorious world."¹⁶⁶ St. John, by contrast, refuted the Gnostic heresy with his assertion that "the full and final revelation of God was in the flesh"¹⁶⁷, and arrived at a doctrine of the atonement secondarily, as a result of belief in the Incarnation. For Quick, a complete Christology must provide a synthesis of the approaches of St. Paul and St. John, so

¹⁶¹ *ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

¹⁶² *ibid.*, p. 44. This theme had been developed in *Unnatural Death* (1929). See COOMES Dorothy L. Sayers: *A Careless Rage for Life*, p. 102.

¹⁶³ SAYERS, 'Creed or Chaos', p. 37.

¹⁶⁴ QUICK, *Doctrines of the Creed*, p. 78.

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 95.

¹⁶⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 97-98.

¹⁶⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 101-102.

that the life of Jesus of Nazareth might be seen as at once "the supremely effective act of God's love," and "its uniquely true symbol or expression."¹⁶⁸

Perhaps in response to Quick's argument, Sayers attempted to integrate the Pauline and Johannine emphases on Redemption and Incarnation in her dramatic and orologetic works. On the one hand, she employed the Johannine argument that, "It is only with the confident assertion of the creative divinity of the Son that the doctrine of the Incarnation becomes a real revelation of the structure of the world."¹⁶⁹ On the other hand, her plays are peppered with sequences in which the redeeming act of Christ is taken as evidence of his divinity. In *The Man Born to Be King*, Jesus at his baptism felt "the shoulder of God stoop under the weight of man's sin [and]... knew what it meant to be the Son of Man."¹⁷⁰ Judas, in love with the idea of redemptive suffering, is appalled when Baruch the Zealot taunts him with his inability to contemplate the act: "Ever seen a man crucified? There's nothing poetical about it, and it hurts, Judas, it hurts... Will you testify from the cross? Will you be elegant from *that* pulpit about the value and blessedness of pain?"¹⁷¹ The disciples, faced with Thomas's confession before the resurrected Jesus, "You are my Lord and my God", realise with horror that their act in disowning Him at the crucifixion, and the acts of violence perpetrated against him, are "what we do to God," but John realises that "when you patiently suffered all things, and went down to death with all our sins heaped upon you", that is what "God does for us". Even in Sayers's earliest Canterbury Festival play, there is an attempt to combine the Pauline and Johannine Christologies:

Thus God took up the gauntlet in Eve's face.
Having, like man, courage to look on death:
"My Son for thy sons, and God's blood for man's;
Crucify God, but let the work go on."¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 109-110.

¹⁶⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 25-46.

¹⁷⁰ SAYERS, 'The King's Herald', *The Man Born to be King*, pp. 78-79.

¹⁷¹ SAYERS, 'The Princes of this World', *The Man Born to be King*, p. 272 (italics original). Judas "sees the truth about himself - the itch for suffering that was only an inverted cruelty... He sees the truth, not only about himself, but about sin - he sees the need for the untainted priest and the spotless sacrifice; he even knows obscurely who is the untainted Priest and Victim who could do for him what Caiaphas cannot do - but he cannot be saved because he *will* not be saved. He goes on, down and down to the lowest pit of all, where sits the devil of pride that makes the sin unforgivable because the sinner resents and hates and refuses the forgiveness." SAYERS, Notes on the Characters, 'The Princes of this World', *The Man Born to be King*, p. 263.

¹⁷² SAYERS, *The Zeal of Thy House*, pp. 51-52.

Because of this tension, the redemptive act of the Incarnate took on for Sayers a strong dramatic significance. In *The Just Vengeance*, the Persona Dei, anticipating his own crucifixion, testifies that "man shall see the image of God/ In the image of man, and man shall show no mercy."¹⁷³ The murder of God incarnate is made possible by the fact that, faced with the turning point in history, "the people of that time had not the faintest idea that it was happening." This was, for Sayers, the greatest possible example of tragic irony, beside which "the doom of Oedipus is trifling, and the nemesis of the Oresteian blood-bath a mere domestic incident."¹⁷⁴ Witness, for example, the way in which Caiaphas's pragmatic statement recoils upon him: "It is sometimes expedient that one man should die for the people."¹⁷⁵ There is tragedy, too, in the life of Christ itself. William of Sens, beset by his own tragedy, is reminded by the Archangel Michael that Christ knew:

The last, the bitterest, worst humiliation,
Bowling His neck under the galling yoke
Frustrate, defeated, half His life unlived,
Nothing achieved...¹⁷⁶

The orthodox dogma of Redemption which Sayers wished to promote was, in the language of popular apologetics, "the tale of the time when God was the under-dog and got beaten."¹⁷⁷

Christ's tragedy comes in Sayers's plays as a result of his bearing the burden of humanity's tragic "insufficiency", revealed in its most devastating form in the failure to recognise Jesus as God. The plays thus provide a dramatic representation of the "vicarious suffering" of Christ. In her plans for the Oecumenical Penguin, Sayers was also searching for a way in which this idea could be interpreted for a popular audience. She felt that it could best be explained in terms of the natural experiences of vicariousness in ordinary life - in the case of a coal shortage, for example, in which the people must bear the burden of their Government's failed foresight, or in the case of a soldier fighting and dying for his country. She hoped that such an approach would help to explain the idea of vicarious suffering to those who "cannot see any sense or justice" in it, by pointing out that "in practice, they do quite readily

¹⁷³ SAYERS, *The Just Vengeance*, p. 48.

¹⁷⁴ SAYERS, 'Introduction', *The Man Born to be King*, p. 21.

¹⁷⁵ SAYERS, 'The Feast of Tabernacles', *The Man Born to be King*, p. 172.

¹⁷⁶ SAYERS, *The Zeal of Thy House*, pp. 103, 104.

¹⁷⁷ SAYERS, 'The Greatest Drama Ever Staged is the Official Creed of Christendom', in *Creed or Chaos?*, pp. 1-5.

accept it for themselves, when occasion arises, and think nothing of it."¹⁷⁸ This treatment of the idea of vicariousness owed much to Charles Williams's doctrines of "substitution" and "co-inherence", derived from Christ's injunction to "bear one another's burdens". It was a corporate rather than an individualistic, and a Catholic rather than a Protestant, understanding of redemption, and the vicarious suffering of Christ must be borne also by the Church which was his body¹⁷⁹. The Church must "carry the cross and share the burden of God"¹⁸⁰, because, as John the Baptist explains in 'The King's Herald', the prophecy "he hath borne our griefs" is both a "prophecy of the Messiah" and a description of the suffering of Israel, since "All Israel is in Israel's Messiah."¹⁸¹

For Sayers, Christology culminated in ecclesiology. Whale agreed, describing the Church as "the supreme agency of mediation following upon that of the Incarnate Son himself"¹⁸². Sayers's criticism at Malvern of the Church of England's "singular failure... to convey to the common people the impression that it is a corporate body,"¹⁸³ was thus perhaps the most damning criticism it was possible to make, especially in time of war when the witness to corporate suffering was of such paramount concern. Sayers defined a church as:

A body of men, living in the world, united in a recognizable and conscious fellowship and organized within a living tradition whose essence persists unchanged while its expressions continually develop, by a single devotion and a single service to an immanent and

¹⁷⁸ Set of notes by Dorothy L. Sayers on "Relations between Christianity & (a) natural morality, (b) natural religion. *BELL*, Vol. 208, ff. 277-282.

¹⁷⁹ Compare the sequence in Sayers's *The Just Vengeance* in which the cross is borne about the church with A.G. HEBERT's statement that: "On Good Friday He still calls as from the Cross, 'O my people, what have I done unto thee, and wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against me'", *Liturgy and Society*, p. 69. See also REYNOLDS, *Life and Soul*, p. 324.

¹⁸⁰ SAYERS, *The Just Vengeance*, p. 72. See SAYERS' letter of Jan 1946, to Iremonger: "The play is about that mutual act of Christ and His Church... the exchange when the Cross which man has laid upon Christ is taken back from Him by the Church. Up to that crucial moment, the play affirms the Incarnation of God; after that moment it affirms the in-Godding of Man; that is why the verses and responses of the Via Crucis insistently celebrate the Double Nature." REYNOLDS, *The Just Vengeance*: "It's the best thing I've done", p. 7.

¹⁸¹ SAYERS, 'The King's Herald', *The Man Born to be King*, p. 81.

¹⁸² WHALE, *Christian Doctrine*, p. 140. See also BLUNT, *What the Church Teaches*, pp. 59-64. Blunt focussed on explaining how the Church's shortcomings could be reconciled with the "idea that the Church is as necessary for the fulfilment of God's plan as the Gospel itself." He was compelled to admit that "If Christians were better Christians, this would have been an easier chapter to write..."

¹⁸³ SAYERS, 'The Church's Responsibility', *Malvern, 1941*, p. 71. William TEMPLE, too, felt that the Church should be "acting together as a unified force... All very well, perhaps you say; but the actual Church does not look as if it were fighting the world at all; its policy looks like appeasement.", B.B.C. Series: *The Archbishop Speaks to the Services*, '5. The Necessity of a Church', *WT*, Lambeth Palace Library, Vol. 69, f. 302

transcendent reality, whose claims are felt to be paramount.¹⁸⁴

The Christian Church was a collective, authoritative body, appealing to tradition, and requiring of its members a primary allegiance and obedience. However, Sayers, like many Catholics, responded to the war, and particularly the crisis of 1940-1941, by emphasising that the acceptance of the Church's authority leads to freedom. Hebert had represented the "liturgical" approach as "an appeal *away from* personal beliefs and opinions... to the common faith of the Church" as embodied in the Creeds. Yet this did not represent "an appeal from individual freedom of thought to a closed theological system", nor did it call for the "renunciation of intellectual freedom"; rather, the Creeds, because they represented the truth, were in fact freedom's safeguard¹⁸⁵. The "common life" of the Church depended entirely on the possession of a "common faith", and modern social problems were largely attributable to the erosion of dogma.¹⁸⁶ Such arguments gained added significance in wartime. Sayers's works of this period are replete with examples of the appeal to a common faith which transcends individual opinion. In *The Man Born to be King*, James cannot understand why Jesus chose to found his Church on Peter rather than on John, who was his "special friend". John replies, "I don't think you can found a church on personal friends and special cases. It's got to be less exclusive - more - what's that Greek word? - more Catholic."¹⁸⁷ In *The Just Vengeance*, the Airman, when asked to recite his personal creed, begins automatically to recite the Apostle's Creed, and then becomes annoyed with himself: "I reacted automatically to the word 'creed' -/ My personal creed is something totally different." He is told, however that the voice of the Church has been speaking through him, and that he should not resist it:

Did you think you were unbegotten?
Unfranchised? With no community and no past?
Out of the darkness of your unconscious memory
The stones of the city are crying out. Go on.¹⁸⁸

The emphasis on the relationship between freedom and authority is also a favourite theme for Sayers. In a scene which might have served as a dramatic rendering of MacKinnon's writings on the apostolicity of the Church, Jesus, after his

¹⁸⁴ SAYERS, 'The Church's Responsibility', *Malvern, 1941*, pp. 57-58.

¹⁸⁵ HEBERT, *Liturgy and Society*, pp. 11-12.

¹⁸⁶ *ibid.*, p. 199.

¹⁸⁷ SAYERS, 'The King Comes to His Own' *The Man Born to be King*, p. 335.

¹⁸⁸ SAYERS, *The Just Vengeance*, p. 24.

resurrection and Thomas's confession of faith, tells his disciples that "you are freely mine... not slaves, but sons", and then sends them as apostles, giving them the authority to grant absolution¹⁸⁹. The claims of the Church might be "felt to be paramount", but the insistence on freedom made it into a collective which was radically opposed to totalitarianism. At Malvern, Sayers affirmed that Germany had come under the power of "a mystical, fanatical and authoritarian Church - idolatrous and evil if you like, but nevertheless real and living."¹⁹⁰ This Nazi "church" was "sacramental through and through", demanding unquestioning obedience and "devotion to a single purpose which at once indwells and transcends it":

It is a complete consecration of body, mind and spirit, and of the whole civilization included within it, economic, political, cultural and spiritual. It excludes nothing, from the school-primer to Grand Opera, from cosmetics to high finance, from ploughshare to factory; everything that man can think or feel or do is part of a single service which takes in the whole individual man and the whole community.

Nazism had made the fundamental error of identifying itself with a Law which was itself "subject to judgment". The Church, too, was in danger of doing this, and any Church which became aligned with a specific "political, economic or social structure" would rise or fall on the basis of that structure's ability to "maintain itself against the judgment of its own corruption"¹⁹¹. Yet the true Church was not merely the Law; it transcended the Law, because it was an extension of the Incarnation, and believed "that God was also a man [whom] it has never been possible to identify with any social, political or economic system, or with any moral code." It was, as MacKinnon agreed when he spoke from the same platform, manifest that the Church did not in reality "resemble her Founder," yet "We must, it seems, do the impossible, or perish."¹⁹² It was certainly impossible if the vast majority of churchgoers did not subscribe to or understand the dogma of the Incarnation. Sayers's enthusiasm for the Oecumenical Penguin was at bottom an ecclesiological concern which ran deep amongst wartime Catholics.

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¹⁸⁹ SAYERS, 'The King Comes to His Own' *The Man Born to be King*, p. 340.

¹⁹⁰ SAYERS, 'The Church's Responsibility', *Malvern, 1941*, p. 60.

¹⁹¹ *ibid.*, pp. 67-68.

¹⁹² *ibid.*, pp. 77-78.

For churchmen such as the dour centrist-Anglican Bishop of Gloucester, A.C. Headlam, there remained one fundamental question. Why should a detective-novelist write about Christian dogma?¹⁹³ The superficial reason should not be underestimated: Sayers had an inimitable writing style; capable of conveying apparently difficult theological concepts to an audience unaccustomed to Christian language and dogma. As Hastings puts it, "forty years on, who would even think of turning to Headlam's theology? *The Man Born to Be King* may still be read."¹⁹⁴ The motivation behind Sayers's decision to turn to religious writing, whether in the form of her plays, the Oecumenical Penguin, her apologetic speeches, her address to the Malvern Conference, or her later translations of Dante¹⁹⁵, lay in her conviction that the creative artist had something unique to contribute to theology. Once again, this conviction had precursors in the liturgiology of Hebert and in Quick's *Doctrines of the Creed*. Quick discussed the use of analogy in theology, whereby "human fatherhood, power and creatorship" are seen as attributes dependent on the nature of God, and the observation of these attributes in human beings allows the theologian to make meaningful statements about God¹⁹⁶. Quick maintained that the Church, in its representations of God as Creator, had concentrated too much on the analogy with the human craftsman and neglected the more fruitful comparison between God and the creative artist¹⁹⁷. The analogy with the artist had the advantage that "The work of art exists not for use but for admiration... It expresses... the qualities and the genius of the artist himself."¹⁹⁸ The artist, like God, was immanent in his creation¹⁹⁹. Quick's insistence on the importance of divine immanence - at a time when the Barthian theology, with its emphasis on transcendence, was increasingly popular - represented an attempt to reassert the theological importance of the physical act of

¹⁹³ Headlam was not averse to controversy, but perhaps he did not dare to ask the other question which, surprisingly, was rarely if ever used to hamper Sayers's efforts: "Why should a woman write about Christian dogma?" Evelyn Underhill had written prolifically on mysticism, but mysticism had always been a subject on which women's views had been aired. To write and speak on dogma as Sayers was doing was more innovative; Headlam may have felt privately that she was usurping a role reserved for males, or for clergy. Vidler would argue in the Moot (see below, p. 294) that the "clerisy" were more likely to interpret Christianity to the masses than were the "clergy" - an embarrassing admission, but one which justified the encroachment of Sayers, Eliot, Williams and others on a domain traditionally dominated by ordained males.

¹⁹⁴ HASTINGS, *History of English Christianity*, p. 252.

¹⁹⁵ Sayers's work on Dante is discussed in detail by Barbara REYNOLDS, *The Passionate Intellect: Dorothy L. Sayers' Encounter with Dante*, Ohio, 1989, and see also Ann LOADES, 'Anselm, Dante and Dorothy L. Sayers' *The Just Vengeance*', in *The Dorothy L. Sayers Society: Proceedings of the 1996 Seminar*, June 1996, pp. 33ff.

¹⁹⁶ QUICK, *Doctrines of the Creed*, p. 31. "Our intention is to proceed on the hypothesis that, because man is made in God's image, man's relation to that which he makes is grounded in and points towards the relation of God to his creatures." (p. 38.)

¹⁹⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

¹⁹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 42.

¹⁹⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

creation. Such passages in *Doctrines of the Creed*, combined with Berdyaev's emphatic affirmation of the importance of creativity, provided the context for Sayers's own work on the subject in the 1940s, culminating in her translations of Dante, who was, for her, "the supreme poet of joy"²⁰⁰. Hebert had explored the reverse side of this analogy - "Sin... expresses itself in ugliness" - citing the industrial areas of Bristol and Birmingham as examples²⁰¹. For Hebert, the Liturgy, like the Bible, partook "of the nature of art" - of "a certain fitness and inevitableness" in which "each detail has to be just right."²⁰² Christian dogma and art also shared "a certain affinity", both being the product of "a higher vision than that of a mere logician."²⁰³ More importantly, Hebert made an explicit link between the aims of the artist and the Incarnation itself:

We may speak of the Incarnation, in Platonic terms, as the manifestation in the flesh of the Idea of the Good: and the Idea, in the Platonic sense, is just that which the artist is seeking.²⁰⁴

All of these ideas found expression in Sayers's own writing in the 1940s. Like Quick, Sayers began with the analogy between the artist and God. *The Mind of the Maker* was a detailed discussion of this theme. Human beings were reduced to using metaphors in talking about God, and "In the metaphors used by the Christian Creeds about the mind of the maker, the creative artist can recognise a true relation to his own experience."²⁰⁵ She concurred with Quick's criticism of the failure of theologians to appreciate the role that artists could play in revealing God's nature as Creator²⁰⁶. Perhaps under the influence of Eliot's own artistic manifesto, *After*

²⁰⁰ Barbara REYNOLDS, 'Dante, Poet of Joy: A Celebration', *Theology*, XC VII, No 778, (July/August 1994), p. 266.

²⁰¹ HEBERT, *Liturgy and Society*, p. 239.

²⁰² *ibid.*, p. 246.

²⁰³ *ibid.*, p. 247.

²⁰⁴ *ibid.*, p. 242.

²⁰⁵ SAYERS, *The Mind of the Maker*, p. 34. This book was the first of a proposed series called "Bridgeheads", to be edited by Sayers herself and by Muriel St. Clare Byrne, the aim of which was the promotion of "Creativeness" in the light of theology and Christian social theory. See REYNOLDS, *Life and Soul*, pp. 308ff; COOMES, *Careless Rage for Life*, pp. 155ff. Sayers sent a copy of the book to Maurice Reckitt, along with a description of the aims of the Bridgeheads, and Reckitt may have recommended her to Demant, who would invite her to speak on "A Christian Aesthetic" in 1944. In the event, only two of the six titles planned were ever published: Una ELLIS-FERMOR, *Masters of Reality* (1942), and Helmut KUHN, *Encounter with Nothingness* (1951).

²⁰⁶ "It is the artist who, more than other men, is able to create something out of nothing... This experience of the creative imagination in the common man or woman and in the artist is the only thing we have to go upon in entertaining and formulating the concept of creation... [Yet] The artist does not recognise that the phrases of the creeds purport to be observations of fact about the creative mind as such, including his own; while the theologian, limiting the application of the phrases to the divine Maker, neglects to enquire of the artist what light he can throw upon them from his own immediate apprehension of truth." SAYERS, *The Mind of the Maker*, pp. 22-24.

Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy, Sayers made an explicit connection between dogmatic orthodoxy and good art. The assertion of the Athanasian Creed that "except a man believe rightly he cannot be saved", however true it might be in literal terms, was certainly true in terms of art, for "A loose and sentimental theology begets loose and sentimental art-forms; and illogical theology lands one in illogical situations; an ill-balanced theology issues in false emphasis and absurdity"²⁰⁷. If Hebert equated sin with ugliness, Sayers equated heresy with bad art²⁰⁸, providing a litany in *The Just Vengeance* in which the Lord is asked to deliver us "From all the worship of man in man's own image,/ From the corrupt alike and from the barren/ Imagination"²⁰⁹. These ideas spilled over into Sayers's religious dramas, which subjected "Catholic theology" to the test of a dramatic rendering and found it remarkably resilient. She insisted that her plays be judged "by the proper standard of drama", since the life of Christ is "dogma shown as dramatic action."²¹⁰ Finally, she built upon Hebert's analogy between artistic endeavour and the Incarnation. Hebert's Christ manifested the "idea of the good"; Sayers's Christ is, in one of the play's many Eliotic echoes:

The image of the Image of the Unimaginable
From the place where the Image and the Unimagined are one.²¹¹

What was true for the eternal Word was also true for the artist, because "the urgent desire of the creative mind is towards expression in material form,"²¹² and in the Incarnation "we may say that God wrote His own autobiography."²¹³ Even the doctrine of the Trinity could be illuminated by use of the artistic analogy, since each

²⁰⁷ SAYERS, 'Introduction', *The Man Born to be King*, p. 19.

²⁰⁸ "There is, for instance, artistic Arianism - all technique and no vision, like the machine-made French-bedroom comedies and that slicker and more mechanical kind of detective story which is nothing but an arrangement of material clues. There are the propaganda novelists and dramatists - Manichees, whose son assumes what looks like a genuine human body, but is in fact a hollow simulacrum that cannot truly live, love or suffer, but only performs exemplary gestures symbolical of the Idea. There are the Patripassians, who involve the Father-Idea in the vicissitudes and torments of the creative Activity. Patripassian writers are those who (in the common phrase) 'make it up as they go along'; serial writers are strongly tempted to this heresy..." SAYERS, *The Mind of the Maker*, pp. 140-141. The idea was anticipated by the initiation ceremony for the Detection Club, of which Sayers was a founding member. See COOMES, *Careless Rage for Life*, pp. 109-110. For a criticism of this aspect of Sayers's thought, see Ann LOADES, 'Creativity, Embodiment and Mutuality: Dorothy L. Sayers on Dante, Love and Freedom', in T.E.T. CLARK (Ed), *God and Freedom*, London, 1995, p. 105, and LOADES (Ed.), *Dorothy L. Sayers: Spiritual Writings*, p. 75.

²⁰⁹ SAYERS, *The Just Vengeance*, p. 46.

²¹⁰ SAYERS, 'Introduction', *The Man Born to be King*, pp. 19-20.

²¹¹ SAYERS, *The Just Vengeance*, p. 52. Sayers was clearly influenced by Eliot's *LG* here, as in the earlier passage which speaks of the "flurry of mice in the wainscot" and "the patter of dead leaves on the window" (p. 12).

²¹² SAYERS, *The Mind of the Maker*, p. 32.

²¹³ *ibid.*, p. 70.

work of art was threefold, comprising the "Creative Idea" which is "the Image of the Father", the "Creative Energy" which is "the Image of the Word", and the "Creative Power", which is "the image of the travelling Spirit"²¹⁴. With this in mind, it is hardly surprising that the Pharisee in *He That Should Come*, in addition to denying the Incarnation, says that "Nothing is so demoralising as art and culture."²¹⁵

While London endured the flying bomb attacks of 1944, Sayers was participated in a series of lectures on Christianity and Culture organised by Demant. Her own contribution, "Towards a Christian Aesthetic", sheds further light on Sayers's wartime agenda. She wanted to see the revival of "a Christian aesthetic", a "Christian philosophy of the Arts". She described both the Puritanical denunciation of art and the exploitation of art by the Church for didactic purposes as "false and degrading", founded upon misconceptions about the nature of art. If Christianity was a revelation of truth, why should it not reveal the truth about art?²¹⁶ In her defence of a Christian aesthetic, Sayers was prepared to cross swords with Plato. Plato had wanted to banish all representational art from his Republic on the grounds that it was "a kind of cheat": the visible world was itself only a reflection of eternal realities, and, in turn, art was only a dim reflection of the visible world. Plato scorned the idea of art for entertainment: it must be "austere, primitive and symbolic", it must be didactic - a kind of moral propaganda²¹⁷. Sayers insisted that both notions - art as entertainment and art as moral guide - were unsatisfactory, concluding that "no pagan philosopher could produce an adequate aesthetic, simply for lack of a right theology"²¹⁸. Plato had failed to recognise that "The true work of Art... is something *new* - it is not primarily a copy or a representation of anything." Christian theology had transformed aesthetics by introducing the word "Image". The true artist aims to produce not a "copy" or an "imitation", but an "image", in the same way that St. Paul says that "God... hath spoken to us by his Son, the brightness of his glory and *express image* of his person."²¹⁹ The work of art itself is an incarnation, and in it "we can *recognize* the image of some experience of our own". Thus, art communicates truth²²⁰. Entertainment and didacticism "may be incidental effects of good art; but they may also be the very aim and essence of false art... a

²¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 28. Quotation from *The Zeal of Thy House*, pp. 110-111, with annotations.

²¹⁵ SAYERS, *He That Should Come*, pp. 42-45.

²¹⁶ SAYERS, 'Towards a Christian Aesthetic', in V.A. DEMANT (Ed.), *Our Culture: Its Christian Roots and Present Crisis*, London, 1944., p. 51. The genesis of these ideas may be sought in her correspondence with George Every (see letter to Every, 21 May 1941, *Letters*, p. 261).

²¹⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 55-59.

²¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 53.

²¹⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 61-62. (Sayers's italics.)

²²⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 63-65. (Sayers's italics.)

very sinister force indeed." The artist who works for such ends produces not an image, but an idol. By contrast:

The Christian revelation set free all the images, by showing that the true Image subsisted within the Godhead Itself - it was neither copy, nor imitation, nor representation, nor inferior nor subsequent, but the brightness of the glory, and the express image of the Person - the very mirror in which reality knows itself and communicates itself in power.²²¹

A Christian aesthetic was of enormous potential value in the face of totalitarian systems, which produced the most idolatrous and debased forms of art. However, the temptation for the Church was "to urge artists to produce works of art for the express purpose of 'doing good to people'." The Church must encourage the artist to communicate his or her religious vision, but this was a different concept entirely from that of "edifying art" which attempts to tell people what to believe.²²² In its anxiety about the use of art for entertainment's sake, the Church's demand for moralistic art had left the true artists "excommunicate". It was time for the Church to find "a real Christian aesthetic, based on dogma and not on ethics"²²³. In 1941, Sayers had scolded Bell for saying that the Church needed to get "hold of the Arts".

It's a matter of (a) presenting the artist with a brand of Christianity which can inform and inspire his secular work, and (b) recognising the autonomy of the artist's vocation as such. As it is, the greatest living creative force in the secular world is functioning right outside the pale of Christendom. Incidentally, this is why so many religious books are so ill-written and so incomprehensible to the ordinary man... (Ditto with Church painting and music).²²⁴

²²¹ *ibid.*, pp. 66-68.

²²² *ibid.*, pp. 66-68. See also Sayers's assertion at Malvern that "the Christian Church to-day not only subjects Art to the moral Law, not only fosters corruption by condoning and approving a thing artistically vicious provided that it conforms to moral sentiment... she is as a whole ignorant that the integrity of the artist exists at all as a power within the world... if a statue is ill-carved or a play ill-written, the artist's corruption is deeper than if the statue were obscene or the play blasphemous." SAYERS, 'The Church's Responsibility', *Malvern, 1941*, pp. 74-75.

²²³ SAYERS, 'Towards a Christian Aesthetic', pp. 68-69. Eliot asserted in 1949 that "it should now be more evident than ever that our literature, our art in general, has no permanent source of nourishment except in the Christian Faith." (Speech at Brussels, 4 December 1949, *TSE, M.S. 'Essays, Addresses and Verses 1939-1946'*, f. 6.)

²²⁴ SAYERS, Memorandum to Theological Literature Association, 28 November, 1941, *BELLP*, Vol. 208, ff. 250-251, and see her letter to Count Michael de la Bedoyere, 7 October 1941, *Letters*, p. 309. This model for the co-operation of Church and artist was perhaps inspired by Sayers's own co-operation with ecclesiastics for her Canterbury festival play *The Zeal of Thy House*. The performance was followed by a service of "thanksgiving and dedication" for the arts and crafts in the Cathedral.

Bell was surely acquitted by his own actions: if Tristram's murals were didactic, Feibusch's were precisely the type of artistic expression for which Sayers was arguing. Yet here we arrive at the philosophy which underpinned Sayers's confidence that a writer of detective fiction could make a useful contribution to an Oecumenical Penguin.

Sayers's last letter on the Oecumenical Penguin reveals that Charles Williams was to have been given the responsibility of writing much of the first draft. No discussion of the links between Sayers's theology and her views on ethics and aesthetics would be complete without a recognition of her indebtedness to Williams. His doctrine of "coinherence" profoundly influenced her ecclesiology, and his emphasis on "the Way of Affirmations" helped her to make the link between Christian dogma and Christian joy. The flurry of activity with which Sayers met the conditions of total war should not blind us to the fact that she was capable of the most profound pessimism. At Malvern she told an audience of ecclesiastics that "I think it is possible that we may have to go down to the deepest bottom of the pit - the point where all faith - literally *all* faith - is lost; when words and deeds become completely meaningless."²²⁵ She could, at times, be rather like her own Lazarus before he was raised from the dead, who asks, "In a world like this, what is there to be merry about?" Yet ultimately, Lazarus must ask, "Does joy go so deep as that? To the very foundations of the world?"²²⁶ If Eliot had embarked upon the *via negativa*, the influence of Williams, and her own Incarnational Christology and sacramentalism, led Sayers to become a vocal exponent of the Way of Affirmations. Sayers's Mary Magdalen confesses to Jesus that "We thought you would be sour and grim, hating all beauty and treating life as an enemy," but she comes to realise that "You were the only person there that was really alive."²²⁷ In *The Zeal of Thy House*, the Prior, receiving William's confession, reminds him that:

they mistake
Who think God hates those bodies which He made.
Freedom, not licence, must be given to the body,
For licence preys upon itself and others,
Devouring freedom's gifts.²²⁸

See REYNOLDS, *Life and Soul*, p. 281; COOMES, *Careless Rage for Life*, p. 126; *Church Times*, 18 June 1937.

²²⁵ SAYERS, 'The Church's Responsibility', *Malvern, 1941*, p. 76 (italics original).

²²⁶ SAYERS, 'The Light and the Life', *The Man Born to be King*, p. 187.

²²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 187.

²²⁸ SAYERS, *The Zeal of Thy House*, p. 95.

The sacraments themselves were for Sayers the Church's argument that "matter and the body" are sacred. Moreover, once the Church's dogmatic position had been established, the way was cleared for it to comment and to take action in the field of politics, sociology and economics. This action must be based upon the conviction that:

...the whole material universe is an expression and incarnation of the creative energy of God, as a book or a picture is the material expression of the creative soul of the artist. For that reason, all good and creative handling of the material universe is holy and beautiful, and all abuse of the material universe is a crucifixion of the body of Christ... Because of this, the exploitation of man or of matter for commercial uses stands condemned, together with all debasement of the arts and perversions of the intellect.²²⁹

Despite the pessimism of her statement at Malvern, Sayers maintained that the Christian witness must never be confined to a "purely personal and exemplary" piety. The Christian must attempt as far as possible to show respect for the Creatorship of God and the Incarnate Christ by endeavouring to "alter the constitution of the State and the conditions of civilization" in so far as they conflict with Christian ethics. Sayers rejected the solution of the "Yogi" - the Christian who opted out from a corrupt society - on the grounds that religion could not be concerned "only with the salvation of the individual soul". The solution proposed by the Yogi would merely ensure that:

the Church will become a little aristocratic microcosm of the elect, dissociating itself with all its energies from the physical and intellectual, no less than from the political and economic aspects of a self-destructive and sinful universe.

In the light of the Incarnation, the revelation of the Word made flesh, Sayers argued that it was difficult to uphold such a position without becoming either an Arian or a Manichaeist²³⁰. To opt out from involvement in society is not "Christian at all - or, at any rate, not Catholic."²³¹ The true Church, for Sayers, upheld an orthodox dogma of the Incarnation, and was therefore "fully sacramental", and deeply concerned with civilization, not only in political and social terms, but also in terms of "all arts, all

²²⁹ SAYERS, 'Creed or Chaos', p. 43.

²³⁰ SAYERS, 'The Church's Responsibility', *Malvern, 1941*, pp. 60-65.

²³¹ *ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

letters, all labour and all learning". Echoing Maritain, Sayers insisted that the Church must uphold the potential for good in all human endeavour on the basis that man was made in the Image of God. It must also promote "a proper reverence for the earth and for all material things; because these also are the body of the living God."²³² It is logical to assume that the statement in the Oecumenical Penguin on the Incarnation would have progressed to a discussion of the sacramental role of the Church, including an affirmation that on the dogmatic basis of the Incarnation, the Christian Church must be committed to a full involvement in the wider society and culture²³³.

The Oecumenical Penguin remained an unrealised ambition. There had been considerable obstacles in its path: the misunderstandings between Sayers and the theologians, and the deaths of Quick and Williams. More serious still were the difficulties in trying to obtain Roman Catholic acceptance of the scheme. Yet there were inherent problems in such an initiative, even as an expression of dogma within the Anglican Church alone. The Bishop of London's remark that Sayers might find herself more in agreement with a Methodist minister than with a low-Church Anglican, had been perceptive. Sayers's vision was deeply Catholic - she felt that orthodoxy could not be guaranteed by free interpretation of the Bible - and it is probable that the Oecumenical Penguin would have met with similar resistance to that which confronted *The Man Born to be King*. The difference between the two projects was that the one demanded the reaching of a consensus, while the other was an individual endeavour which merely required the assistance of a Welch to push it through²³⁴. Yet there is a remarkable consistency and cohesiveness to all of Sayers's wartime output. The grounds of orthodoxy must be established, either on the basis of Church tradition, or by the simple affirmation of Catholics that "this is what we do in fact believe". The basis of that orthodoxy was the Incarnation, mediated to Christians through the Church. Moreover, all of this could be communicated by the vision of the artist, who recognised with Berdyaev that "nothing can prevent the human soul from preferring creativeness to happiness". In this, the Christ was the archetypal artist, "who in this world suffers and creates continually, being incarnate

²³² *ibid.*, p. 67.

²³³ See, for example, SAYERS's Memorandum to Theological Literature Association, 28 November, 1941: "it seems very necessary that something should be done about the matter of Work and Vocation, which has got into a most hideous muddle." *BELLP*, Vol. 208, ff. 250-251, and see also her article, 'Vocation in Work', reprinted in LOADES (Ed.), *Dorothy L. Sayers: Spiritual Writings*, pp. 131-143.

²³⁴ The only wartime publication remotely approaching Sayers's concept of an "Oecumenical Penguin" was the Bishop of Bradford's Penguin Special *What the Church Teaches*, but this, too, was a purely individual effort.

in the bonds of matter."²³⁵ All of this could - indeed must - be communicated to the common man, if the Church was to have "integrity" in the face of the modern world and the realities of the totalitarian state. So it was that on Christmas Day, between the Munich crisis and 1939, the Magi were enunciating Dorothy L. Sayers's creed, on the radio, that great instrument of mass culture:

Caspar: I looked for wisdom - and behold! the wisdom of the innocent.

Melchior: I looked for power - and behold! the power of the helpless.

Balthazar: I looked for the manhood in God - and behold! A God made man.²³⁶

²³⁵ SAYERS, 'Creed or Chaos', p. 41. Sayers was alluding to Nicholas BERDYAEV, *The Destiny of Man*, London, 1937, Chapter 3 'The Ethics of Creativeness', pp. 126-153: "Creativeness can only spring from fathomless freedom... The creative act is an escape from time... It is by its nature opposed to anxiety which makes time so terrible... Creativeness may give one bliss and happiness, but that is merely a consequence of it. Bliss and happiness are never the aim of creativeness, which brings with it its own pain and suffering..."

²³⁶ SAYERS, *He That Should Come*, p. 80.

Chapter

6

"Confessional Church" or "Christian Racket"?
The Moot's Prescriptions for the "Survival of Christian Civilisation"

Two months into the War, Bell wrote to inform Eliot that he had recently finished reading *The Idea of a Christian Society*. The book was "noble"; he had been "deeply moved by the argument [and was]... in extraordinarily full agreement" with Eliot's views. He also praised Eliot's observations on the establishment of the Church of England:

How curious it is (but that is a superficial thing to say, for it is really in these circumstances not curious at all) that in this very time when the totalitarian state is attacking the Christian Church in Russia and Germany and in other places too, we should feel so strongly the forces of the argument in favour of... an established church. I have wavered often in my mind about the merits of the establishment in present circumstances, but it is not only true, as you say, that the disestablishment of the church now would be a shrewed [sic] blow to the Christian religion, but it is also the case that for the sake of the State itself, and to save it from being either pagan or neutral, the Christian religion must be made a very part of its life.¹

Bell's practical reasons for supporting establishment were to be amply revealed in wartime; being in the House of Lords allowed him to voice Christian criticisms of government policy, and his patronage of the arts suggested that he expected the established Church to play a key role in the preservation of culture. Eliot responded that he too had "inclined at one time to favour disestablishment", but had concluded that "the position thus surrendered would have at some time to be re-claimed, and with perhaps insuperable difficulties". Moreover, he added, "I cannot believe that the more intelligent leaders, either among Romans or Non-Conformists [sic], would regard dis-establishment [sic] with satisfaction."² In supporting establishment as

¹ George BELL to T.S. Eliot, 15 November 1939, *BELLP*, Vol. 208 ('Eliot-Shaw'), f. 34. See also Jaakko RUSAMA, *Unity and Compassion: Moral Issues in the Life and Thought of George K.A. Bell*, Helsinki, 1986, p. 35.

² T.S. ELIOT to George Bell, 23 November 1939, *BELLP*, Vol. 208, f. 35. See his *The Idea of a Christian Society*, 1939, p. 49. For a discussion of Anglican bishops' views on Establishment in the late 1930s and the 1940s, see Andrew CHANDLER, 'The Church of England and the Obliteration Bombing of Germany in the Second World War', *English Historical Review*, 1993, pp. 920-921, and his *Brethren in Adversity: Bishop George Bell, the Church of England and the Crisis of German*

essential to the Christian response to totalitarianism, Eliot and Bell were clearly aware of the dangers of a state religion. If the role of establishment was to keep the State from becoming "either pagan or neutral", a parallel danger must be avoided: that the State might paganise or neutralise the official Church, as the Nazis had done. It was an ancient dilemma, but made more acute, and given specific form, by the creation of modern industrial society and the modern state; and if neither seriously expected a Nazi or Communist Britain to emerge from the war, both were well aware of the totalitarian potential of the means of social control available to a British government, especially a wartime government. Bell and Eliot represented a self-conscious movement among the Christian intelligentsia, addressing the following dilemma: "How can an established Church maintain its capacity for criticism and its cultural relevance, especially at a time when centralised planning must guide even the most democratic State?"

Eliot's observation about other denominations also points to the growing willingness of Catholic Anglicans to face this dilemma within an ecumenical context. One such opportunity was afforded by the Moot, a "body of friends" which met in various places between 1938 and 1947, to discuss social and cultural problems from a Christian standpoint. The Moot left behind substantial records, including minutes, papers and drafts for publications, and attracted a number of scholars, churchmen and other public figures conscious of a responsibility to form a Christian élite⁴, leaving some feeling enriched, and others frustrated. Its confidentiality and its blend of lay and ecclesiastical perspectives, helped to make it unique. The Moot provided an opportunity for Anglican Catholics and other Christian intellectuals to speak candidly, and without fear of censorship, about the cultural crisis.

Its origins lay in the international ecumenical conference which met in Oxford in July, 1937. The Conference on Church, Community and State was attended by representatives of 120 different communions, although there were no Roman Catholic delegates, and representatives of the German Evangelical Church had been

Protestantism 1933-1939, Church of England Record Society 4, Suffolk, 1997, pp. 31-32. For the perspective of an opponent of establishment see H.H. HENSON, *The Church of England*, Cambridge, 1939, pp. 33-56.

³ Karl Mannheim, Gilbert Shaw and Walter Moberly, quoted in R.D. HACKING, *Such a Long Journey: A Biography of Gilbert Shaw, Priest*, London, 1988, pp. 59-63.

⁴ The Moot was conceived as an "élite" from its inception. See, for example, J.H. OLDHAM, *A Renewed Christendom*, Chapter V, 'The Dual Task', August 1939, *MOOTL*, Item 2, pp. 15-19: "A movement looking to a new Christendom must have the guidance of men and women of high class ability and wide experience occupying positions of influence in the public life. These would form an élite in the sense that they would accept the obligations of an acknowledged vocation and bring to the movement their exceptional gifts of knowledge and experience."

prevented from attending by the Nazi Government.⁵ Its organiser, the Anglican layman J.H. Oldham⁶, hoped that the Conference would tackle "the fundamental religious problem of to-day... [which is] the problem of the relation of the Church to the all-embracing claims of a communal life." He quoted the Roman Catholic historian, Christopher Dawson, who had asked "how religion is to survive in a single community which is neither Church nor State, which recognizes no formal limits, but which covers the whole of life and claims to be the source and goal of every human activity". The Oxford Conference was therefore concerned with "the life and death struggle between Christian faith and the secular and pagan tendencies of our time"; it was also evidence that a growing number of church leaders were convinced that the churches must resist the totalitarian tendencies in modern culture through ecumenical Christian witness.⁷ The immediate practical result was a message of solidarity, sent by the Conference to the leaders of the Confessing Church in Germany, despite the protests of three German delegates who supported the Nazi regime. The slogan "Let the Church be the Church" came to epitomise the findings of the Conference:

The primary duty of the Church to the State is to be the Church, namely, to witness for God, to preach His Word, to confess the faith before men, to teach both young and old to observe the divine commandments, and to serve the nation and the State by proclaiming the Will of God as the supreme standard to which all human wills must be subject and all human conduct must conform. These functions of

⁵ The Nazis withdrew their passports (Gordon RUPP, *I Seek My Brethren*, London, 1974, p. 14). See also Nils EHRENSTRÖM, 'Movements for International Friendship and Life and Work 1925-1948', in Ruth ROUSE and Stephen Charles NEILL (Eds.), *A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948*, London, 1954, p. 588. In addition to Oldham, the Oxford Conference was attended by two future Moot members: Sir Walter Moberly, Chairman of the Section dealing with Church and Community, and T.S. Eliot, who spoke in support of ecumenism as a means of preventing confusion over which aspects of the faith were merely provincial and which were genuinely Catholic. At meetings of the Moot, Eliot would frequently underline the importance of maintaining localised diversity in tandem with catholicity. See, T.S. ELIOT, 'Notes on Mannheim's Paper', January 1941, *MOOTL*, Item 35, p. 1; Roger KOJECKY, *T.S. Eliot's Social Criticism*, London, 1971, pp. 156-157; Adrian HASTINGS, *The Shaping of Prophecy: Passion, Perception and Practicality*, London, 1995, p. 27, and J.H. OLDHAM, 'Introduction', OXFORD CONFERENCE ON CHURCH, COMMUNITY AND STATE, *The Churches Survey Their Task*, London, 1937, pp. 33-34.

⁶ See Keith W. CLEMENTS, 'John Baillie and "The Moot"', in David FERGUSSON, *Christ, Church and Society: Essays on John Baillie and Donald Baillie*, Edinburgh, 1993, pp. 199-200; Kenneth SLACK, *George Bell*, p. 54. The full membership and attendance details of the Moot are listed in Appendix 7, below, pp. 385-392.

⁷ OXFORD CONFERENCE, *The Churches Survey Their Task*, pp. 9-10. Oldham's quotation of Dawson was taken from *The Tablet*, 26 June 1937. The Conference approved the merging of the Faith and Order and the Life and Work movements into a single body, the World Council of Churches. See also A.R. VIDLER, *Scenes from a Clerical Life: An Autobiography*, London, 1977, p. 116.

worship, preaching, teaching, and ministry the Church cannot renounce whether the State consent or not.⁸

The progeny of the Oxford Conference was a series of organisations and initiatives chaired by Oldham. The Council on the Christian Faith and the Common Life, inaugurated at the suggestion of Temple, then Archbishop of York, in March 1938, was a precursor to the British Council of Churches⁹. There followed the formation of a Christian Frontier Council, "an association of Christian lay men and women who held responsible positions in public life"¹⁰, and an ecumenical *Christian News-Letter*¹¹ with a circulation of 10,000. Such initiatives allowed Oldham to proclaim in 1939 that as a result of the Conference, "New foundations have been laid for common action"¹². In addition, a small group of Christian intellectuals began meeting in April 1938, calling themselves "the Moot", defined in 1939 by three of their members as "a body of friends who have established through a common experience a certain relationship and corporate life which they desire to preserve unimpaired"¹³. From the beginning, the Moot was ecumenical. Several members identified themselves with Catholic Anglicanism, including H.A. Hodges, Professor of Philosophy at Reading University, his friend and confessor Fr. Gilbert Shaw¹⁴, T.S. Eliot and later, Philip Mairet, but it also included the Church of Scotland theologian John Baillie¹⁵, and, for a time, the Roman Catholic Christopher Dawson. There were no Barthians in the group, but one was invited to comment on a paper by

Hodges¹⁶. Two Jewish exiles from Germany also attended: the economist Adolf Löwe, and, from September 1938, the sociologist Karl Mannheim, whose role in the Moot became so pivotal that it disbanded with his death in 1947¹⁷.

More remarkably, its third meeting in January 1939 accepted "the central position" of the Roman Catholic philosopher, Jacques Maritain, in his *True Humanism*, as providing "the basis for the work of the Moot."¹⁸ Discussion focussed on a review by Baillie of Maritain's book. Baillie had been chosen to write the paper because as a Presbyterian he was less likely than other Moot members to be "predisposed to agreement with Maritain", but he found that *True Humanism* had avoided "those aspects of Romanism which would be repellent to me". Maritain had criticised Luther and Calvin, not for their doctrine of justification by faith, but for their "nominalism, voluntarism, dualism and extreme anti-humanism", and Baillie concurred:

In these respects I am as much opposed to Luther and Calvin as Maritain is. Professor Heinrich Frick of Marburg, a German Protestant of the staunchest kind, recently boasted that 'next to its rediscovery of the pure Gospel, the greatest accomplishment of the Reformation was the secularisation of culture in opposition to the Catholic idea of a Christian culture'... As regards their 'rediscovery of the pure Gospel' my sympathies... are substantially with Luther and Calvin. But as regards their 'secularisation of culture' I find myself in almost complete unanimity with Maritain.

At the first meeting of the Moot, Baillie had felt that the "crisis confronting the Christian Church" hinged upon the question, "What is the relation of the secular to the sacred?" He had wanted to know whether Renaissance humanism was right or wrong, whether it was "something to be woven into a future Christian tradition" or eschewed as incompatible with Christianity. Now he found Maritain addressing the same question. Both held that the Renaissance had destroyed the mediaeval

⁸ OXFORD CONFERENCE, *The Churches Survey Their Task*, p. 82. See also Alan M. SUGGATE, 'The Christian Churches in England Since 1945: Ecumenism and Social Concern', in Sheridan GILLEY and W.J. SHEILS (Eds.), *A History of Religion in Britain. Practice and Belief from Pre-Roman Times to the Present*, Oxford, 1994, pp. 468-469.

⁹ KOJECKY, *T.S. Eliot's Social Criticism*, pp. 158-159. See J.H. OLDHAM, letter to Members of the Moot, 23 August 1939, *MOOTL*, Item 1, pp. 1-2. The Council would explore "how far, when we speak of a new Christendom, we mean the same thing."

¹⁰ VIDLER, *Scenes from a Clerical Life*, p. 134; KOJECKY, *T.S. Eliot's Social Criticism*, p. 162. The Christian Frontier Council was formed in 1942, and was a partial realisation of "the Order", discussed by the Moot in its early meetings.

¹¹ KOJECKY, *T.S. Eliot's Social Criticism*, p. 161. The *C.N.L.* was published weekly from 18 October 1939, and changed to fortnightly publication on 7 April 1943. Oldham was initially the editor, and occasionally passed the task on to others. On 30 May 1945, Kathleen Bliss became editor.

¹² J.H. OLDHAM, *A Renewed Christendom*, Chapter 1, 'The Issue', August 1939, *MOOTL*, Item 2, pp. 1-3.

¹³ The authors of this definition were Karl Mannheim, Gilbert Shaw and Walter Moberly. HACKING, *Such a Long Journey*, pp. 59-63. The meetings of the Moot invariably occupied a long weekend, and interspersed the discussion of papers and articles with daily periods of prayer.

VIDLER, *Scenes from a Clerical Life*, p. 118; *pers. comm.*, Marjorie Reeves.

¹⁴ Hodges was an authority on Wilhelm Dilthey (CLEMENTS, 'John Baillie', p. 202.) Shaw was known to Oldham as the founder of "the Sydney", an organisation based in a disused beer hall in London's East End, designed to ensure a Christian presence among the unemployed. HACKING, *Such a Long Journey*, pp. 43-46.

¹⁵ CLEMENTS, 'John Baillie', p. 201, theorises that Oldham invited Baillie to join the Moot because of "a shared interest in the personalist philosophy of encounter and human relations..." The two had met originally at the Edinburgh Missionary Conference in 1910.

¹⁶ Thomas F. TORRANCE, 'Christian Thinking Today', (circulated December 19-22 1941), *MOOTE*, BAI-05-06.

¹⁷ Mannheim had been Professor of Sociology at the University of Frankfurt before being expelled by the Nazis in 1933. See David KETTLER and Volka MEJA, *Karl Mannheim and the Crisis of Liberalism: The Secret of these New Times*, New Jersey, 1995, p. 253-254; Colin LOADER, *The Intellectual Development of Karl Mannheim: Culture, Politics, and Planning*, Cambridge, 1985, p. 149; CLEMENTS, 'John Baillie', p. 203.

¹⁸ KOJECKY, *T.S. Eliot's Social Criticism*, p. 168. Several members of the Moot would meet with Maritain at a London club (possibly the Athenaeum) on May 11th 1939 (*pers. comm.*, H.A. Hodges to Kojecky, *ibid.*, pp. 65, 229.)

"consecrational conception of the temporal order". It had proclaimed "the emancipation of the secular from the control of the sacred", so that the arts and the sciences were no longer seen as "means to the end of eternal life, but as ultimate ends in themselves"¹⁹. Baillie was less sure that Maritain had answered his question, but at least he agreed with his formulation of the problem. His review demonstrated how far he shared the concerns of his Catholic colleagues, and agreed with their diagnoses about the crisis in western culture.

The word "diagnosis" was used frequently in the Moot; indeed, medical terminology abounded in their discussions of the cultural crisis. This use of the metaphor of social malaise, which would find poetic expression in Eliot's *East Coker*²⁰, is evidence of the influential role played by Mannheim at the outset. Mannheim's sociology drew increasingly upon such language in response to his own exile from Nazi Germany. In 1934, he had insisted that the sociologist must distinguish between "healthy" and "pathological" social tendencies; psychoanalysis must be complemented by "socioanalysis"²¹. He was preoccupied throughout the early 1930s with the disintegration of democratic culture, writing feverishly of the breakdown of the egalitarian "consensus" and the increasing tendency for élites to become separated from the concerns of mass society²². At the Moot in 1939, he argued that the advent of industrialism had unbalanced society, and presented his "diagnosis of our present situation". This was "an age of planning which is bound to find a new form of coordination", when "the forces of both tradition and enlightenment are disintegrating". Furthermore, "we are living in an age which passes from the predominance of limited élites to mass democracy... an age whose uncontrolled forces bring about dehumanisation and disintegration of the personality." The intellectual élite must come to understand education as "a new form of social control which is neither the inculcation of Fascism nor the complete anarchy of a deteriorated laissez-faire policy."²³ During the transition from Phoney to total war, the other Moot members added a religious dimension, concurring with Oldham that the danger posed to the Christian faith by secularism was underlined by

¹⁹ John BAILLIE, 'Paper on Maritain's *True Humanism*', (n.d., written for third meeting of the Moot, 6-9 January, 1939) *MOOTE*, BAI-05-53, pp. 1-2. Baillie's citation of Frick is from *Deutschland innerhalb der religiösen Weltlage*, Berlin, Töpelmann. See CLEMENTS, 'John Baillie', pp. 204-205. CLEMENTS, 'John Baillie', pp. 212-214.

²⁰ See above, pp. 194ff.

²¹ KETTLER and MEJA, *Karl Mannheim and the Crisis of Liberalism*, p. 148. "No longer a mediator who orients politically creative actors and fosters tendencies towards synthesis, the social thinker becomes a sociotherapist, who clinically analyses social disorders, devises therapeutic regimes, and overcomes the inhibitions and distortions that hamper remedial action." (p. 147.)

²² LOADER, *The Intellectual Development of Karl Mannheim*, p. 131.

²³ Karl MANNHEIM, 'Sociology of Education. Preliminary Remarks', (n.d., late 1939), *MOOTL*, Item 11, pp. 1-6.

the growing cultural ascendancy of totalitarianism and "scientific humanism"²⁴. Philip Mairet pointed out that there was some truth to the Nazi insistence that "the old order of things is culturally as well as economically corrupt, and that there must be a new intellectual culture with a literature more consistent and controlled to a loftier purpose". The brutality of the Nazis' "assaults upon culture" had come to obscure the fact that "there was a growing world dissatisfaction with the state of literary culture". In view of the declining cultural influence of the Christian intelligentsia, Mairet recommended the formation of a "body of Christian opinion" dedicated to creating "a Christian order", and that one of the first steps towards this should be an "article on the authority of tradition, how it is embodied, and by whom, written by T.S. Eliot."²⁵

Eliot's contributions to the Moot on cultural disintegration and the role of religion were partly a response to Mannheim's notes on "Christian values and the changing environment". Mannheim argued that there were five possible attitudes to the problem of how to plan for religious growth. The first recommended monitoring cultural forces which may retard religious experience, but insisted that religion itself must be allowed to arise "spontaneously". Such an attitude was characteristic of the mystic, yet "even mystics have known that there are certain conditions favourable or adverse to... [their] experience". Monasticism was itself an admission that "external conditions" affected religious experience, and that certain types of controlled environment promoted religious growth.²⁶ A second, typically Catholic attitude, argued that maintaining tradition provided the necessary conditions for religious experience. Thirdly, one could argue that "Tradition... is linked up with certain social conditions. These have to be maintained in order to maintain the corresponding tradition..." Mannheim predicted that this would be Eliot's standpoint. According to such an argument, the "social pattern" is similar to a "collective work of art", rather like a cathedral in which "the contribution of even the greatest genius remains anonymous", being melded with that of others, and drawing upon inherited traditions. This was also typically Catholic: indeed, the cathedral-building metaphor had been used for precisely the same purpose in Sayers's *The Zeal of Thy House*. It tended to be linked with belief "in some kind of collective

²⁴ KETTLER and MEJA, *Karl Mannheim and the Crisis of Liberalism*, p. 252.

²⁵ Philip MAIRET, 'The Christian News-Letter: Notes for Social and Political Policy', 10 January 1941, *MOOTL*, Item 36, p. 4.

²⁶ Mannheim wondered "whether something corresponding to the monastic seclusion, some form of complete or temporary withdrawal from the affairs of the world, will not be one of the great remedies for the dehumanising effects of a civilisation of busy-bodies." In addition to fostering traditional religious orders, he hoped that it would be possible to introduce orders for those who had not taken religious vows. Eliot later expressed agreement in a letter to Oldham, (n.d., probably early 1943), *MOOTE*, BAI-05-20, p. 1.

salvation", and concerned as much with "improvement of the social structure" as with "individual salvation". Such an approach allowed individuals to enjoy the riches of Catholic culture, but Mannheim warned that "a social pattern which embodies religious experience" may lead to a conventional ritualism in which true religious experience would be lost, and any kind of struggle avoided. A fourth position stressed "conventions": inner religious experience was fostered by church attendance, ritual observance and "orthodoxy on basic issues". Finally, there was a standpoint, typical perhaps of the Evangelical, which stressed "personal inspiration", and argued that religious growth would occur in a society which fostered personal relationships and "fellowship". Mannheim favoured an approach which would take account of all these opinions, since, historically, mysticism, tradition, social structures, rituals and fellowship had all been catalysts to religious development.²⁷

Eliot agreed, and sought to apply Mannheim's categories to "the Christian imagination", using literature as an example. He applied the term "imagination" to the saint, as well as to the artist. His discovery that similar language could be used to discuss both art and sanctity, reflected also in *Four Quartets*, was leading him in the Moot to apply this parallel more broadly in terms of "culture" and "religion". Eliot lamented that it was difficult, if not impossible, for the contemporary Christian writer to have any sense of community, or to draw nourishment from any religious sensibility embedded in the social pattern²⁸. Imagination was, he felt, "essentially religious", but this only made matters worse, because "... one is painfully conscious of the mutilated condition of the Imagination amongst theologians." Previous ages had produced great devotional writers; the 1940s could only produce "distinguished writers about devotional literature". Mannheim sought to diagnose the ailments of modern culture; Eliot was exploring its pathology, and found the root of the disease in the growing gulf between religious sensibility and the wider culture:

... the disintegration of the Imagination is manifest by the separation between those people who cultivate the arts (both as producers and as consumers) and those who cultivate the religious sensibility. The tendency then is for the religious sensibility to be stunted, and for the arts to

²⁷ Karl MANNHEIM, 'Towards a New Social Philosophy: A Challenge to Christian Thinkers by a Sociologist. II: Christian Values and the Changing Environment', (n.d., late 1942) *MOOTE*, BAI-05-23, pp. 3-6.

²⁸ T.S. ELIOT, Letter to Dr. Oldham, (n.d., probably early 1943) *MOOTE*, BAI-05-20, p. 2. See also his 'Notes on Mannheim's Paper', January 1941, *MOOTL*, Item 35, p. 2: "what makes me uneasy is the suspicion of machine-shop imagery, rather than the imagery of the natural cycle; and the suggestion that we are at the point at which our past culture must be scrapped. I mean by culture something which grows from the depths, and flowers at the top... Soil and vegetables are two different things, but what I mean by culture is neither one nor the other, but that which includes both."

perish slowly - as the religious imagination atrophies, the imagination *tout court* disappears also.²⁹

It was the same conclusion that Bell and Sayers were reaching in their recognition of the cleavage between Church and artist. The cultural crisis, Eliot and Bell were agreed, was the result of a generalised failure to recognise with Coleridge that religion was "the centre of gravity of a realm"³⁰. Eliot would return to the theme in 1944, in a paper which anticipated his *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (1948). Culture was not the refinement of manners, or urbanity, or a given philosophy, or even "the arts"; it must be taken to include "all the characteristic activities and interests of a people"³¹, and "the culture of the individual is dependent upon the culture of the class or group", which in turn depended on the culture of the wider society. Societies always contained cultural élites, who, in a healthy culture, gradually influenced the rest of society. When cultures were disintegrating, however, "the culture of two or more social strata becomes so divergent that they approximate to having different cultures." Eliot judged that this process was already far advanced in wartime Britain, and once again, found compelling evidence in the breakdown of communication between the artistic and the religious sensibilities. The development and decline of culture could not be clearly distinguished from the operation of the same processes in religion, so that culture could be described as "the incarnation, so to speak, of a religion in a particular people." If religion and culture were "different aspects of the same thing", then the common assumption that either could flourish without the other was false, leading on the part of secularists to spiritual starvation, and on the part of the religious, "to a rejection of the products of culture as frivolity and obstruction to spiritual life."³² Eliot also sought to discredit the assumption that culture belonged merely to an élite, and so would in the future either become completely irrelevant, or be appropriated by the masses. He argued that similar assumptions were operating when extreme Protestants had attacked celibacy and contemplative life simply because they were virtues of which few were capable. If a healthy culture was characterised by the interchange of ideas between society in

²⁹ T.S. ELIOT to J.H. Oldham, *MOOTL*, Item 68, (n.d., 1941), pp. 2-3. On 6 December 1947, Eliot revived this aetiological metaphor for cultural decline in a discourse on the corruption of language delivered at Aix-en-Provence: "The dangers to language [from its use in propaganda] are less like the attack of human enemies than like the invasion of some microscopic parasite which corrupts that upon which it feeds." (*TSE*, M.S.: 'Essays, Addresses and Verses 1939-1956.') For all their temperamental differences, concern over the religious dimension of the corruption of language was common to Eliot and C.S. Lewis. See the latter's *The Abolition of Man*, London, 1943.

³⁰ KOJECKY, *T.S. Eliot's Social Criticism*, p. 33.

³¹ T.S. ELIOT, 'Cultural Forces in the Human Order', 1 November 1944, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-38, p. 2.

³² *ibid.*, p. 7.

general and a cultural élite, then the same must be true for religion. This was not, however, a license to speak glibly about the "Christianisation of culture":

Many people will admit either that our culture ought to be Christianised, or that our fragment of Christendom ought to be refined by more culture; but as I do not accept the kind of separation which they take for granted, so I do not find satisfactory the kind of unification which they advocate.³³

Various members of the Moot were concerned about the perceived failure of communication between Christian élites and the rest of society³⁴. Mannheim developed the point into a broad explanation of social conflict and disintegration in writing of a "crisis in valuations" which had culminated in war and produced a relativist society³⁵. The crisis in valuations manifested itself in confusion over education, leadership and leisure, and in the process whereby ideas of private property, originally intended to protect the small-scale producer, had come to provide a justification for the exploitation of the masses³⁶. It had affected aesthetics, too, because "in our appreciation of art the real struggle lies between the attitudes which are rooted in good craftsmanship and values which emanate from machine-made goods."³⁷ Such a situation became positively dangerous in a society skilled in manipulating opinions through propaganda but uncertain about its purpose. The result, as Mannheim testified from experience, was collective neurosis:

³³ *ibid.*, p. 9. Eliot's influence, (combined with that of William TEMPLE's 'What Christians Stand for in the Secular World', *CN-L*, No. 198), may be detected in V.A. DEMANT's, 'The Incompetence of Unaided Virtue or The Mischief of Ideals', 7 February 1946, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-48, pp. 1-2, (published in *CN-L*, Supplement, No. 257, 3 April 1946): "If there is a sickness in the culture, no aims moral or political, however strongly held, can be achieved... I am using the word culture... for the ways of life that the members of a community can count on... it conveys the notion that this is something that has grown, it comes out of the past and forms a tradition." (p. 1.) It is also evident in H.A. HODGES, 'The Collective Commonwealth and the Christian', 22 January 1944, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-33. "... a cultural life grows up by which the consciousness of the people is moulded and developed. This again is overarched and held together by religion, the attempt to maintain relations with superhuman powers. All these levels of activity interact and interpenetrate, and the total complex of them is what we call civilisation..." (p. 2.)

³⁴ The development of this theme in Mannheim's work is discussed by LOADER, *The Intellectual Development of Karl Mannheim*, p. 134..

³⁵ Karl MANNHEIM, 'The Crisis in Valuation', (n.d., late 1942), *MOOTE*, BAI-05-21.

³⁶ Indeed, the only encouraging sign was the fact that the Moot, at least, were agreed that such a state of affairs was not good, that "The abandonment by modern man of Christian and then of humanitarian valuations is the final cause of our crisis..." In particular, it was undecided whether education ought to aim at specialisation, or "cater for all-round personalities with a philosophical background." In terms of leadership, "there is a split in the ranks of the wealthy and educated few" between "the potential leaders in an evolving Fascism", and those who "are willing to assist in building up a new social order under competent leadership". *ibid.*, pp. 1-3.

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 6.

Only those who have seen the result of complete non-interference with valuations and deliberate neglect of that sphere in our neutralised democracies like Republican Germany will understand that this absolute neglect leads to drifting and prepares the ground for submission and dictatorship.³⁸

Mannheim, the secular social theorist, came close to recommending a dogmatic synthesis when he maintained that "Nobody can expect a human being to live in complete uncertainty and with unlimited choice... There must be a sphere where conformity and continuity prevail." The maintenance of such a sphere was difficult in a "mass society" in which "the social mechanisms which ought to guide value integration and mediation are being continually suppressed". Some kind of planning was inevitable: if its totalitarian forms were to be avoided, there must be some form of "democratic planning" such as that which the war had induced in Britain³⁹.

In these diagnoses, Moot members were particularly sensitive to the rise of totalitarianism, both on the continent and, in more subtle ways, in British society, especially once Russia and Britain became allies⁴⁰. The Moot was at least to some extent a fulfilment of the desire expressed by Bell at the Church Congress in 1935 that both clergy and laity should focus on the challenge of the totalitarian state, and "not be content with fiddling in the vestry while the world outside burns"⁴¹. For Oldham, totalitarianism was intrinsically linked with secularisation; communism and fascism were "the new paganisms", which had openly rejected Christianity, and their crimes proved that Christianity was essential to the welfare of mankind. Britain had not forsaken Christianity entirely, but it was no longer "the determining

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 9.

³⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 9, 12.

⁴⁰ Britain was now allied to the Communist state which, when it attacked Finland, Oldham saw as being motivated by its atheism (Editorial, *CN-L*, No. 7, December 13 1939). Yet by 24 September, 1941 (No. 100), he could describe the alliance with Russia as "one of the most exciting events in history..." On May 13 1942 (No. 133) he denounced as propaganda the assertion of the *Soviet War News* that "no citizen of the Soviet State has ever been persecuted or can be persecuted for his religious beliefs". In September 1943, Stalin "freed" the Russian Church - an act of cynical propagandising in response to which NIEBUHR warned, "I do not believe we ought to sing too many hymns of praise..." ('Russia and the Christian World', *CN-L*, No. 189, 25 August 1943.) See also Middleton MURRY, 'Can Democracy Survive?', *CN-L*, No. 274, 27 November 1946. See A.M. CHANDLER, 'The Church of England and Nazi Germany, 1933-1945', Ph.D. Thesis, Cambridge University, 1991, p. 12.

⁴¹ George BELL, 'Christianity and the Totalitarian State', Speech to the 1935 Church Congress, *BELLP*, Vol. 345 ('Sermons/Addresses 1933-1939'), ff. 163, 171. Bell argued that "The doctrine of the Totalitarian State... involves the adoration of civilization for its own sake, that is the worship of man."

principle of national policy."⁴² Oldham saw totalitarian tendencies in the increasing centralisation of British society⁴³ and the growing power of new systems of thought-control. Technology had brought protection from natural threats, at the expense of subduing individuals to a repressive, constructed environment. It was almost impossible for Christians to live in such a society without experiencing "an intolerable division of the self".⁴⁴ This was also the conclusion of Christopher Dawson, who in the *Sword of the Spirit* contrasted the methods of past tyrannies, which subjugated by mere force, with totalitarian mind-control. Religion would either be sidelined, or exploited by the State to control the masses⁴⁵. Writing previously to Oldham and the Moot, Dawson had been more forcefully pessimistic. It was useless to compare the current situation with that facing St. Augustine when he wrote *The City of God* in response to the collapse of a pagan civilisation. The situation in 1939 reminded Dawson more of the Apocalypse of St. John. By resisting totalitarianism through war, a nation was forced to take on totalitarian characteristics of its own:

As soon as men decide that all means are permitted to fight an evil, then their good becomes indistinguishable from the evil that they set out to destroy... We have to oppose by arms the aggression of the external enemy and at the same time to resist the enemy within - the growth in our own society of the evil power we are fighting against. And this second war is the more dangerous of the two, as it may be lost by victory as well as by defeat... this is a spiritual catastrophe which strikes directly at the moral foundations of our civilization and releases the forces of destruction that have been held in check by a thousand years of Christian culture.⁴⁶

⁴² J.H. OLDHAM, *A Renewed Christendom*, Chapter I, 'The Issue', August 1939, *MOOTL*, Item 2, pp. 1-3. Oldham's argument echoes that of Jacques MARITAIN, *True Humanism*, London, 1938, pp. 221-222.

⁴³ Oldham popularised these concerns in his *CN-L* editorial on June 5 1940 (No. 32): "We have had... to surrender our liberties to Mr. Attlee in order to avoid having to surrender them to Hitler, knowing that we can get them back from Mr. Attlee, though not from Hitler. But it is idle to suppose that we shall ever get our liberties back in the form in which we have known them in the past."

⁴⁴ OLDHAM, *A Renewed Christendom*, Chapter III, 'Modern Society', August 1939, *MOOTL*, Item 2, pp. 8-11.

⁴⁵ Christopher DAWSON, Article to appear in *The Sword of the Spirit*, December, 1940, for discussion by the Moot, *MOOTL*, Item 37, pp. 1-13. In a discussion with Bell in 1944, Dawson would explicitly link the successes of totalitarianism with the weakness of a divided Christianity and a disintegrated culture. See 'Notes by Christopher DAWSON after meeting with George Bell', 27 October 1944, *BELLP*, Vol. 258 ('Commonplace Book'), f. 116v.

⁴⁶ Christopher DAWSON to J.H. Oldham, (n.d., 1939), *MOOTL*, Item 6, pp. 1-3. For Dawson's views on the problems of maintaining freedom after the war had ended, see 'The Conditions of Peace' (1945?), *BELLP*, Vol. 206 ('Chichester C-D'), ff. 245-254: "... total war implies the necessity of a total peace to end it, and how is a total peace to be achieved when the whole social organism is concentrated in the attainment of short-term military objectives?"

When the Moot discussed Dawson's views in July 1940 and August 1941, during the most acute crisis of the war, when a Nazi victory was a desperate possibility, there was still general concern about the increasing state control that had accompanied mobilisation. John Middleton Murry felt at the 1940 meeting that free speech was continually being eroded. Eleanor Iredale agreed, and thought that resistance should be organised before it was too late. Eric Fenn, now working for the Religious Broadcasting section of the B.B.C., reported that within the past six weeks, with the disaster in France, "censorship of opinion" had become a reality: Murry's 'A Christian Looks at the World', broadcast in February, would now be considered too depressing to be aired in public.⁴⁷ These fears were amplified in 1941 by increasing concern that even the Church's independent voice might be suppressed. The only solution, Dawson said, was a spiritual revival capable of withstanding totalitarianism. Gilbert Shaw agreed, but pointed to the weakness of the "believing societies" themselves. "The Church," he complained, "seemed to be running down. Those inside were superior and couldn't talk the language of those outside. The Church had lost hold of the Christian archetypes."⁴⁸

This concern for revivifying Christian archetypes, symbols and images became the first part of the Moot's prescription for preserving Christian civilisation. Mannheim told the Moot in July 1940 that the Nazis had failed to realise that "Propaganda worked on different levels". Nazism had successfully exploited such activities as "marching... [and] wearing a uniform or a badge", but Christianity could draw more effectively upon archetypal figures and virtues.⁴⁹ In early 1942, Hodges, while sharing Mannheim's view, argued that the Moot needed to rework Christian symbolism to make it effective. Modern people were often repelled by Christianity because its language and assumptions were foreign to those educated according to scientific rationalism. Even those interested in Christianity did not know how to penetrate its language, and their confusion would persist unless Christians could define the differences between theirs and a secular outlook "and explain why it is

⁴⁷ The Moot, Notes on Discussion at the Ninth Meeting, July 12-15 1940, at Old Jordans Hostel, Beaconsfield, *MOOTL*, Item 28, p. 3. Fenn was a Presbyterian. CLEMENTS, 'John Baillie', p. 202. The internment of refugees as "enemy aliens", criticised by Bell (see above, p. 162), was another aspect of this situation.

⁴⁸ The Moot, 'Notes on Discussion at Twelfth Meeting', 1-3 August 1941, at 13 Norham Gardens, Oxford, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-01, p. 6.

⁴⁹ The Moot, Notes on Discussion at the Ninth Meeting, July 12-15 1940, *MOOTL*, Item 28, p. 16. Mannheim suggested that "Psychologists would give you facts about propaganda, but they could not produce the symbol which made it effective."

necessary in our sphere of thought to talk so strangely."⁵⁰ Consequently, "we needed a hermeneutic of Christian speech - an examination of Christian symbols and figurative language and its relation to the scientific mind and mode of thought."⁵¹ Popular unfamiliarity with religious imagery was, he argued later, a crucial obstacle to evangelism, calling for a renewed study of Christian symbolism. Christians must also become "image-conscious... yet we shall not get the imagery right by tinkering directly with it, but only by using it... to express the truths of Christian teaching about God and man." Hodges took for granted Eliot's arguments about the unity of culture and religion: ignorance of symbols designed to convey religious values was mirrored by the fact that only a small élite could grasp the finest values of the high culture. This accounted for the pressure to regard art as mere amusement, restricting educational priorities to applied science, and exploiting "cultural activities as propaganda for moral and political ideas"⁵². If "real culture" was to be protected by a cultural élite, then a similar lead must be given by a Christian intelligentsia with the benefit of true religious experience, if Christian symbolism was to be given new life:

The religious consciousness of the civilised world is a palimpsest in which the earlier writings, only half effaced, can be seen through, and sometimes actually blur, the text that is written above them.

Only a living Christianity which actively used its archetypes and symbols would be able to read from such a palimpsest, since:

There is always in the Church a minority of real 'disciples' and a majority of 'adherents'... [who use the Church's] symbols and its archetypes, but without having the genuine paradigmatic experiences from which these take their meaning.⁵³

Such adherents would merely read a cacophony of jumbled texts, meaningless or repellent to those more honest non-Christians who recognised the confusion for what

⁵⁰ H.A. HODGES, 'Towards a Logic of Christian Thinking', (March 27-30, 1942), *MOOTE*, BAI-05-05, p. 28. In his first paper on Christian Archetypes, Hodges added that "elaborate use of imagery is possible only to those who are fully familiar with it, and intelligible only to persons similarly qualified." He used the typical Christian imagery of salvation, with its ideas of "atonement", "reconciliation", "forgiveness" and "sacrifice", as an example. 'Christian Archetypes and Symbols', 22 June 1942, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-09, pp. 12-13. See also HODGES, 'The Problem of Archetypes', *CN-L*, No. 183, May, 1943.

⁵¹ The Moot, 'Notes on Discussion at the fourteenth Meeting', March 27-30, 1942, at 13 Norham Gardens, Oxford, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-03, p. 20.

⁵² Compare this with Sayers's remarks on aesthetics (see above, pp. 265ff).

⁵³ H.A. HODGES, 'Christian Archetypes and Symbols', 22 June 1942, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-09, p. 28.

it was. Hodges was beginning to see the Moot as a holy remnant, qualified to interpret the scratchings on the palimpsest because its members had experienced the spiritual reality behind the archetypes and symbols; he had also identified the problem of how the remnant could convey its experience to those whose minds were cast in a different mould altogether.

The concept of Christian archetypes had become by now central to his thinking about how to maintain the continued vitality of Christian self-expression, and even the survival of Christianity itself⁵⁴. He elaborated on it in a series of papers, from mid-1942 to the end of 1945⁵⁵. In the first of these, he defined an archetype as "an ideal or idealised human figure or group, embodying in typical form one or more qualities which are regarded as valuable", linking "the abstract formulae of moral and social theory" to practical realities. By means of archetypes, "the popular mind does most of its ethical thinking."⁵⁶ Yet archetypes could not be invented: Christianity had taken over existing archetypes, remoulding them in the light of "paradeigmatic experiences" of spiritual reality and their ethical connotations. These "paradeigmatic experiences" (a phrase borrowed from Mannheim)⁵⁷, had much in common with the mystical experiences of the "way up" and the "way down" described in Eliot's *Four Quartets*. They were "moments of heightened experience" and "hours of insight" in which decisions were made which would "become determinative for our life and thought during long periods lived on a lower level". Some arose naturally as human beings interacted with each other and with their environment; others depended upon interaction with the supernatural. The typical Catholic insistence that Christian ethics must arise out of dogmas about the nature of God found expression in Hodges' assertion that:

⁵⁴ This was also the case for Mannheim. See The Moot, 'Notes on Discussion at twelfth Meeting', 1-3 August 1941, at 13 Norham Gardens, Oxford, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-01, pp. 5-6.

⁵⁵ They were: 'Christian Archetypes and Symbols', 22 June 1942, BAI-05-09; 'More about Archetypes and Symbols', 28 August 1942, BAI-05-11; 'Some Tasks for Christian Thought', (n.d., 1942), BAI-05-12; 'Christian Archetypes, Paradigms, and Symbols in the Future', 22 October 1943, BAI-05-28; 'Archetypes and Paradigms', 6 September 1943, BAI-05-29; 'Paradigms and Archetypes', 22 November 1944, BAI-05-45; 'What is an Archetype?', 27 August 1945, BAI-05-46; 'Christian Archetypes and Paradigms', November 1945, BAI-05-47. He also published a *CN-L* supplement on 'The Problem of Archetypes', No. 183, 1943, and a related series on 'Christianity and the Modern World View' throughout 1948 (Nos. 305, 309, 313, 319, 322).

⁵⁶ H.A. HODGES, 'Christian Archetypes and Symbols', *MOOTE*, BAI-05-09, p. 2. Hodges accepted Jung's argument that archetypes were "stock symbols common to all mankind", but rejected his conception of their hereditary character. 'Christian Archetypes and Paradigms', November 1945, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-47.

⁵⁷ The phrase "paradeigmatic experience" was originally Mannheim's. See The Moot, 'Notes on Discussion at the fifteenth Meeting', 11-14 September 1942, at Jordans, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-04, p. 3. For a discussion of the "remoulding" process whereby Christianity "redeems" secular archetypes, see H.A. HODGES, 'More about Archetypes and Symbols', 28 August 1942, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-11, p. 5.

There is a logical progression from the idea of the nature of God, through His relation to creation and His acts of providence and revelation, to our own experience of Him, thence to our character and outlook as moulded by our relations with Him, and finally to the archetypes in which our moral outlook crystallises... What we believe about the acts of God... gives rise... to a set of interpretive concepts or categories, in terms of which we as Christians understand and react to events and situations.⁵⁸

Mannheim followed these observations to their logical conclusion in another paper, later that year. Religion was "not a moral ethical experience... but a way of interpreting life from the centre of some paradigmatic experience". He feared that in a secularised society, such experiences would cease, so that ethical questions would be decided in terms of efficiency. Ethical values would become means whose ends were forgotten, and those for whom "paradigmatic experiences are still relevant or alive", being unable to convey them to their contemporaries, would become culturally impotent⁵⁹. Thus Mannheim the sociologist, prompted by Hodges the philosopher, had voiced a concern for the loss of the dogmatic foundation of ethics which had much in common with MacKinnon's critique of Kant⁶⁰. He also voiced a plea for a contemporary presentation of Christian doctrine - a notion which resonated with Sayers the novelist's plan for an "Oecumenical Penguin"⁶¹.

Hodges followed Jung in contrasting those archetypes which were "human and civilised" with those which were demonic personifications of "destructive elemental forces". Fascism had allowed the former archetypes to be "possessed and perverted" by the latter. The question before the Moot was therefore, "Can the reverse process take place? Can the demons be exorcised and the elemental archetypes redeemed?"

⁵⁸ H.A. HODGES, 'Christian Archetypes and Symbols', June 1942, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-09, pp. 3ff. In Hodges' thought, paradigmatic experiences lead to the acceptance of certain "virtues and graces"; these are then embodied in "archetypes". The connection with Eliot's mystical experiences is further illustrated by another of Hodges' articles, 'Christian Archetypes, Paradigms, and Symbols in the Future', 22 October 1943, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-28, pp. 2ff, which provides a list of "paradigmatic experiences", including "Illumination, Intellectual joy, Aesthetic joy, Charity, Koinonia, Mental fight, Tragic tension, Victory, Depth, Peace".

⁵⁹ Karl MANNHEIM, 'Towards a New Social Philosophy: A Challenge to Christian Thinkers by a Sociologist. II: Christian Values and the Changing Environment', (n.d., late 1942) *MOOTE*, BAI-05-23, pp. 9ff. The Moot struggled to define the central Christian "paradigmatic experience". Mannheim contrasted the "experience which feels the world as fundamentally harmonious and that which feels the world as fundamentally demonic and frightening", but "After discussion it was agreed that the Christian paradigmatic experience is neither of the two..., but... an experience of victory through struggle, peace in and through conflict, assurance through facing the deepest fear." The Moot, 'Notes on Discussion at the fifteenth Meeting', 11-14 September, 1942, at Jordans, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-04, p. 3.

⁶⁰ See above, p. 87.

⁶¹ See above, Chapter 5, *passim*.

There were historical precedents. The Arthurian cycle provided an example of the process whereby "Christian imagination has taken pagan literary material and recast it in a Christian spirit". Hodges hoped that the same could be done for the cinema and the popular novel⁶², but not through a simple propaganda campaign, spearheaded by Christian artists, promoting the superficial brand of "edifying art" which Sayers would condemn. Like Sayers, Hodges insisted that any rebirth of religious archetypes must find expression in the popular arts, but "To try to educate people into public spirit by writing stories about public-spirited heroes is no use at all. The hero will be found unreal and the story will not be read."⁶³ Reviving Christian archetypes must be a more organic process: institutions must be moulded to favour them, and the revitalised understanding of archetypes among Christians must be combined with social reform. Once, people were inspired by "the visible images of paradigmatic lives... the saint, the monk, the heretic, the martyr, the ascetic in religious culture, the knight in chivalry"; now they thought in "bureaucratic" terms of a "life career"⁶⁴. There was more than a hint of the influence of Peck, Demant and Reckitt here, as there was in Hodges' faith that the Church was able to impart "supernatural life" to society through "her system of symbolic words and actions"⁶⁵.

This reliance on the typical arguments of Anglican Catholicism and the Christendom Group was also evident in Hodges' portrayal of God as the "Archetype of archetypes... [the] realisation of our ideals... in a form which we cannot understand". Here he was drawing upon the tradition of "reverent agnosticism" so prominent in *Essays Catholic and Critical*, and also upon the mystical tradition of *The Cloud of Unknowing*. God was both the source of meaning and, being absolute, the negation of meaning. Yet such traditions on their own were inadequate equipment for Christian life in the world: the idea of God must be "converted into terms which the discursive intellect can grasp".⁶⁶ One solution offered by Hodges in

⁶² Consequently, "we need the work of the poet in making Christianity visible." H.A. HODGES, 'More about Archetypes and Symbols', 28 August 1942, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-11, p. 5. Charles Williams was exploring this aspect of the Arthurian legend - and the blending of pagan and Christian elements in the myth of the Grail quest in particular - shortly before his death. See LEWIS, C.S., *Arthurian Torso: Containing the Posthumous Fragment of the Figure of Arthur by Charles Williams and a Commentary on the Arthurian Poems of Charles Williams by C.S. Lewis*, Oxford, 1948.

⁶³ H.A. HODGES, 'Archetypes and Paradigms in a Future Society', 6 September 1943, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-29, p. 7.

⁶⁴ Karl MANNHEIM, 'Sociology of Education. Preliminary Remarks', *MOOTL*, Item 11, pp. 1-6.

⁶⁵ H.A. HODGES, 'Towards a Logic of Christian Thinking', March 27-30 1942, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-05, p. 27.

⁶⁶ H.A. HODGES, 'Towards a Logic of Christian Thinking', March 27-30 1942, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-05, p. 24. For a discussion of the "negative side" by Hodges, see his 'Christian Archetypes and Symbols', 22 June 1942, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-09, p. 20: "God... can be conceived only by analogy... religion has made necessity into advantage and cultivated its symbol-vocabulary to a high degree of efficiency... Indeed, the rites themselves are acted metaphors... The negative side rests upon the one

1942⁶⁷, and greatly elaborated by him in 1945, was to recognise that God was the synthesis of all archetypes, or "the original Unity" from which they proceeded. Maritain's insistence on the possibility of an "integral" Christian humanism found further expression in Hodges' claim that God "embodies the deep unity of the human person... which is his highest aspiration", so that "God is more truly myself than I myself am".⁶⁸ This notion of God as the ideal self came in the context of a long-running discussion revolving around the perception that the chief evil of Nazism lay in its rejection of the idea of God. As Mannheim had put it in 1941, "the intellectual adventure of titanism broke the greatest archetype - that there must be something static and eternal" - the idea which Plato had enunciated so clearly.⁶⁹ However, Hodges proposed that the Christian revelation provided a further solution: the notion of Christ as the "Archetypal Man", God revealed through the Incarnation, "the substantial link between history and the absolute". Christ was the "integrating archetype", of which all others were merely "broken rays"⁷⁰.

These perceptions, explored most thoroughly in 1945, were the fruit of Hodges's long wartime reflections on Christ, the expression of the mind and character of God "in the archetypal form of a human life", whose sayings offered the "conceptual terms" by which that life was to be interpreted. The Incarnation was an unparalleled revelation, but it had also fulfilled a deep-seated need in the human psyche, evident in earlier ideas of "theophany" and of the "divine king who dies for his people". Hodges had written of the Incarnation in 1942: "We had thought of it before God did it."⁷¹ Such a phrase was calculated to infuriate the Barthians, but it was encouraging to the Catholic apologist who was, like Sayers, seeking to demonstrate the inherent and satisfying "logic" of the Incarnation. The Barthian Thomas F. Torrance, responding to an early version of Hodges' paper on 'Christian Thinking'⁷², insisted that "Christian truth is not something we already have", but a

attribute of God which sets Him essentially apart from us: His absoluteness... From this there comes a new understanding of what suffering can mean, a new belief in its necessity and value."

⁶⁷ 'Christian Archetypes and Symbols', BAI-05-09, pp. 2ff, 'Christian Archetypes, Paradigms and Symbols in the Future', BAI-05-28, p. 1.

⁶⁸ H.A. HODGES, 'Christian Archetypes and Paradigms', November 1945, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-47, pp. 1-2.

⁶⁹ The Moot, 'Notes on Discussion at twelfth Meeting', 1-3 August 1941, at 13 Norham Gardens, Oxford, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-01, p. 7. Mannheim pointed out that this "modern view" which "asked why the static should be more holy than the changing", had its religious parallels in Protestantism, and in the philosophy of Hegel, Croce and Bergson. It was inherent in the "abyss" of Kierkegaard, and in "the sense of chaos and disintegration which became intolerable for society..."

⁷⁰ H.A. HODGES, 'Christian Archetypes and Paradigms', November 1945, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-47, pp. 7ff.

⁷¹ H.A. HODGES, 'Towards a Logic of Christian Thinking', *MOOTE*, BAI-05-05, p. 25.

⁷² Torrance, a young Free-Church minister, had been invited by Baillie to comment on Hodges' paper. Baillie concurred with Maritain's criticisms of Barth, but was concerned to ensure that Barthian

divine revelation, and it was impossible to evangelise by "poetically kindling" the imagination⁷³. The Moot, deliberating on this challenge to its very foundations⁷⁴, decided to ignore his criticisms⁷⁵, and may have felt encouraged when, in the same month, the B.B.C. broadcast the first episode of *The Man Born to be King*.

Yet even the notion of Christ as Archetypal Man, Hodges urged, was insufficient guidance for Christian living, in a world so different from first-century Palestine. The veneration of Saints was in part a response of the Christian tradition to this problem: "they are a living interpretation of the spirit of Christ with reference to specific circumstances." However, this process of developing stock figures personifying the Christian virtues needed to go much further. Sayers had explored the mediaeval archetype of the craftsman in *The Zeal of Thy House*, but there was no archetype of a Christian scientist⁷⁶. Current educational policy advanced an individualistic archetype, when what was needed was a "citizen archetype."⁷⁷ There must be new presentations of the complementary roles of action and contemplation in the Christian life, of active Christian community, as well as archetypes of "the Christian in secular life... in industry and public affairs". Representations of Creation, and exegesis of the Biblical account of it, needed a thorough overhaul, as did angelology, in order to emphasise that humanity was "like the wretched Italy, drawn into someone else's war and compelled to fight amongst giants"⁷⁸. Ultimately,

viewpoints were represented in the Moot. John BAILLIE, 'Paper on Maritain's *True Humanism*', (n.d., written for third meeting of the Moot, 6-9 January, 1939) *MOOTE*, BAI-05-53, p. 8, and see CLEMENTS, 'John Baillie', pp. 215-217.

⁷³ Thomas F. TORRANCE, 'Christian Thinking Today', (circulated December 19-22 1941), *MOOTE*, BAI-05-06, pp. 3-5, 14. "...it cannot be helped if the outsider is blind to Christian truth. Something far more than language and thought will be required to make him see." Attempts to appeal to the human psyche by means of archetypes were doomed, because "outside the strict don-tradition, ordinary folk in this country are guided by impulses similar to those which the Nazis have dug out of the depths of their souls and deified."

⁷⁴ Gilbert SHAW responded that Torrance's argument seemed to stifle Christian action. There was therefore "a fundamental cleavage between Torrance's attitude... and all that the Moot stands for..." Criticism of Torrance's Paper', (n.d., early 1942), *MOOTE*, BAI-05-07, p. 1.) Hodges offered a detailed rebuttal of Torrance in 'Barthian and Christian Thinking', early 1942, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-08, p. 5.)

⁷⁵ The MOOT, 'Notes on Discussion at the Thirteenth Meeting', 19-22 December 1941, at 13 Norham Gardens, Oxford, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-02, pp. 12-14.

⁷⁶ H.A. HODGES, 'Christian Archetypes and Symbols', 22 June 1942, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-09, p. 24.

⁷⁷ H.A. HODGES, 'Archetypes and Paradigms in a Future Society', 6 September 1943, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-29, pp. 3ff. He later added that the modern world also needed an archetype of the "Christian *cursus vitae*", similar to that of Bunyan's Pilgrim, but adapted to modern conditions - a new Everyman, perhaps. Bunyan's Pilgrim was also inadequate because "it does less than justice to the corporate responsibility and the mutual coinherence of all Christians." H.A. HODGES, 'Christian Archetypes and Paradigms', November 1945, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-47, p. 11. Note that Bunyan's Christian possessed an archetypal appeal for the painter Hans Feibusch (see above, p. 134).

⁷⁸ H.A. HODGES, 'Christian Archetypes, Paradigms, and Symbols in the Future', 22 October 1943, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-28, p. 5. Hodges also discussed the problems of "Cosmogony" in 'Archetypes and Paradigms in a Future Society', 6 September 1943, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-29, pp. 11-12.

Hodges hoped to see the Church counteract the various "divisive archetypes based on social groupings" with a Christian archetype of "MAN". Democracy had produced its archetype of the citizen; Communism, that of the worker. Notions such as the superman, the little man and the plain man were "archetypes of enmity", defined by means of contrast with other groups. A "healthy civilisation" needed an aim and source of meaning arising out of a shared paradigmatic experience, for which only an archetype of "MAN" would do⁷⁹.

There were also archetypes and symbols in regular use by the Church which either needed to be made more accessible, or to be purged: "The chief contribution that the Church can make at this point to the development of healthy archetypes for political life is to subject her own archetypes and imagery to a spring-clean."⁸⁰ There was, Hodges felt, too much judicial imagery attached to doctrines of salvation⁸¹, and this was simply not understood by the general public. The Cross, the central symbol of Christianity, needed to be re-emphasised as a symbol of "self-naughting"⁸². Other aspects of the Church's language tended to retard Christian activism, not least the familial conception of authority, often used by the Church, which was problematic in the modern world, where authoritarianism benefited greatly from the idea of rulers being comparable to parents. This was why the Church had acquiesced in the development of feudalism and had never been comfortable since its decline.⁸³ Yet in 1945, he could still vindicate the familial archetype of society, and "the Platonic Idea" of the Church as the Family of God, as the ideological, although not the practical, basis for "natural forms of fellowship and association". Here was the same paradox of ecclesiology that MacKinnon, Ramsey and other younger Catholics were advancing: the contrast between the imperfect earthly Church, and the divinely instituted Church which was the "extension of the Incarnation". Hodges resolved the

⁷⁹ H.A. HODGES, 'Archetypes and Paradigms in a Future Society', 6 September 1943, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-29, pp. 10-11. Hodges distinguished this from H.G. Wells's archetype of "collective man", whose "highest paradigm is comradeship." H.A. HODGES, 'Paradigms and Archetypes in the Collective Commonwealth', 28 June 1945, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-45, p. 3.

⁸⁰ H.A. HODGES, 'Archetypes and Paradigms in a Future Society', 6 September 1943, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-29, p. 6.

⁸¹ H.A. HODGES, 'Christian Archetypes and Symbols', 22 June 1942, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-09, p. 4. "The popular notion is that the course of events goes on, partly in accordance with and partly in defiance of the will of God, and that on certain special occasions God bestirs Himself and does something unusual, and probably spectacular, to even out the scores and remind us that He is there." See also H.A. HODGES, 'Christian Archetypes, Paradigms, and Symbols in the Future', 22 October 1943, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-28, p. 4: "[We] Need to use more lavishly the idea of sin as disease and redemption as healing. This is biblical. It is readily intelligible. It is so nearly exact that it is hardly metaphor at all."

⁸² H.A. HODGES, 'Christian Archetypes and Symbols', 22 June 1942, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-09, pp. 5-6, 21.

⁸³ H.A. HODGES, 'Archetypes and Paradigms in a Future Society', 6 September 1943, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-29, p. 6.

paradox in precisely the same way: the eternal Church, the Church of God's intention was a "true archetype", and the "central act of her worship" was the Eucharist:

There is a sense in which the Church does not yet exist, but is continually being prayed into existence by Christ in the eucharist; and what she is in the eucharistic act is a prophecy and a foretaste of what she is to be continually hereafter.⁸⁴

In Hodges' thought, therefore, ecclesiology and eucharistic theology stood at the basis of any Christian plan for social action, since the true Church itself, as disclosed in the Eucharist, was the archetype from which the familial conception of social order arose. This cut at the roots of the misuse of the archetype of the family which led to acquiescence in authoritarian rule, because the head of the Church was the suffering Christ revealed in the Eucharist.

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The fact that Hodges could point to the Eucharist as the ultimate medium for conveying the archetypes of a Christian social order demonstrates that he expected any Christian initiative for restoring an ailing civilisation to be based primarily on spiritual and intellectual, rather than on pragmatic or political, action. The same was true of Eliot's contributions on religion and culture. The two most consistent Catholic contributors to the Moot were therefore committed to promoting an organic interchange of ideas between the wider British society and a cultured Christian élite⁸⁵ - or "clerisy", as Eliot came to prefer - but they were less keen on the notion that the Moot might form the basis of a political party. This reticence about direct political action - shared also by Vidler⁸⁶, whose contributions to Moot discussions in the early 1940s plumbed the depths of social pessimism - irked Mannheim, and has been seen in recent scholarship as evidence of a fundamental and permanent division in the

⁸⁴ H.A. HODGES, 'Christian Archetypes and Paradigms', November 1945, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-47, pp. 9-10.

⁸⁵ The Moot's wholesale acceptance, with the exception of Russel Acheson, of this assumption, was probably due to the influence of Maritain: "Are such principles applicable to the great mass of mankind, who are far from any preoccupation with sanctity? They concern the small number of those who may undertake the social and political guidance of this mass: a political fraternity of the future, who will have with regard to the inauguration of a new Christendom that *vocation of leadership*..." *True Humanism*, p. 245. Acheson's dissent is recorded in a letter to Oldham, 3 April 1940, *MOOTL*, Item 24, p. 1: "we are... too much confining our activities within a relatively small circle of a Christian élite, to the neglect of the mass of ordinary men in the pew and the street..."

⁸⁶ Eliot doubted "whether anything in the way of 'collective action'... was in the nature of the Moot." T.S. ELIOT, Letter for the Moot, 9 August 1943, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-30, p. 1. Vidler agreed. See KOJECKY, *T.S. Eliot's Social Criticism*, pp. 185-194.

Moot⁸⁷. Mannheim, ever the activist, wrote constantly of the need for an "Order" or "Party" which would implement a social programme devised by the Moot. In April 1940, he had hoped that the Moot would produce a programme for social action within three months. "Hitler started with six people", he told them, and, as Keith Robbins puts it, "Here were the makings, almost, of a Christian conspiracy."⁸⁸ He spoke of "revolution from above", to which Moberly reacted with mild consternation⁸⁹. However, Oldham had made it clear from the beginning that any such Order must contain "both conservatives and socialists", which, as Adolf Löwe perceived, favoured those who saw its function as "prophetic" rather than directly political⁹⁰. Yet their reticence about Mannheim's proposal did not conceal either Eliot's toryism or Hodges' acceptance of socialism as the only viable political alternative to communism or a decadent capitalism⁹¹. Robbins suggests that the Moot's failure to instigate direct social or political action was the result of its key members being busy academics, but it seems unlikely that many of them would have agreed to such a course in any case. Temple argued in his own work on the subject, *Christianity and Social Order*, that while it was possible for the individual Christian to recommend measures for social reform (he supplied his own in an appendix), it would be a mistake to think that Christians could form a truly representative political party⁹². Late in 1942, when the Beveridge Report⁹³ was being released, and the Moot

⁸⁷ KETTLER and MEJA, *Karl Mannheim and the Crisis of Liberalism*, p. 261. They cite (p. 265) a letter from Mannheim to Oldham, written in 1943, lamenting the Moot's lack of activism. For a record of VIDLER and Murry's "more gloomy view" of the dangers of cultural collapse, and of Mannheim's attempt to persuade them that social action on the part of Christians was still essential, see the former's *Scenes from a Clerical Life*, p. 119.

⁸⁸ Keith ROBBINS, 'Britain, 1940 and 'Christian Civilization'', in his *History, Religion and Identity in Modern Britain*, London, 1993, pp. 206, 207.

⁸⁹ KOJECKY, *T.S. Eliot's Social Criticism*, pp. 171-175. Gilbert SHAW, in a lunch hour sermon, Westminster, 1935, (quoted in HACKING, *Such a Long Journey*, pp. 53-54), had himself spoken about the necessity of "a revolution to put God in the Centre of its social life, to proclaim again the living Gospel as good news to the poor..." This motivated Shaw's ministry in the East End, a social application of the Gospel on a much smaller scale than that which Mannheim had in mind.

⁹⁰ Adolf LÖWE, 'Letter Regarding the 'Order'', to J.H. Oldham (n.d., 1939), *MOOTL*, Item 3 pp. 1-4. See also J.H. OLDHAM, *A Renewed Christendom*, Chapter I, 'The Issue', August 1939, *MOOTL*, Item 2, pp. 1-3.

⁹¹ Hodges' socialism may have been influenced by Paul Tillich, whose article on 'The Problem of Power' (published in 1931) was circulated among the Moot in December 1942, but even MARITAIN had spoken of the capitalist system as a "frankenstein of a usurious economy" (*True Humanism*, p. 108). In 'The Collective Commonwealth and the Christian', 22 January 1944, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-33, p. 8, Hodges could not agree with those who hoped to find a "third way" of accepting collectivisation which would avoid fascism and socialism alike: "if, as I believe, there is no third way, this policy is cryptofascist..." OLDHAM had called Christians to "active and discriminating support" of the Beveridge Report in the *CN-L Supplement* (No. 178, 24 March 1943), 'Christians and the Beveridge Report'.

⁹² William TEMPLE, *Christianity and Social Order*, Harmondsworth, 1942, p. 28.

⁹³ The Beveridge Committee on Social Insurance and Allied Services, set up in July 1941, completed its report in October 1942. It was written almost exclusively by Beveridge, and other members of the Committee declined to accept responsibility for it. He claimed that its aims were not merely the abolition of poverty, but also the redirecting of democracy and the reformulation of war aims. There

was anticipating a visit from Beveridge's publicist, Frank Pakenham, Hodges put his finger on the problem in a letter to Oldham: "The difficulty we find in reaching agreement is only a small fraction of the difficulty the world is finding." He personally sympathised with Pakenham's socialism, and was supported in this by Hetherington⁹⁴, but surmised that part of the function of the Moot was "in some small measure to endure and consecrate in our own experience the world's agony and frustration, and our ultimate significance may lie on the supernatural plane rather than in anything we can do in Church or State." The Moot was "running along two tracks at once and hoping to find that they meet". He had tried to merge them in his work on archetypes, but this was "not a genuine meeting-place". Moreover, he observed of his friend:

The Mannheim who chafes at his impotence in the immediate political issues of the hour conceals another Mannheim who is concerned about deep changes in the basic attitudes of men to life, and who thinks that a change is needed now which would compare with the change from the self-possessed Gallo-Roman nation to the sorrowing Virgin from the rood-screen at Halberstadt. I agree with him that such a change is needed, but I have no idea how or where it can happen. Certainly not in England in my lifetime. And from there I go forward, not to construct new types of freedom-loving civil servants and vocationally-minded piano-tuners, but to ask what the Cross means in the present and the future, and I find it an enigma. Has the Moot any higher function than to confront that enigma?... And what has it all to do with button-holing Cabinet Ministers?⁹⁵

Mannheim's desire for political action had, in fact, been eroded as it became clear that the other members were either confused or repelled by the notion of a political Order⁹⁶. His shift in emphasis was already evident at the end of 1941 when he defined the Moot as "a formulating group which realized that it could not act except in the educational and religious fields". It was not, after all, "the nucleus of an exploding body", but it retained its value "as a community with a definite spiritual history and mental tradition"⁹⁷. Early in the Moot's history, Oakeshott had described

was widespread public support, but little confidence that his proposals would be carried out. See Jose HARRIS, *William Beveridge: A Biography*, Oxford, 1997, p. 414.

⁹⁴ Hetherington was himself chairing a Commission on Workmen's Compensation at this time. *ibid.*, p. 370.

⁹⁵ H.A. HODGES, Letter to Oldham, 6 November 1942, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-26, p. 1.

⁹⁶ KETTLER and MEJA, *Karl Mannheim and the Crisis of Liberalism*, pp. 259-260.

⁹⁷ The Moot, 'Notes on Discussion at the thirteenth Meeting', 19-22 December 1941, at 13 Norham Gardens, Oxford, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-02, p. 19.

his own vision of an Order connected with the Moot which would not be an instrument of Christian political action or criticism, but "a body pledged to real obedience and to real devotion to the church... a body of servants". He wanted it to be associated with "one of the great cathedrals - say Durham?", holding weekly services there⁹⁸. Such a conception had more in common with a religious order than with a political party. In his last years, Mannheim came gradually to accept that a Christian élite was more likely to succeed in exerting such diffuse religious influence than in formulating a social policy. The turning point came at the meeting in March 1942. He spoke of the need to retranslate the values expressed, for example, in the Sermon on the Mount, into terms relevant to a mass society rather than to "a small neighbour community". Fred Clarke asked dubiously who was to do it. To Mannheim, the answer was obvious: the clergy must do it, otherwise they had "no justification". Vidler squirmed and "entered a plea to substitute the term *Clerisy* for Clergy. He felt that the clergy were so backward that to rest everything on them would be a mistake."⁹⁹

While the Moot would never agree on a political programme, Middleton Murry pointed out in September 1942 that it had come to accept "a kind of orthodoxy", summed up in Mannheim's phrase "Planning for Freedom"¹⁰⁰. The slogan was popular with members because, as Gilbert Shaw put it, "the dialectical negation of totalitarianism must be something positive and not a mere opposition, a restatement of values not in their past terms but in their present significance."¹⁰¹ Mannheim argued that political trends and international events were making increased emphasis on planning inevitable: totalitarian regimes had led the way, but the same would happen in Britain. Mobilisation for war had already set this process in motion; Britain now needed a deliberate policy of planning, proceeding along democratic lines.¹⁰² Mannheim's influence had been clearly visible as early as July 1940 in a

⁹⁸ "I suggest Durham partly because of the way it affects me - symbolising strength by its massiveness - partly because it belongs to the great age, *par excellence*, of the church, partly because it is not simply English, but Anglo-Norman, partly because (being in an area which is poor and which has been depressed) the church is not in so much danger there perhaps of being simply an ornament to middle-class civilisation." W.F. OAKESHOTT, 'Notes on the "Order"', (n.d., late 1939), *MOOTL*, Item 4, pp. 1-2.

⁹⁹ The Moot, 'Notes on Discussion at the fourteenth Meeting', March 27-30 1942, at 13 Norham Gardens, Oxford, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-03, p. 12.

¹⁰⁰ OLDHAM had summarised Mannheim's concept in the *CN-L* supplement, No. 104, 22 October 1941.

¹⁰¹ Gilbert SHAW to J.H. Oldham, (n.d., 1941 or 1942), *MOOTL*, Item 51, p. 2.

¹⁰² Karl MANNHEIM, 'The Crisis in Valuation', (n.d., late 1942), *MOOTE*, BAI-05-21, p. 10: "there must be something, a third way, between totalitarian regimentation on the one hand and the complete disintegration of the value system at the stage of *laissez faire* on the other. The third way is what I would call the democratic pattern of planning, or planning for freedom." See also his 'Towards a New

memorandum circulated among the Moot. The "English tradition" had produced a range of "institutions, customs and ideas" which favoured democratic action:

While such conditions offer a strong safeguard against the imposition of a totalitarian system upon England, much more deliberate planning and ordered integration will be required than have been necessary in the past. So far from this involving a diminution of freedom, it must be undertaken as essential to the maintenance of our traditional freedom in the kind of world in which we shall now have to live...

The memorandum recognised the risks of "a deadening and mechanized bureaucracy", and that state action might be "employed ruthlessly and blindly". These must be prevented by "a more lively and critical awareness of the central values of the [English] tradition along with a just comprehension of the conditions in which it will now have to maintain itself."¹⁰³ Indeed, Hodges' work on archetypes was, by his own admission, an attempt to show how the coming planned society could be given a "guiding purpose" compatible with Christianity¹⁰⁴. Certain members of the Moot did at least possess some power for exerting an influence on planning, by virtue of their positions in the educational system¹⁰⁵.

Social Philosophy: A Challenge to Christian Thinkers by a Sociologist. II: Christian Values and the Changing Environment', (n.d., late 1942), *MOOTE*, BAI-05-23, p. 10.

¹⁰³ Memorandum: 'An Initiative of the Churches towards a more Christian Society', 8 July 1940, *MOOTL*, Item 27, pp. 1-3.

¹⁰⁴ H.A. HODGES, 'Christian Archetypes and Symbols', 22 June 1942, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-09, p. 1. For a later statement of similar convictions, see F.R. BARRY, *Church and Leadership*, London, 1945, p. 146.

¹⁰⁵ The Moot was deeply concerned with the issue of educational reform, and this aspect of its agenda has been discussed in detail by William TAYLOR, 'Education and the Moot', in R. ALDRICH (Ed.), *In History and Education: Essays presented to Peter Gordon*, London, 1996, pp. 166ff. Moot papers dealing with the subject include: 'An Initiative of the Churches towards a more Christian Society', 8 July 1940, *MOOTL*, Item 27, pp. 2-3; F. CLARKE, 'Some Notes on English Educational Institutions: in the light of the necessities of "Planning for Freedom" in the coming Collectivized Régime', 21 August 1939, *MOOTL*, Item 7, pp. 1-25; Karl MANNHEIM, 'Sociology of Education. Preliminary Remarks', *MOOTL*, Item 11, pp. 1-6; Geoffrey VICKERS, 'Education, War, Change', *MOOTL*, Item 13, pp. 1-9; Walter MOBERLY, 'The Universities', *MOOTL*, Item 16; Adolf LÖWE, 'Some Notes on University Reform', *MOOTL*, Item 17; T.S. ELIOT, 'Christian Education', *MOOTL*, Item 58 (and see also ELIOT, 'Education in a Christian Society', *The Christian News-Letter*, No 20, March, 1940). A number of specific initiatives were advanced. Löwe suggested the setting-up of an experimental Teacher Training College, but Moberly saw only the logistical problems of staffing, recruiting and financing it. The MOOT, 'Notes on Discussion at seventh Meeting', 9-12 February 1940 at Old Jordan's Hostel, Beaconsfield, *MOOTL*, Item 14. The Moot's frustration about the state of British education was perhaps best encapsulated in Hodges' remark at the Ninth Meeting, July 12-15, 1940, at Old Jordans Hostel, Beaconsfield, *MOOTL*, Item 18: "What on earth do we mean by talking about democracy with an educational system such as we've got? That is the question that floors people from overseas when they come here..."

Murry was the first to question this consensus. In September, 1942, he wrote to Oldham about the "lack of 'reality' about the [recent] transactions of the Moot". It was not that he chafed for action as Mannheim did; indeed, "The general discovery that no 'action' at all is possible would be quite satisfying to me." However, it seemed that "the Moot is no longer engaged on a corporate *quest*". The Moot had uncritically accepted "Planning for Freedom", and no-one had discussed what, if anything, the Moot was to do about it. Murry clearly felt that it had bitten off more than it could chew. "I know I can do nothing about Planning for Freedom," he confessed to Oldham, "but I can do something quite parochial in struggling to create a patch of ordered freedom of a new kind". He had, in fact, been instrumental in setting up a farming community of pacifist university students, by his own admission edging himself "out of the main stream of society"¹⁰⁶. Eliot responded that he agreed with Murry about the "*quest*". It was another indication that Hodges' and Mannheim's attempts to synthesise religious thought with political action had failed. Eliot always agreed with those "who are not concerned with any immediate solution of anything", and submitted that the Moot operated best in bringing together "an exceptionally interesting variety of clinical cases for reciprocal examination."¹⁰⁷

Eliot's apolitical ambitions for the Moot were indeed encapsulated by the term "clerisy", used already by Vidler in 1942, but originally coined by Coleridge, a social critic whom Eliot admired¹⁰⁸. In 1944, he wrote on the subject for the Moot, insisting that the clerisy was "an *élite* and not a *class*". Classes were based on the family; clerisies on the individual, and "One of the chief merits of class is that it is an influence for stability; one of the chief merits of the clerical *élite* is that it is an influence for change." It was not their business to maintain culture, which was a task for society at large; rather, the clerisy consisted of "those individuals who originate

¹⁰⁶ Letter from J.M. MURRY, 14 September 1942, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-15, pp. 1-2. It was undoubtedly Murry who spoke to the Moot about "The attempt to form new agricultural communities where rural life could be re-established on better foundations... [for] people who were in one way or another disillusioned with urban values and wanted to break with capitalist-industrialist civilisation." The Moot, 'Notes on Discussion at the thirteenth Meeting', 19-22 December, at 13 Norham Gardens, Oxford, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-02, p. 21. Murry's farming experiment is also discussed by Philip MAIRET, *John Middleton Murry*, London, 1958, pp. 33-35, and in MURRY's own *Community Farm*, London, 1952.

¹⁰⁷ Letter from T.S. ELIOT, 20 December 1942, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-19, p. 1. Eliot's agreement with Murry is the more remarkable since Murry was in religious terms, as CLEMENTS ('John Baillie', p.202) observes, at "the farthest imaginable pole from Hodges and Eliot..."

¹⁰⁸ KOJECKY, *T.S. Eliot's Social Criticism*, pp. 19. Coleridge defined the clerisy as "the learned of all denominations, the sages and professors of the law and jurisprudence, of medicine and physiology, of music, of military and civil architecture, of the physical sciences, with the mathematical as the common organ of the preceding: in short, all the so called liberal arts and sciences, the possession and application of which constitute the civilisation of a country, as well as the theological." (*On the Constitution of Church and State*, 1830), quoted in Kojecky, p. 23.

the dominant ideas, and alter the sensibility, of their time", and therefore included creative artists. Moreover, they were drawn together by one shared characteristic: their dissimilarity not only from everyone else, but also from each other: "we cannot ask for any common mind, or any common action, on the part of clerics."¹⁰⁹

Mannheim responded that he was pleased that Eliot had seen fit to explicitly include Noel Coward among the clerisy. Coward would perhaps not have been flattered that Mannheim saw parallels between his role and that of "the gargoyles of Notre Dame which represent[ed] the underworld both in the language of theological symbols and in the language of pure visuality which made it intelligible to everybody", but the point was important: "popularisation" was not necessarily "dilution". Coward was not merely a mouthpiece through which the clerisy communicated with the masses; he was an artist in his own right. Here was another example of the conviction, especially resonant in the age of propaganda, that art for popular consumption must have a dramatic and aesthetic integrity of its own, rather than being a filtered version of the art of a cultured *élite*, employed merely to make its didactic purposes more palatable. Mannheim, in responding to Eliot, might have made much of Sayers's response to an early paper by Hodges on archetypes:

The business of the artist is, I think, not to instruct his audience, but to *be* his audience and express them. That is, he is the 'common man' of every age, only more articulate.¹¹⁰

Mannheim accepted, as Eliot did, that the clerisy was closely connected with the continuation of living traditions, and agreed that sociology should consider what social conditions helped keep them alive. Private discussion groups were one such device, giving "new ideas... time to mature before they are thrown into the open market"; another was the provision of opportunities for discourse between different clerisies.. Mannheim could not fail to notice that the Moot had provided both of these things. It was in this context that he offered a revised definition of Planning for Freedom:

Planning for freedom means so to organise that the organisation itself should establish within its own cosmos those rules and unwritten laws which protect the solitary thinker, unorganised thought, the attempt at transcending established routine, and conventionalisation against the

¹⁰⁹ T.S. ELIOT, 'Notes... On the Place and Function of the Clerisy', 10 November 1944, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-43, pp. 1-5.

¹¹⁰ Dorothy L. SAYERS, quoted in OLDHAM's Editorial of the *CN-L* (No. 183, June 2 1943).

impact of the stereotyped mind... As it is one of the essentials of democracy that it not only admits minorities and non-conformists... but ascribes creative significance to them, it is equally important that it should defend those minorities on whose constructive co-operation the life of culture depends...¹¹¹

The Moot might be impotent to resist the growing influence of totalitarianism on British society, but at least it could provide in itself a microcosm which had, in its own small way, planned for freedom.

Mannheim was coming to appreciate the position of Eliot and Murry, who were reminding the Moot that it was merely "a body of friends". Yet there was more to their reactions against Mannheim's activism - itself more theoretical than practical - than the knowledge of the Moot's political impotence. Eliot, preoccupied with the problem of how the mystic must live in the modern world, was filling his poetry with the language of the *via negativa*. Murry, a pessimist about political action, refused to compromise with total war, and had "opted out". He was living in "a small, experimental community" with others who "felt the impossibility of the present social order". They ate communally, and "lived in frugality and poverty," in neither of which, perhaps, they were particularly remarkable in wartime Britain. For the Moot, the problem of reconciling the positions of the "Yogi and the Commissar", the quietist and the activist, had first arisen in discussion during February 1940. Fenn considered that "there was a gulf between the older people, who still thought of this war in terms of 1914, and the younger men and women who appeared to regard it as almost amoral - on a par with cosmic catastrophe." Amongst young people, the greatest vitality seemed to be expressed in semi-communal groups, most of them pacifist. Oldham summarised a letter from MacKinnon which emphasised this gulf, arguing that "War was calling on destruction to destroy destruction. All we could do was prepare the martyrs and care for the suffering, hoping that the Church might be able to bear witness at last to the Truth." Gilbert Shaw agreed, pointing out that such an attitude was an improvement on the Church's acquiescence during the last war in

¹¹¹ Karl MANNHEIM, Letter in response to T.S. Eliot, 20 November 1944, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-41, 1-8. For a discussion of the degree to which their papers on the clerisy revealed the differences between Mannheim and Polanyi, see KETTLER and MEJA, *Karl Mannheim and the Crisis of Liberalism*, pp. 267-268. Polanyi's assertions that "The first function of the clerisy is to keep the mental heritage alive and hand it on to its successors", and that each clerisy "is a miniature society of experts whose function is to supervise the apprenticeship of novices, to preside over the discussions of mature members and pronounce a verdict on their achievements", contradict Eliot's and Mannheim's emphasis on the importance of more "popular" clerics. They may have concurred, however, that clerisies provide "a rightful ground to stand up against oppression by the State" Michael POLANYI, Letter to the Moot, 18 November 1944, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-40, p. 3.

"the use of religion for bolstering up national morale", a blunder the effects of which were still being felt in the East End. Moberly felt that MacKinnon's attitude was an admission that "the course of events was completely out of hand", and wondered what the effect would be on "Christian action". He insisted that "The triumphant note in Christianity could not be (as Hodges maintained) purely transcendental or only after catastrophe had come (as MacKinnon felt)." In MacKinnon's defense, Shaw replied, "the reason for the black despair in some people was that the catastrophe appeared wholly evil, and they saw no hope for a Christian answer." Vidler, while accepting that others were less pessimistic, agreed that "MacKinnon represented an insight into the signs of the times which was lacking in older people. We were at the end of an order of society, and action was not open on a large scale, but only to individuals and groups." Oldham also feared that "things were going to move so as to submerge all individual effort", but Mannheim rejoined that "in that case there would still be time to form your monasteries" when civilisation had collapsed, but "At present, we were in the active, formative period before the situation crystallised." At this stage he still believed that the Moot could achieve much by influencing people in key positions. Murry's response was decisive:

J.M. Murry said there was a deep difference involved here. We were a tiny minority, and even so needed a greater unity of purpose and concrete faith than we possessed. You could either believe in the possibility of seizing Key [sic] positions or you couldn't. He couldn't. He was paralysed by people in key positions.¹¹²

In the same month, Murry delivered an address, 'A Christian Looks at the World', on the B.B.C. Home Service. For him, Christianity was based on the fact of Christ crucified. Belief in progress was un-Christian; rather, "The mark of the Christian mind is that it is prepared to go into the melting pot over and over again. Its progress is through death into life; through submission to the unbearable fact to a new knowledge of the eternal truth, and a new effort to live by it."¹¹³ Maritain would have agreed; for him, Christian heroism derived from a different source from other forms of heroism; it originated "in the heart of a God scourged and turned to scorn and crucified outside the city gate." When the Christian tried to transform social life,

¹¹² The MOOT, 'Notes on Discussion at seventh Meeting', 9-12 February 1940 at Old Jordan's Hostel, Beaconsfield, *MOOTL*, Item 14, pp. 7-10.

¹¹³ J. Middleton MURRY, 'A Christian Looks at the World', Introductory Talk for B.B.C. Home Service, Friday, 16th February 1940, *MOOTL*, Item 20, p. 7. This was one of the last radio talks to be given by a pacifist (on any subject) in wartime: the state of national emergency beginning in May 1940 resulted in the banning of pacifist broadcasters. Another prominent pacifist, Charles Raven, was told that he could not even take the microphone to talk about birds. See F.W. DILLISTONE, *Charles Raven: Naturalist, Historian, Theologian*, London, 1975, pp. 344-345; 359 (n. 4).

there was a temptation to try to be a merely secular hero, to the detriment of sanctity. There were two parallel dangers: "the danger of seeking sanctity only in the desert, and the danger of forgetting the need of the desert for sanctity"¹¹⁴. MacKinnon was underlining this dilemma when he suggested to Hodges in 1942 that there was a need to synthesise the Yogi and the Commissar. For Hodges, these represented "partly the ancient dialectic of active v contemplative... [and partly] an instance of conflict between an archetype belonging to the age of the great religions and philosophies and another belonging to the age of planning and administration." Christians must try to resolve this dialectic, because the strengths and weaknesses of the two positions could be exploited either for good or for evil:

Both the Yogi and the Commissar are ambivalent types; each has possibilities of self-devotion which promise something good, and each has the temptation of power. It is not only a tension between them, but a real battle within each of them. They could be mated on the basis of what is good in each, and we should then have the saint in business and politics; or on the basis of what is bad in each, and we should then have a sinister combination of psychic power with material efficiency.¹¹⁵

The Moot was vocal in its diagnoses of the "disintegration" of western culture, and had made its various prescriptions along the lines of the revivification of archetypes and Planning for Freedom, but the problem of the Yogi and the Commissar, a significant impediment to the kinds of treatment it was recommending, was beyond it. In the past, Mannheim explained, it might have been possible to regard Christianity as a private and interpersonal matter, but not in a planned society¹¹⁶. The position of the Yogi, once possible, was now irresponsible. Yet if there was a possibility that the present civilisation might be destroyed, the Yogi's witness remained valuable, offering the chance that faith might be preserved in the midst of catastrophe. Hodges pointed out that "the asceticism of withdrawal" was "an invitation to escape, pessimistic in its estimate of the empirical world, and attractive to introverted minds." By contrast, the Commissar looked to an "historical messianism" with a misplaced "faith in time". The alternative was a Christian

¹¹⁴ Jacques MARITAIN, *True Humanism*, p. 115, quoting his own *Freedom in the Modern World*, p. 142. See also J.H. OLDHAM, *A Renewed Christendom*, Chapter V, 'The Dual Task', August 1939, *MOOTL*, Item 2, pp. 15-19: "a general withdrawal of Christians from participation in social activities would be the abandonment of the common life and the civic sphere to the control of other forces."

¹¹⁵ H.A. HODGES, 'More about Archetypes and Symbols', 28 August 1942, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-11, p. 5. Compare this with the quotation of C.S. Lewis's *Preface to Paradise Lost* above, pp. 180-181.

¹¹⁶ Karl MANNHEIM, 'Towards a New Social Philosophy: A Challenge to Christian Thinkers by a Sociologist. I: Christianity in the Age of Planning (Prolegomena)', (n.d., late 1942), *MOOTE*, BAI-05-22, p. 8.

eschatology looking towards a transcendent future. Three months after Hiroshima, Hodges urged that Christianity must "talk to the world about time", otherwise:

The two errors described above will share the world between them; for the collective commonwealth will adhere to historical messianism and cast itself for the role of messiah, while the movements of reaction, the intellectual and spiritual counterirritants which it will generate within itself, will go over to withdrawal.¹¹⁷

Ultimately, it was not the advent of a planned society, but the exploding of the atomic bombs, which would compel a detailed discussion of this problem, which had haunted Christian discourse throughout the war¹¹⁸.

Murry's withdrawal was based on a loss of hope for civilisation, and a desire to maintain a Christian witness come what might. Hodges, however - stirred perhaps by Mannheim's prophecy in 1941 that the Church would be tempted to slip into "a form of Pétainism: a revival of the appeasement policy... [which] would cover a transition to a totalitarian order"¹¹⁹ - feared a different kind of withdrawal, namely the rise in Britain of a puerile Church which would acquiesce in the actions of a power-hungry State. Such a church, "the Christian Racket"¹²⁰, as Hodges called it, would be, in Bell's words, the State's "spiritual auxiliary", dulling people's responses to an incipient totalitarianism, encouraging reactionary tendencies and the misuse of Christian conceptions of authority, and utilising misconceived forms of Christianity. Its antithesis would be a confessional Church which would prove, as Mannheim had hoped, that "it was still possible in this country to be progressive and religious at the

¹¹⁷ H.A. HODGES, 'Christian Archetypes and Paradigms', November 1945, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-47, p. 6.

¹¹⁸ For a discussion of the Commission on *The Era of Atomic Power* and Donald MacKinnon's contributions on the problem of the Yogi and the Commissar, see below, Chapter 7, *passim*.

¹¹⁹ The Moot, 'Notes on Discussion at twelfth Meeting', 1-3 August 1941, at 13 Norham Gardens, Oxford, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-01, pp. 6-7. Mannheim later criticised "a romantic mediaevalism, the creed that everything is better because it is old... In its most dangerous form it leads to a kind of "Pétainism" which seeks to overcome the evils of modern society by cloaking it in the pageantry of the past." Karl MANNHEIM, 'Towards a New Social Philosophy: A Challenge to Christian Thinkers by a Sociologist. II: Christian Values and the Changing Environment', (n.d., late 1942), *MOOTE*, BAI-05-23, p. 1.

¹²⁰ Consciousness of the problem of a "Christian Racket" may be traced to the early meetings of the Moot. At the second meeting in 1938, William Paton had argued that the Moot was too concerned about the decline of "Christian society", and cited the established Church as a guarantee of Christian influence on the British state. Baillie replied that on the contrary, this "showed... a concordat between the State and the Cultus, whereas Murry... was pleading for public policy directed by Christian principles." CLEMENTS, 'John Baillie', p. 208. Later, Oldham asserted: "If you wanted a persecuted Church... it implied persecuted Archbishops as well as laymen. We had to attack power and privilege." The MOOT, 'Notes on Discussion at seventh Meeting', 9-12 February 1940 at Old Jordan's Hostel, Beaconsfield, *MOOTL*, Item 14, p. 20.

same time."¹²¹ In 1945, Hodges continued to feel that a British planned society would come into being "piecemeal and in a conservative spirit", but that this would be exploited by vested interests and lead to the evasion of hard choices. Such a society would encourage a blinkered philosophical idealism, and:

With such a use of idealist philosophy would go also the use of a form of Christianity. The state would support a Christian institution, which in return would expect to be docile and helpful. The set of ideas which I have summed up as "the Christian racket"... would be put across. There are clear traces of this already in the religious and educational life of Britain.

Hodges insisted that art, philosophy and religion must respond with creative criticism, dissenting from "official myths and pretences and... prevailing motives and standards." He warned that such resistance would be mere cynicism unless founded upon religious conviction; however:

The official Church, I think, will not go so deep. It will try to continue what has been a long tradition of alliance with the world, in spite of increasing difficulties... What is coming now is a positivistic humanism with a touch of obscurantism and a wholly immanentist outlook. Official Christianity will dislike the pantheist and naturalist philosophies prevailing, but will still cling to the idea of an alliance with the system. If in our country the system takes the conservative form which itself has a use for Christianity, the advent of a new byzantinism is certain.

This must be countered, from within the Church, by "a sort of confessional movement," which, in Hodges's conception, bore much in common with the notion of tradition as defined by *Essays Catholic and Critical*. It might divide the Church, but at all costs it must maintain "a critical assessment of the Christian tradition itself". It would be compelled to sever many of its moorings to Hellenic culture, and become cognisant of modern science. It must develop its own polemic, centring on dogmatic exposition.¹²² The collective commonwealth would undoubtedly try to appropriate for itself the symbols and rituals of the Church. It would sing "And did those feet" and "I vow to thee, my country", and might speak of the Kingdom of God,

¹²¹ Karl MANNHEIM, 'Towards a New Social Philosophy: A Challenge to Christian Thinkers by a Sociologist. I: Christianity in the Age of Planning (Prolegomena)', (n.d., late 1942), *MOOTE*, BAI-05-22, p. 2.

¹²² H.A. HODGES, 'Paradigms and Archetypes in the Collective Commonwealth', 28 June 1945, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-45, pp. 8-9.

"but always on one assumption: God must be the daemon of the collective commonwealth itself". Accordingly, "the test of the Christian who knows his business will be his refusal to acquiesce in this usurpation".¹²³

The success of such a confessional Church depended on renouncing many attitudes commonly considered Christian. When the Moot attempted to define human rights in terms of fellowship and rootedness, security and status, Hodges admitted that the Church had a quite respectable record, but when the words "function" and "initiative" were introduced, he pointed out that "Among Christians generally, but especially among Catholics, these principles are cut across by the rival principles of *hierarchy, authority, and obedience*." There were too many representations of the Blessed Virgin which portrayed humility as submissiveness.. It was not humility to allow oneself to be trampled upon by one's rulers¹²⁴. In addition, such a confessional Church must purge itself of a "Father theology" which either "encourages a too-comforting conception of Christianity", or defines God as an arbitrary dictator. Such doctrines of God attempted to dragoon people into belief by exploiting their fear, as did legalistic doctrinal systems which defined salvation in terms of "penalties" and "satisfaction". These were no better than the totalitarianism that Christianity was pitted against.¹²⁵ The tendency among Catholics to think the Church infallible must be avoided: the Church could not criticise the State if it did not criticise itself. A confessional Church would condition its members "to suspect all dogmatic formulae, *including its own*, to seek God beyond all images, *even the images of God*." In this sense, it would be a new iconoclasm, a new Puritanism, but it would recognise that "The proper place for iconoclasm is not in public worship, but in the recesses of each individual soul." Its adherents would be few; there would be plenty of "more conformable" versions of Christianity to choose from, which did not insist on teaching Christian doctrines of human rights, arising out of the paradigmatic experience of the reality of God, and did not insist on Maritain's concepts of dignity, freedom and "rehabilitation of the creature in God." Like the Confessional Church in Nazi Germany, it would be discouraged by the State and the

¹²³ H.A. HODGES, 'Christian Archetypes and Paradigms', November 1945, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-47, p. 11.

¹²⁴ H.A. HODGES, 'The Collective Commonwealth and the Christian', 22 January 1944, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-33, pp. 14ff. Hodges acknowledged that the Free Churches often had a "creative moral and social force" which compared favourably with Roman Catholicism, a system which "narrows the limits of responsible choice, and breeds the kind of mind which clamours for guidance everywhere and cannot endure to have to make a decision."

¹²⁵ H.A. HODGES, 'Christian Archetypes and Paradigms', November 1945, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-47, p. 40. "A protestant writer has said that a God Who is conceived as akin to and so 'continuous with' man 'lacks the essential attributes of Godhead...' I take this to be pretty nearly the opposite of the truth. God can justly command because He is our own deepest self... He embodies the deepest desires of all persons, ourselves included, and is precisely *not* ontologically over against."

official Church¹²⁶. It would recognise, as Moberly had insisted in 1941, that Christianity was not "wholly inward", even though at times "martyrdom might be the only adjustment possible". It would find a balance between the type of thought which placed a priority on the survival of civilisation, and that which admitted that "the Christian way might involve a crash and that if so it was not to be burked."¹²⁷ In short, it would revive what Maritain had called "the old combat of the christian faith against the despotism of the powers of this world."¹²⁸

MacKinnon, writing to the Moot on 'Christianity and Science' in 1944, insisted that even those "powers of this world" which seemed well-disposed towards Christianity, such as those represented by the Conservative Sub-Committee Report on Education, could not escape their essential nature. The Report had attempted to exploit the machinery of power politics for the purpose of "imposing a certain traditional cultural pattern upon the citizens of this land." That pattern was supposedly Christian, but MacKinnon called it "sinister", because "Christianity so integrated in a power-political set-up would necessarily differ *toto caelo* from the conformity to the death and resurrection of the Messiah in the fellowship of the Church of which the New Testament speaks."¹²⁹ For Christians to meddle with political entanglements in this way was in direct contradiction of everything that the Moot had learnt, from the days of its first meeting when Dawson had said that "obviously the solution ultimately is a totalitarian Christian Order", and Eliot had replied with horror "that the best thing a totalitarian state could do would be to abdicate"¹³⁰. The Moot's acceptance that the cure for an ailing civilisation was not for Christians to seize power, had been evident in the encouragement it gave to Hodges' work on archetypes: here was a task for Christian thought and action which would affect society more by osmosis than by imposition. Such tactics were more appropriate in an age in which, as MacKinnon put it, one ought not to expect the Church to "produce, like a conjurer's rabbit from his hat, a solution for the deepest antinomies of our thought and life." Modern Christian faith must "reflect the

¹²⁶ H.A. HODGES, 'Christian Archetypes and Paradigms', November 1945, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-47, p. 38. Hodges did not expect that it would be possible for this confessional Church to inaugurate a new Christendom, but a hypothetical society operating according to its teachings, would adapt its legal institutions "in the interests of persons rather than of property or hereditary status". Church and society would be mutually critical, and cultural and scientific freedom would be maintained (pp. 35-38). Hodges' vision was strongly influenced by MARITAIN's *True Humanism*, p. 65.

¹²⁷ The Moot, 'Notes on Discussion at the thirteenth Meeting', 19-22 December 1941, at 13 Norham Gardens, Oxford, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-02, p. 3.

¹²⁸ MARITAIN, *True Humanism*, p. 154.

¹²⁹ Donald MACKINNON, 'Christianity and Science', 29 September 1944, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-37, p. 9.

¹³⁰ KOJECKY, *T.S. Eliot's Social Criticism*, pp. 163-164.

insecurity and uneven temper of our days."¹³¹ In expecting that collectivisation would continue or increase after the war, the Moot arguably made an error of judgement: the more pressing issue would be, as Mairet and MacKinnon were predicting, how to cope with the enormous problems of casuistry raised by a new scientific invention. Yet in defining the difference between a confessional Church and "the Christian Racket", Hodges and the Moot had accurately predicted the dilemmas that would face the Church after 1945. Several members had also plumbed the depths of the Moot's hopes and fears. The talk of diagnoses, panaceas and cures for Christian civilisation might all be a waste of time. At one point, Murry had asked "*what we wished to survive?*" since "Mere survival had little significance". Gilbert Shaw, too, warned that "We might be bolstering up what had to die: we might see the breakup of our whole intellectual and religious world". If so, it was imperative to "hold to fundamentals" and "face the strain of the Dark Night... The real foundation was pessimism and a transcendent faith."¹³² In the current situation, the most powerful archetype might well be Christ crucified. On Good Friday, 1941, Eliot had written to Fred Clarke:

With regard to the Christian future, I find I have to warn myself against being either optimistic or pessimistic: for in either mood I am probably hoping or despairing about only human schemes: and if there is a brighter future preparing it must almost necessarily be invisible.¹³³

It was a perception which would seem all the more apt in 1945, when the full extent of the Nazi death-camps and the atomic bombs was disclosed, and Christians were confronted with atrocity on an unprecedented scale.

¹³¹ Donald MACKINNON, 'Christianity and Science', p. 9.

¹³² The Moot, Notes on Discussion at tenth Meeting, 10-13 January 1941, at Downe House, Cold Ash, *MOOTL*, Item 38, p. 10.

¹³³ T.S. ELIOT to F. Clarke, Good Friday, 1941, *MOOTL*, Item 57, pp. 1-2.

Chapter

7

**"The continuing beastliness of mankind":
Graham Sutherland's *Crucifixion* and the Commission
on *The Era of Atomic Power* as Responses to Wartime
Atrocity**

In February 1944, after consulting with Bishop Bell and the sculptor Henry Moore, Walter Hussey, an Anglican Catholic vicar and an enthusiastic patron of the arts¹, asked the Roman Catholic artist Graham Sutherland to paint a picture for his Northampton parish church, St. Matthew's. Hussey suggested an *Agony in the Garden*, as a counterbalance to Moore's sculpture in the north transept, the serene *Madonna and Child* (1943-1944). Sutherland agreed, but said that he would prefer the challenge of a *Crucifixion*². He had worked throughout the war for Kenneth Clarke's War Artists' Advisory Committee, on drawings and paintings of the devastation caused by German bombs at Swansea, in the Welsh countryside and in London, and recording scenes from the Cornish tin-mines, the steel foundries at Cardiff and the Woolwich Arsenal, and the open-cast coal mining at Abergavenny. Finally, he had travelled to liberated France to draw the results of the R.A.F. bombing in St. Leu and Trappes³. Clarke's patronage had been generous: for the first time in his career, Sutherland had not been compelled to fall back upon teaching to finance his painting. Moreover, Clarke's ulterior motive had met with success: Sutherland had survived the war. In the spring of 1945, his contract as a war artist ended, he went with his wife Kathleen for a holiday in Pembrokeshire, and wandered

¹ Garth TURNER, "Aesthete, Impresario and Indomitable Persuader": Walter Hussey at St. Matthew's, Northampton, and Chichester Cathedral', in Diana WOOD (Ed.) *The Church and the Arts*, Oxford, 1995, pp. 526-527, explores Hussey's correspondence with George Bell, (WH, MS 317). Later, Bell gained Hussey's appointment as Dean of Chichester. See also Michael DAY, *Modern Art in English Churches*, London, 1984, pp. 24-26. Hussey's commissions at St. Matthew's included: Malcolm Arnold (*Laudate Dominum*, Psalm 150 for Choir and Organ, 1950); W.H. Auden ('Litany and Anthem for S. Matthew's Day', 21 September 1946); Edward Barnsley, (oak furniture designs, 1947 and 1949); BBC Broadcast Organ recitals (1941-2); BBC Symphony Orchestra (Broadcast 2 October 1943); Lennox Berkeley (*Festival Anthem*, 1945); Benjamin Britten (*Rejoice in the Lamb*, 21 September 1942; *Prelude and Fugue on a Theme of Vittoria*, 1946); Sir John Ninan Comper (credence, 1944); Harold Craxton (Piano recitals, 1943; accompanied Kirsten Flagstad, 1947); Gerald Finzi (*Lo, the Full, Final Sacrifice*, Festival Anthem, 1946); Christopher Headington (*An Anthem for S. Matthew's Day*, 1948); Colin Horsley, (Piano recital, patronal festival, 1948); Henry Moore (*Madonna and Child*, 1943); Norman Nicholson, (Poem 'The Outer Planet', printed as a pamphlet, 1949); Edmund Rubbra (Setting of Henry Vaughan's 'The Revival', 1944); Denis Tegetmeier (memorial inscription for Hussey family members, Lady Chapel, 1946-7); Michael Tippett (*Fanfare for St. Matthew's*, 21 September 1943).

² Roger BERTHOUD, *Graham Sutherland: A Biography*, London, 1982, p. 114.

³ The dates of Sutherland's W.A.A.C. commissions were: Devastation drawings, September 1940 - December 1941; Cornish tin-mines, 1942; steel foundries, 1942; coal mining, 1943; bombed sites in St. Leu and Trappes, autumn 1944. A detailed, illustrated account of these commissions is given by Roberto TASSI, *Sutherland: the Wartime Drawings*, London, 1979.

about the countryside, enjoying the fine weather and meditating on his new ecclesiastical commission. "For the first time," Sutherland later related, "I started to notice... the structure of thorn bushes as they pierce the air", and he began to draw. Sutherland habitually made numerous sketches, and, when he drew natural forms, tended to begin with detailed, realistic representations, and then gradually to simplify, pruning away all but the most necessary elements, producing paintings bordering on abstraction, yet derived from natural forms [Plate 21]. "As the thorns rearranged themselves," he related, "they became, while still retaining their own pricking, space-encompassing life, something else - a kind of 'stand-in' for a crucifixion and a crucified head."⁴ For an artist who had begun his career by making meticulous Palmeresque engravings⁵, it was an unusual and disturbing subject to choose on an idyllic spring day. The thorns became Sutherland's archetypal symbols of cruelty and pain. The fact that the symbolism was drawn from nature served to underline a preoccupation that was to become central to his own thinking about the crucifixion: cruelty was something that occurred naturally, lurking behind even the most idyllic façade. His work as a war artist may have inspired him to use such a symbol, but he was also affected by the disclosures about the Nazi concentration camps. The *Crucifixion*, completed for St. Matthew's in 1947, documented the Nazi atrocities as his work earlier in the 1940s had documented the war.

If the Northampton *Crucifixion* was one response, approved by the Church, to the disclosures of 1945, the British Council of Churches' Commission on *The Era of Atomic Power* was another. MacKinnon's contributions to it, endorsed by Bell⁶, revealed the degree to which theologians, churchmen and artists were sharing similar concerns. In August 1945, Bell, having gained a reputation as the Bishop who had protested against obliteration bombing, was inundated with letters about the atomic bombs⁷. Maurice Reckitt was among the first to write, seeking guidance on the "vast

⁴ Graham SUTHERLAND, 'Thoughts on Painting', *The Listener*, 6, September 1951; and see BERTHOUD, *Graham Sutherland*, p.120; Horton DAVIES, 'Anglicanism's Appreciation of Visual Art', in Donald S. ARMENTROUT (Ed.), *This Sacred History: Anglican Reflections*, Massachusetts, 1990, pp. 178-179; Gordon H. BENNETT, *Sutherland in Pembrokeshire*, 1995, p. 14-15.

⁵ See Malcolm YORKE, *The Spirit of Place: Nine Neo-Romantic Artists and their Times*, London, 1988, pp. 109-114; Ronald ALLEY, *Graham Sutherland*, London, 1962, pp. 57-63.

⁶ Bell joined the Commission "reluctantly (in view of many commitments)" (BELL to Christopher Dawson, 11 December, 1945, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, ('Nuclear Bomb 1945-1951') f. 79.), and was clearly grateful that MacKinnon was able to voice opinions similar to his own.

⁷ Bell collected newspaper clippings documenting nuclear scientists' horror that the bombs had been used on cities. *BELLP*, Vol. 113, pp. 48ff. Forty thousand people were killed instantly by the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. Japanese authorities tried to find a "surrender formula", but could not forestall the second attack on Nagasaki on 9 August. By the end of 1945, this second bomb was responsible for seventy thousand deaths. Emperor Hirohito prepared his surrender speech, but could not deliver it in time to prevent a further incendiary attack by a thousand bombers. If the obliteration bombing campaigns had not qualified for the label "atrocious", these last two acts of retribution,

problem of the *modes* of contemporary warfare". He wanted the Archbishops to appoint a Commission "equal in weight" to those which had reported on Doctrine in 1938 and Evangelism in 1945, "to examine the enormous issues [raised by] the use of contemporary techniques of destruction". A naval chaplain wrote that he had always accepted the Just War of Catholic moral theology, but now felt that "the Allies have gone beyond the bounds of the legitimate use of Force and have committed a crime and a sin not only upon the Japanese but upon the whole human race, and have adopted such means as cannot be justified by the ends in view". By using the bombs, the allies had "fallen into precisely the errors which up till quite recently we... appeared to condemn", thus making a mockery of the trials of Nazi war criminals, while the leaders of the Church stood condemned by their silence⁸. Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence hoped that the Christian Church would provide a lead for a "popular reaction against violence, cruelty and war"; she felt that there was already a "very great subconscious protest against the use of the atomic bomb"¹⁰. Other correspondents wrote logically inconsistent letters which revealed their confusion. "Unfortunately," one wrote, "the Japanese civilian population is a potential source of supply for future Japanese Armies, Navies and Air Forces. If two atom bombs are going to destroy part of this potential, then I wish the Americans would drop another two dozen and make a final job of it once and for all." He concluded, however, that the atomic bomb would soon be "in the arsenal of every potential war-mongering country", and predicted that it would be left to "outraged nature" to call a halt, "with the ultimate disintegration of the world."¹¹

All of these letters made explicit the need for an authoritative pronouncement from the Church on the atomic bombs, dealing both with the problem of the legitimacy of their use in 1945, and with the new ethical dilemmas they presented. This need was expressed in a petition presented to the Archbishops in the same month. The signatories subscribed to a variety of views about the atomic bomb.

showcases of Allied military superiority, surely did. See Richard OVERY, *Why the Allies Won*, London, 1995, p. 127.

⁸ Maurice B. RECKITT to George BELL, 14 August 1945, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, f. 13. See also Bell's reply, 21 August 1945, f. 17, and Douglas LOEBACH to George Bell, 21 August 1945, f. 23: "Cannot something be done, by authority in the C. of E., to clear up the amazing moral confusion that exists over the question of war and what is legitimate for the Christian in warfare? ... The official line seems to be that the end (shortening a war) justifies *any* means whatever. I do not see how the Christian who stands on that footing can possibly do so as a Christian."

⁹ H.A. John WINDLE, to George Bell, 14 August 1945, *BELLP*, Vol. 113., f. 14. Windle excluded Bell from this condemnation, because he had immediately written a letter of protest to *The Times*.

¹⁰ Emmeline PETHICK-LAWRENCE to George BELL, 20 August 1945, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, f. 19.

¹¹ Sergeant N.J. CHATFIELD to George Bell, 27 August 1945, *BELLP*, Vol. 113., f. 29. Bell marked the last two paragraphs of the letter, and made a marginal comment about their apparent inconsistency.

Some held that it was a "means of indiscriminate destruction" which could not be justified for the attainment of any end, even the cessation of war, while others regretted the fact that neither the Japanese people, nor "the peoples in whose name it was to be used" had been warned. Still others pointed out that atomic warfare raised no new ethical problem, but highlighted the "grave moral implications" of the doctrine that modern war was necessarily total war. Owing to these differences, the petition urged "the imperative need for guidance and direction in the whole complex of problems raised by the character and methods of modern warfare", and asked the Archbishops to "appoint a Commission to consider and report upon The Moral and Spiritual Implications of Modern Methods of Warfare... May we add that we believe that in this matter the general public is justified in demanding... a 'lead' from the Church?"¹² Reactions from the other Bishops were varied. Chavasse of Rochester made a general statement "deploring the use of the atomic bomb"¹³, but the Bishop of Oxford felt that the best that could be expected of a Commission would be a majority report which would be forced to dilute all of the divisive issues, such as those raised by pacifism¹⁴. However, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Geoffrey Fisher, supported the idea, and asked Bell if he would serve on the Commission¹⁵. On December 11th, Bell reported to Christopher Dawson that this would not be a purely Anglican, but an ecumenical affair: "The British Council of Churches has appointed a Commission of twelve on the New Era of Atomic Power... Oldham is

¹² Petition to the Archbishops, August 1945, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, ff. 35-36. The signatories were: Rev. Dr. Demant, Rev. Canon Balmforth, Mr. Philip Mairet, Mr. T.S. Eliot, Mr. Donald MacKinnon, Dr. J.H. Oldham, Mrs. Kathleen Bliss, Rev. P.T.R. Kirk, Dean of St. Albans, Rev. Canon Lindsay Dewar, Miss Amy Buller, Rev. Donald Harris, Sir Will Spens, Miss Knight-Bruce, Mr. Ashley Sampson, Prof. H.A. Hodges, Rev. Canon C.H. Smyth, Sir Ernest Barker, Rev. Canon Eric Abbott, Rev. Canon F.A. Cockin, Prof. Leonard Hodgson, Sir Walter Moberly, Lady Caroline Bridgeman, Mrs. William Temple, Bishop Furse, Bishop Bernard Heywood, Rev. J.H. Christie, Rev. Kenneth Riches, Mr. John Maud, Sir Henry Slessor, Rev. Canon McLeod Campbell, Sir Wyndham Duedes, Mr. H.V.W. Willink, Mr. R.A. Butler, Mr. Maurice Reckitt, Rev. Canon C.E. Hudson, Rev. E.L. Mascall. Bell was aware that parts of the Church in America were already offering such a "lead". The Revd. Richard M. Fayley (Secretary of the Commission on a Just and Durable Peace instituted by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America), had distributed a memorandum, 'The Atomic Bomb and the Crisis of Man', c. August 1945, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, ff. 39-45. The document attacked the notion of atomic weapons as deterrents.

¹³ George BELL to Maurice Reckitt, 2 October 1945, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, f. 59

¹⁴ Bishop of Oxford to George Bell, 24 September 1945, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, f. 47: "...I am certain that the main road of progress in the Church of England is by means of unofficial publications... upon which, in the end, the mind of the Church passes its judgment in practice without official resolution. This is how *Lux Mundi* and *Foundations* were treated, and their influence is still felt; whereas the official Reports of Commissions have for the most part been forgotten..." See also Maurice B. RECKITT to George Bell, 28 August 1945, ff. 32-33; George BELL to the Bishop of Oxford, 30 August 1945, f. 34.

¹⁵ Geoffrey FISHER to George Bell, 20 November 1945, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, f. 73. George BELL to Geoffrey Fisher, 21 November 1945, f. 74. Bell was reluctant to join a Commission, but Fisher informed him that "No-one could really take your place on it". Fisher's second choice was the Bishop of Southwark.

the main spring. There are six clergy, Anglican and Free Church, and six laity."¹⁶ However, Bell was dissatisfied with the membership of the Commission, and wrote to Oldham, complaining that no younger representatives would be serving on it: "We are all the same old sexagenarians, aren't we...?"¹⁷ Two days later, Oldham replied that he had recruited two younger lay members, Denis Routh, a former fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, and Donald MacKinnon¹⁸. If Oldham hoped that the Commission would be broadly representative of the range of opinions in the British churches, the choice of Routh and MacKinnon was certainly inspired, but such a decision predetermined before the first meeting on the 4th to the 7th of January, 1946¹⁹ that it could not produce a consensus report, but something more akin to the Doctrine Commission report, highlighting different positions rather than offering an authoritative statement. From its inception, the Commission would clearly only be united by one conviction: that the end of the war had heightened, not relieved, its members' sense of crisis. Oldham confided in Bell, "I am profoundly concerned that... we are facing a situation beyond the power of human influence, and only if we are to listen to and obey the voice of God can we hope to achieve anything."²⁰

Meanwhile, Sutherland was attempting to digest the other disclosure which had marred the news of the Allied victories. He had received a small black book, printed by the American Office of War Information, called simply *K-Z*, an abbreviation of *Konzentrationslager*. It was designed for distribution in Germany, in the hope that it would alert the German people to what had really occurred in the concentration camps. It was filled with horrific photographs of the emaciated victims of Belsen and Buchenwald. They reminded Sutherland of the figure of

¹⁶ BELL to Christopher Dawson, 11 December 1945, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, f. 79.

¹⁷ BELL to J.H. Oldham, 11 December 1945, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, f. 80. Bell also complained that the proposed Commission lacked traditional Catholic representation: it was "a pity... that we have not got someone like Vidler or Farrer or Mascall. Surely we ought at least to have someone who is in sympathy with the Thomist point of view?" See also BELL to J.H. Oldham, 17 December 1945, f. 86.

¹⁸ J.H. OLDHAM to George Bell, 13 December 1945, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, f. 84. OLDHAM, Editorial, *CN-L*, No. 260, 15 May 1946, pointed out that "Four of [the Commission's]... members are still in their thirties", and added that this was the first time that a Church had sought the advice of the British Council of Churches before holding its own Commission.

¹⁹ *BELLP*, Vol. 113, f. 81. Denis Alan Routh was Fellow of All Souls, Oxford, 1938-1946. The final membership of the Commission was: J.H. Oldham (Chairman), M.E. Aubrey (General Secretary, Baptist Union), John Baillie, Robert Birley (Headmaster of Charterhouse), Kathleen Bliss, George Bell, R. Newton Flew (Principal of Wesley House, Cambridge), Norman Goodall (Secretary of the International Missionary Council), Kenneth G. Grubb (Secretary-General of the Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Councils, and between 1941 and 1946 Controller of Overseas Publicity in the Ministry of Information), C.E. Hudson (Canon of St. Albans), D.M. MacKinnon, Sir Walter Moberly, A.D. Ritchie (Professor of Logic and Metaphysics, University of Edinburgh), Dennis Routh, Mrs J. L. Stocks (Principal of Westfield College, University of London), and J.D. MacCaughy (secretary).

²⁰ J.H. OLDHAM to George Bell, 16 November 1945, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, f. 64.

Christ in the Crucifixion scene on Grünewald's Isenheim Altarpiece, with its lifeless head and hanging mouth, its scourged and bleeding body and hands contorted in spasm, nailed to a cross which seemed all the more an instrument of torture because of the mortise and tenon joint by means of which the cross-piece was attached. Sutherland later attested to the profound effect of *K-Z* on his own crucifixion scene:

The whole idea of the depiction of Christ crucified became more real to me after having seen this book, and it seemed to me possible to do the subject again. In any case, the continuing beastliness and cruelty of mankind, amounting at times to madness, seems eternal and classic.²¹

The "continuing beastliness and cruelty of mankind" may have been a suitable subject for an ecumenical commission; it remained to be seen whether it would be considered an acceptable theme for a painting in an Anglo-Catholic parish church. St. Matthew's at Northampton was a large church built in the early 1890s in accordance with the revived Gothic traditions of the Tractarian revival²². Hussey, taking his cue from Bell²³ had cajoled his church into supporting modern artists, beginning with Benjamin Britten, whose Festival Cantata, *Rejoice in the Lamb*, was performed there in 1943²⁴. The cantata was a setting for a poem by Christopher Smart which dwelt upon the connections between art and theology:

Hallelujah from the heart of God, and from
the hand of the artist inimitable,
And from the echo of the heavenly harp
in sweetness magnificent and mighty.²⁵

²¹ Graham Sutherland, open letter to Mullins, *Daily Telegraph Magazine*, 10 September 1971, quoted in BERTHOUD, *Graham Sutherland*, p. 126. For another response to the disclosure of the holocaust, see OLDHAM's Editorial for the *CN-L*, No. 233, 2 May 1945.

²² Mona C. HARRISON, *The Centenary History of St. Matthew's Church and Parish, Northampton*, Edinburgh, 1993, p. 12, and see pp. 102-104 for her discussion of the commissioning of Sutherland's *Crucifixion*.

²³ Hussey published his appeal for Churches to reconsider their role as artistic patrons in an Evangelical journal, noting the lead already taken by Bell. "One could not wish such permanent things to consist of clichés and platitudes, but would surely rather they had depth and vitality, even at the cost of being a little puzzling at a very first acquaintance..." ('The Church and the Artist: An Association too Much Neglected', *The Churchman*, June 15, 1946, pp. 9-10). Bell had recommended Feibusch for St. Matthews. (Bell to Hussey, 26 October 1944, *WH*, M.S. 317.) Sutherland had written to congratulate Hussey on his patronage of "authentic works of art, as distinct from the factory-produced or pedestrian kind" on 24 February 1944 (*WH*, M.S. 345).

²⁴ Alan DOIG, 'Architecture and Performance: Dean Walter Hussey and the Arts', *Theology*, January/February, 1996, p. 16.

²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 16, quoting Christopher SMART (1722-71) 'Jubilate Deo'. Doig comments that this passage "epitomizes Hussey's theology". Other passages were particularly apt considering that Britten had recently attended his tribunal as a conscientious objector: "For I am under the same accusation with my Saviour... For the officers of the peace are at variance with me..."

Such sentiments were encouraging, perhaps, but they still equated art with beauty, and Sutherland had something quite different in mind²⁶. A further precedent was provided by Hussey's employment of Henry Moore to make his sculpture of the *Madonna and Child* [Plate 20]²⁷. Moore's sculpture owed much to his drawings of Londoners sheltering in tube stations during the Blitz, produced for the War Artists' Advisory Committee. These had frequently focussed on women nursing babies, and possessed a similar solidity and simplicity of form²⁸. At Bell's Conference on the Church and the Artist, Moore spoke about the conditions under which he was commissioned to work for St. Matthew's. He had been allowed to work as he wished, and his "relationships with all concerned had been happy." He hoped that contemporary artists would return to working for the Church, but he warned that they would be certain to shock some people. There had been resistance in the local press in his own case, but it merely provided publicity for his work. In producing his sculpture, Moore had pondered "the difference between the religious and the secular", attempting to distinguish his Madonna from his more familiar non-religious subject of women with children, and concluded that "the former was grander, had a hieratic quality, possessed a dignified, serious aloofness"²⁹. However, another participant in the conference hinted at the considerable obstacles to be overcome before such modern works would have full public acceptance, telling Bell privately that "Moore[']s... work belies him". The Madonna was marred, so he said,

²⁶ Eric Newton remarked privately to Hussey (30 August 1946, *WH*, M.S. 347): "I imagine that the first instinctive criticism will be that the sketch may be both sincere and powerful, but that it is not 'beautiful'... Sutherland's style... is undoubtedly sufficiently unfamiliar to be slightly shocking... I can only answer that in the past every artist who has felt deeply and then taken a great deal of trouble to find an appropriate visual form for the expression of his feeling has... in the end, been recognised as a true creative artist."

²⁷ The process by which Moore was commissioned is described in detail in Peter STANSKY and William ABRAHAMS, *London's Burning: Life, Death and Art in the Second World War*, Stanford, California, 1994, pp. 60-68. The sculpture was unveiled in February 1944 and cost £350. TURNER, 'Walter Hussey', p. 524. Sutherland's painting would cost between £300 and £350, but Turner points out that "it is not clear that Sutherland charged a full fee." (p. 525)

²⁸ Moore told Hussey, "There have been two particular motives [sic] or subjects which I've consistently used in my sculpture in the last 20 years - they are the 'Reclining Figure' idea & The 'Mother & Child' idea - (& perhaps the 'Mother & Child' has been the more fundamental obsession.)" (Letter to Walter Hussey, 26 August 1943, *WH*, M.S. 228.) Hussey had decided to approach Henry Moore after noticing the "spiritual quality and... deep humanity" of his Shelter Drawings. Walter HUSSEY, 'The Church and the Artist: An Association too Much Neglected', *The Churchman*, June 15, 1946, pp. 9-10. Moore had been introduced to Hussey by Harold S. Williamson (M.S. 353).

²⁹ Summary notes on The Church and the Artist Conference: observations of Mr. Henry Moore, *BELLP*, Vol. 151 ('The Church and the Artist'), ff. 193-194. See also TURNER, 'Walter Hussey', p. 533; Walter HUSSEY, *Patron of Art: The Revival of a Great Tradition among Modern Artists*, London, 1985, p. 46; and Bishop of Chichester Hussey Papers, 19 July, 1943. The "resistance" in the local press (the sculpture was described as "unfortunate" and "revolting") is described in STANSKY and ABRAHAMS, *London's Burning*, p. 66. For a record of Moore's view on the distinction between religious and secular art, see his letter to Hussey, 26 August 1943, *WH*, M.S. 228.

by "distortion" in the limbs³⁰. Sutherland, aware of such criticisms of modern art, told Hussey that the resistance to Moore's sculpture, which actually came from outsiders rather than parishioners³¹, was due to:

(1) ignorance of what constitutes the purpose & boundaries of art (2) lack of familiarity with the work (& therefore the intentions of a particular artist.) (3) lifelong habits of mind which tend to close that part of it which reacts to & interprets the meaning of, or finds a meaning in, the sight of the external world, be it nature or art [leaving it]...incapable of raising natural significance to divine significance.³²

Yet many aspects of Moore's sculpture were typical of the established cultural tradition of neo-romanticism, finding expression in the religious sphere in paintings consistent with a liberal incarnationalist theology. Works in this tradition were often playful celebrations of life and nature, epitomised, for example, by Stanley Spencer's scenes of a general resurrection. Spencer depicted men and women arising from their graves in a flower-filled country churchyard, as if waking from a long sleep. In one such painting, *The Resurrection, Cookham* (1923-1927)³³ a resurrected woman determinedly pushes a man, reluctant to arise, into an upright position, while another man reclines lazily on a tomb which has been cracked open, as if by an earthquake. The playful theme also predominates in Spencer's painting of *St. Francis and the Birds* (1935)³⁴, where the farmyard poultry at the saint's feet resemble quaint wooden toys, and in the early works in his series *Christ in the Wilderness*, in which a portly Christ sniffs daisies, and nestles a pacified scorpion in his outstretched hand³⁵. Moore himself, and painters such as Keith Vaughan, were preoccupied with images of the "nurturing body": women nursing children, human forms embracing each

³⁰ Herbert BARKER to George Bell, 12 October 1944, *BELLP*, Vol. 151, f. 234.

³¹ Hussey had told Moore from the outset (undated letter, 1942, *WH*, M.S. 228) that he would "be loath to try to force through anything which the simple folk who use the church... really felt offended their religious susceptibilities. Something 'not exactly what they would have chosen', or which they could not quite understand, I do not think would matter, because they would be willing... to accept it, and wait for it's [sic] beauty to grow on them in the future." He would, however, "willingly fight with the Diocesan and faculty authorities (though I do not think it would be necessary!)" He also told Mr. Guillim Scott, (letter, n.d. M.S. 347) that "R.C.'s and Nonconformists seem to be very sympathetic: it is from outsiders that what criticism there has been has chiefly come...."

³² Graham SUTHERLAND to Walter Hussey, 5 April 1944, *WH*, M.S. 345: "I am afraid this happens so much now-a-days. There are so many competitors to stop me thinking. Speed, the cinema, the Press, to mention a few. It is therefore wonderful to me that by having in your church a work of art, you give at once facilities for contemplation, without which no art or religion, can be understood."

³³ Oil on canvas, 274.3x548.6 cm. Tate Gallery (N04239).

³⁴ Oil on canvas, 66x58.4 cm. Tate Gallery (T00961).

³⁵ 'The Scorpion', oil on canvas, 56x56cm, 1939.

other³⁶. Artists who were less specifically Christian in temperament than Spencer, such as Cecil Collins, often blended Christian themes with motifs from eastern religions and Arthurian romance, commonly giving them idyllic pastoral settings³⁷. By the mid-1930s, artistic modernism, with its preoccupation with simplified forms, abstraction, and flatness of pictorial space, was having its effect on the neo-Romantic tradition³⁸, a fact illustrated by Paul Nash's *Equivalents for the Megaliths of 1935*³⁹, a still-life study of a group of solid geometric forms standing in a mown hay-meadow, with an ancient barrow on a hill in the background⁴⁰. An influential theorist and practitioner of this blending of the neo-romantic concern for the arcadian and the pastoral with modernist motifs, was another painter who worked as a war artist, John Piper. Piper was an Anglican with a passion for painting ruined churches; in the midst of war he adapted his passion to churches damaged by the Blitz, producing evocative studies of Coventry Cathedral after its destruction⁴¹. This was the same painter who could equate Silbury Hill with paintings by Miró, and find Picasso profiles on Romanesque fonts⁴², arguing that what people referred to as "modernism" was in fact a long-established tradition. Piper's paintings of ruined churches were also studies of the interplay of light and colour on flat, intersecting planes: the bombing, and the poor light conditions which he seemed to prefer, were, in this sense, aids in the simplification process. Many of these characteristic

³⁶ Two examples of this are given in David MELLOR (Ed.), *A Paradise Lost: The Neo-Romantic Imagination in Britain, 1935-1955*, pp. 24, 25: Henry Moore's 'Women and Children in the Tube' (1940), and Keith Vaughan's 'Man and Child' (1942). Mellor (p. 22) suggests that the philosophy of the Neo-Romantic poet, Alex Comfort, with its emphasis on "nurture", may have affected wartime portrayals of the human body among artists such as Moore and Keith Vaughan. Comfort sought "an alliance for mutual aid of all human beings, against a universe which does not exist for their comfort," a sentiment which also found political expression in the Beveridge Report of December 1942, and religious expression in Christian proposals for a "New Social Order."

³⁷ See for example his paintings, 'The Quest' (1938), 'Portrait of the Artist and his Wife' (1939), and 'Hymn' (1946), all illustrated in MELLOR, *Paradise Lost*, front cover, pp. 17, 19. J.V.L. CASSERLEY provided a critique of Romantic art in his *The Fate of Modern Culture*, (Signposts No. 1, 1940). It had become primarily "escapist" in response to the increasing mechanisation of modern life, but "To-day, the reigning tendency... is to accept the mechanisation of life and to attempt to give it aesthetic expression." This had not prevented the general public from exhibiting their predilection for "escapist" romantic art (pp. 93-94.) Casserley might have approved Sutherland's *Crucifixion* as a use of modernist aesthetic means to a socially critical end.

³⁸ This process is described in detail by Stuart SILLARS, *British Romantic Art and the Second World War*, London, 1991, and see also Charles HARRISON, *English Art and Modernism 1900-1939*, London, 1981, pp. 294-331.

³⁹ Oil on canvas, 45.7 x 66 cm, Tate Gallery.

⁴⁰ The urge towards abstraction was so strong in Paul Nash that it continually hampered his attempts to please the War Artists' Advisory Committee. He succeeded in doing so in works such as *Battle of Britain*, 1940 and *Totes Meer* (1941); but his *Battle of Germany* (1944) was rejected by the Committee. (All of these are in the Imperial War Museum).

⁴¹ See, for example, 'Coventry Cathedral, November 15th 1940', 76.5x63.5cm, 1940. David Frazer JENKINS, 'Picturesque Landscape and War Artist', in TATE GALLERY, *John Piper*, London, 1983, pp. 89-100. Piper also painted a picture of St. Matthew's in 1945. See Henry Moore, letter to Walter Hussey, 24 October 1945, *WH*, M.S. 228.

⁴² See his article in *Axis*, No. 8, 1937, pp. 8-9, and MELLOR, *Paradise Lost*, pp. 38-39.

concerns of neo-romantic art were evident in Moore's *Madonna and Child*: the playfulness in the eyes of the Christ child, the embracing, nurturing body of the Madonna⁴³, and the simplified austerity of the features and the drapery.

There was, however, a further development in the neo-romantic discourse with modernism which Moore's work for St. Matthew's did not encompass. This was the growing preoccupation in British art in the 1940s with disintegration, destruction and decay⁴⁴. The contrast between the idyllic pastorate, the scene of degradation, and the interplay of modernist planes found its way into propaganda posters in the early 1940s. Henry Newbould's contribution to the "Your Britain: fight for it now" series was a picture of a shepherd, his dogs and his sheep, on the South Downs, overlooking a sleepy village in a shaded valley [Plate 18]. Abram Games, by contrast, applied Newbould's slogan to an antiseptic vision of a work of modern architecture. This was superimposed, however, upon a picture of a waif-like boy standing in a ruined slum-house, filled with sludge and puddles, with a gravestone leaning against a wall scrawled with the word "disease", added presumably by some itinerant graffitist⁴⁵ [Plate 19]. In a painting, reproduced in *Penguin New Writing* in 1946⁴⁶, Michael Ayrton demonstrated the degree to which a study of an uprooted silver birch tree could approach abstraction whilst retaining the menacing quality of a scene by Bosch, and in 1944, Ceri Richards succeeded in blending surrealism with abstraction in his *Cycle of Nature*⁴⁷, by combining images of disintegrated human and natural forms. Even Spencer's *Christ in the Wilderness* series took a more

⁴³ Walter HUSSEY explained Moore's views on the portrayal of a nurturing Madonna: "the subject speaks of the Incarnation... and so the Blessed Virgin is conceived as any small child would in essence think of his mother, not as small and frail, but as the one large, secure, solid background to life... The Holy Child sits safely in His mother's lap, with her protecting hands on Him; but He looks out quite unafraid, and her hands do not grip or restrain him, for she presents Him, offers him to the world, as He will offer Himself." ("Statue of the Madonna and Child in S. Matthew's Church, Northampton: Address given by the vicar on the Sunday morning before the unveiling and dedication of the statue", *WH*, M.S. 335.)

⁴⁴ YORKE, *Spirit of Place*, p. 119. See PIETTE, *Imagination at War: British Fiction and Poetry 1939-1945*, London, 1995, pp. 44ff, for a discussion of similar trends in literature. He argues that the Blitz engendered an "aesthetic of destruction", most explicit in the work of the "Apocalyptic school of poets".

⁴⁵ See SILLARS, *British Romantic Art*, London, 1991, pp. 188-189. Games's image reflects a common perception, found also in the language of ecclesiastics. See, for example, Toc H leader Tubby Clayton's response to his first experience of the Blitz: "Far-sighted men can see a grim advantage in what is taking place. When reconstruction finally comes to be, sites will be cleared beyond the dreams of Housing sub-committees... living conditions totally unfit will have been swept away, not by reformers, but by the tragic happenings of this period. Once more the wrath of man turns to God's praise." ('A Sunday Night on Leave', *TC*, M.S. 29987.)

⁴⁶ *Uprooted Silverbirch*, Vol. 27, opposite p. 96.

⁴⁷ Oil on canvas, 45.7 x 35.5 cm, Barbican Art Gallery, illustrated in MELLOR, *Paradise Lost*, p. 29..

depressing turn in *The Eagles* of 1943, in which a brooding Christ reclines in the foreground, while a group of eagles tear the flesh from the carcass of a deer⁴⁸.

These developments fascinated Sutherland. Michael Ayrton had characterised him in 1945 as Britain's chief standard-bearer against the modernising influence of Picasso, and he had replied that he counted Picasso among his principal influences⁴⁹. This influence was at first confined to a growing tendency to simplify forms, removing details and exaggerating certain features, but this was soon followed by breaking down the forms themselves. Sutherland achieved this primarily by careful choice of subject: he was not trying to disintegrate images as the cubists had done, but deliberately to select images of decay or dissolution⁵⁰. The early 1940s saw him experimenting with scenes of natural decay: the semi-abstract study of the effect of sunlight on vegetation in *Entrance to a Lane* (1939)⁵¹ was followed in 1940 by the darkened monstrosity of the *Green Tree Form*⁵². His employment as a war artist, responsible for recording devastation scenes, accentuated this tendency. Sutherland's drawings of ruined structures and machinery were charged with irony: he observed that the bombs caused man-made objects to revert to more natural forms. A fallen lift shaft suggested to him "a wounded tiger in a painting by Delacroix", and compositions such as *Devastation: City, Ruined Machinery*⁵³ were likened to studies of disembowelled animals, "their entrails hanging through the floors, but looking extraordinarily beautiful at the same time."⁵⁴ At a bombed paper factory, he discovered that charred rolls of paper resembled the logs from which they were derived⁵⁵. Charged that his drawings were too abstract for documents of the war, Sutherland responded that "it is really a very close and exact study of what these bombs do - apart perhaps from the colour"⁵⁶. He aimed to capture the "force of the emotion" behind his devastation subjects: their "sordidness and anguish", and

⁴⁸ Oil on canvas, 56cm x 56cm, Royal Academy of Art.

⁴⁹ BERTHOUD, *Sutherland*, pp. 119-120; *New Statesman*, 3 March, 1945.

⁵⁰ See John PIPER, *British Romantic Artists*, London, 1942, p. 47. SILLARS, *British Romantic Art*, pp. 147-8, describes this tendency among artists as "biomorphism".

⁵¹ Oil on canvas 61.4 x 50.7 cm.

⁵² Oil on canvas 78.7 x 107.9 cm, Tate Gallery, illustrated in ALLEY, *Sutherland*, p. 29.

⁵³ TASSI, *op. cit.*, pl. 30; BERTHOUD, *Sutherland*, p. 103.

⁵⁴ Graham SUTHERLAND, open letter to Mullins, *Daily Telegraph Magazine*, 10 September 1971, quoted in BERTHOUD, *Sutherland*, p. 103. Sutherland was describing a factory for making ladies' coats which had been devastated.

⁵⁵ See *Devastation: East End, Burnt out paper rolls*. int., pencil and chalk, 1941, in TASSI, *op. cit.*, pl. 42.

⁵⁶ Graham SUTHERLAND, letter to W.M. O'R. Dickey (secretary of the W.A.A.C.), 1941, BERTHOUD, *Sutherland*, p. 104 (full reference not cited).

occasionally, their "purely explosive character"⁵⁷. At least one critic felt that he had succeeded, observing in 1940 that Sutherland's work possessed "a wild, crucified poignancy that gives the war new meaning."⁵⁸ The use of the word "crucified" was not accidental; even on the most superficial level, Sutherland deliberately included cruciform shapes in his compositions of 1940-41⁵⁹. A further crucial development was the inclusion for the first time of figurative art in his repertoire, through his depiction of tin-miners, set in the midst of subterranean Blakean panoramas⁶⁰. Finally, Sutherland encountered, and attempted to depict, the aftermath of war behind enemy lines, when he went to document the damage done by the R.A.F.'s bombing of railway marshalling yards in Trappes and the V2 rocket sites:

A lot of Germans had been killed inside the caves, and there was a terrible sweet smell of death in them... There were bits and pieces of people knocking about, and I did draw some, but they were not allowed to be shown, and I think probably rightly.⁶¹

By 1945, the neo-romantic idyll had thus been replaced as the predominant subject in Sutherland's work by disintegrated forms, and the ultimate expression of this tendency was the disintegrated *human* form. Once again, the disintegration was not to be expressed through a simple movement towards abstraction, but through depiction of the objects of cruelty, the victims of Belsen and Buchenwald. One further element was required for this to be effective: the implication of cruelty and pain. Critics have found it lurking behind the deformed faces of the bathing women in Moore's drawing *September 3rd, 1939*, but it was more obvious in the writhing form of the beleaguered saint in Michael Ayrton's *Temptation of St. Anthony* of 1942-1943⁶². Indeed, the head and upper torso of Ayrton's Anthony bear careful comparison with Sutherland's *Crucifixion*. Still more influential for Sutherland at this time was the savage depiction of animated butcher's-shop monsters in his friend

⁵⁷ Graham SUTHERLAND, 'Art and Life', *The Listener* (13 November, 1941), quoted in John HAYES, *The Art of Graham Sutherland*, Oxford, 1980, p. 23. Other artists who sought inspiration from devastation scenes included John Piper: see Anthony WEST, *John Piper*, London, 1979.

⁵⁸ Eric NEWTON, *In My View*, London, 1950, p. 117.

⁵⁹ See, for example, *Devastation, City, Burnt our Interior*, 1940, ink, pencil, chalk and gouache on paper, 23.5 x 16 cm, illustrated in TASSI, *Wartime Drawings*, Pl. 11.

⁶⁰ See *Tin Mine: Crouching Miner*, Ink, gouache and chalk, 1942, in TASSI, *op. cit.*, pl. 72. The most striking examples of Blakean influence are *Tin Mine: a Declivity*, Pen and ink, watercolour and gouache, 1942, *Men probing a Furnace: Cardiff*, Pen and ink, pencil and gouache, 1942, and *Tapping a Steel Furnace, Swansea*, Pen and ink, pastel and watercolour, 1942, in HAYES, *Sutherland*, Pls. 48, 55, 56.

⁶¹ Graham Sutherland, open letter to Mullins, *Daily Telegraph Magazine*, 10 September 1971, quoted in BERTHOUD, *Sutherland*, p. 116. See, for example, Sutherland's *France: Bombed Locomotives at Trappes*, Ink and gouache, 1944, in TASSI, *op. cit.*, pl. 149.

⁶² Oil on wood, 58.1 x 75.2 cm, Tate Gallery, illustrated in YORKE, *Spirit of Place*, p. 199.

Francis Bacon's triptych, *Study for Three Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion*, (1944) [Plate 1]. The thorn bushes were Sutherland's first conscious experiments with the same theme, but he chose to dispense with Bacon's livid orange background:

The thorns sprang from the idea of potential cruelty - to me, they were the cruelty. I attempted to give the idea a double twist, as it were, by setting them in benign circumstances: a blue sky, green grass, Crucifixion under warmth - and blue skies are, in a sense, more powerfully horrifying.⁶³

Here were the elements of a work which would stand in stark contrast to the hieratic serenity of Moore's *Madonna and Child*. The *Crucifixion* would be a study of the effects of human "beastliness", having perhaps more in common with the writings of D.R. Davies or "Nicodemus" than with a blend of neo-romanticism and incarnationalist metaphysics.

Studies of human "beastliness", whether pictorial or rhetorical, would always run the risk of evoking pure despair. This was precisely the problem which faced the Commission on atomic power when it attempted to address the role of modern science. The stock assumption that human moral progress had been outstripped by scientific development - questioned by Demant in his papers for the Moot⁶⁴ - had its effect on several of its members. There was more than a hint of neo-orthodox influence in Oldham's opening memorandum on the Commission, which asserted that "The sudden realisation of the immense potentialities for evil as well as good of eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge may dispose men's minds to a fresh consideration of the ultimate issues of human life and destiny." Oldham wanted the Commission to consider "whether the whole modern attitude to life, of which science and technology are the outstanding expressions, is not a disastrous over-emphasis of one side of man's nature to the neglect of what is more fundamental."⁶⁵ Routh agreed that scientific development had so far outstripped moral and social development that "Western man... is in imminent danger of blowing himself out of existence."⁶⁶ The chorus was joined by Philip Mairet⁶⁷ and the historian Arnold

⁶³ Sutherland, 'Thoughts on Painting', *Listener*, 6, September 1951, and see BERTHOUD, *Graham Sutherland*, p. 121. The blue skies might also reflect the influence of portrayals of the Desert War. William Chappel, for instance, wrote in 1944 of the "uncomfortable, thorny stillness" of the desert. See Adam PIETTE, *Imagination at War*, p. 8.

⁶⁴ See V.A. DEMANT, 'The Incompetence of Unaided Virtue', *MOOTE*, BAI-05-48, p. 5.

⁶⁵ J.H. OLDHAM, Memorandum on the Commission on the Age of Atomic Power, 28 November 1945, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, ff. 88-94.

⁶⁶ Extract from letter from Dennis Routh (December 1945), *BELLP*, Vol. 113, f. 106.

Toynbee⁶⁸. Demant supplied a more balanced appraisal. The atomic bombs, a scientific invention, had produced a series of dangerous effects in western society: "a sense of Fear" which may have the effect of cramping creativity, "a sense of Guilt" which was leading some to seek a new world order, and others to hunt for scapegoats, and "a sense of Deception", in which the old ideal of progress was parroted by people who had ceased to believe in it. Yet it was clear that one of the scapegoats was science itself. Demant, exemplifying the characteristic Catholic desire neither to deny nor to exaggerate the reality of original sin, surmised that what was really at fault was the process whereby science had become detached from culture⁶⁹; in short, the same process of "cultural disintegration" identified by the Moot⁷⁰.

Oldham, influenced by Demant's response, admitted at the first meeting of the Commission that "We must not start clergy preaching on religion and science all over the place." He wanted the discussion to "begin with an acknowledgment that the Christian mind has never fully come to grips with the place in God's purpose in human life for the creative faculty in man." It was this creative faculty, ignored by the Church, which had now "broken loose and taken its revenge." These observations sparked off an animated discussion. John Baillie wanted the word "creative" dropped, making the extraordinary assertion that "The Western Church had always denied that man had any creative capacity." Oldham countered with a reference to Berdyaev, whose "point was that the Christian mind had been so occupied with sin and redemption that it had ignored the immense potentialities of human nature which the last four centuries had revealed to us."⁷¹ He hoped that the Commission would agree to stating that "this whole capacity of man to discover and invent was something that belonged to God's plan and that Christians had not done justice to it, but that on the other hand, the assumption that the scientist,

⁶⁷ 'Comments from non-members of the Commission': Philip MAIRET, 1 December 1945, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, f. 110: He predicted the development of a "population every member of which had the knowledge how to destroy a city, but none of which had any moral discipline or inner life."

⁶⁸ 'Comments from non-members of the Commission': Arnold TOYNBEE, (December 1945), *BELLP*, Vol. 113, f. 109: "We have attended to science, business and practical utility instead of to God and the universe and the soul."

⁶⁹ 'Comments from non-members of the Commission': Rev. Canon V.A. DEMANT, (December 1945), *BELLP*, Vol. 113, f. 111. His fears about the cramping of creativity were echoed in the report: British Council of Churches, *Commission on the Era of Atomic Power*, London, 1946, pp. 16-17, 19.

⁷⁰ See above, pp. 276ff.

⁷¹ Oldham was supported by Routh: "Routh wondered whether we were not working on a false distinction - that there were two territories of knowledge, one the business of the scientist, the other the business of the Churches, and that they were mutually exclusive. We wanted the scientists on the spiritual territory exercising their techniques, not to drive them off..." British Council of Churches Commission on the Era of Atomic Power. Record of the first meeting, 4-7 January 1946, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, pp. 124-125.

psychologist, sociologist could by their efforts alone create the right kind of world was the supreme error."⁷² Yet this repentant attitude was lacking from the first draft of the proposed chapter of the report on "Science and Society". It chose rather to focus on the "misuse of scientific knowledge". Science had been "prostituted to the carrying out of the most shocking experiments on human beings":

And even when there is no deliberate cruelty, it is a grave question whether men are not for the most part too short-sighted and restricted in their outlook to be safely entrusted with a knowledge which enables them to determine the biological basis of human life. There is no reason to suppose that men's wisdom and understanding of the highest values of human life are equal to their increasing technical skill.⁷³

Charles Raven, perhaps the Anglican Church's most informed authority on scientific questions, was outraged. The draft caricatured scientists, and identified science with "abstraction". It overemphasised the role of power politics in usurping science, whereas in reality there was among scientists "more tolerance, less domineering, than among most men." He wanted the chapter to stress the need for Christians to repent of their obscurantist attitude towards science before it could urge that science needed to be guided by a metaphysic.⁷⁴

Among members of the Commission, it was left to MacKinnon to protest, in a confidential letter, against the tendency to make science a scapegoat for atrocity. He detected two fallacious assumptions. The first was that Christianity was a "ready-made recipe for solving the problems of our age"; the second, that Christianity was a means of taking "us out of history, out of the world." In fact, history was a very serious matter for Christians, and the Church's historical consciousness was the source of its "prophetic anxiety". Nowhere did MacKinnon express his point of departure from Protestant neo-orthodoxy and Evangelicalism more clearly:

⁷² *BELLP*, Vol. 113, ff. 122ff. "Mrs Stocks... felt dubious about the statement that the scientific and material progress of the last 400 years or so was in accordance with God's plan. She would rather say that we could find no reason to say that it wasn't. We did not want to imply a larger knowledge of God's plan than we chose to assume."

⁷³ Draft of *The Era of Atomic Power*, Chapter II, 'Science and Society' (Chapter VII in the published version), *BELLP*, Vol. 113, ff. 149-150.

⁷⁴ Comments by Charles RAVEN on Drafts of the Report on *The Era of Atomic Power*, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, f. 159. The published Report admitted that "The Churches must acknowledge with gratitude the powerful support brought by the scientific community to the defence of human values which Christians are equally concerned to vindicate," and was merely content to affirm that "science is not enough". It concluded, "It is not in the discoveries of science that the danger to a scientific society lies. It lies in the widening opportunities which these discoveries present to men's power-seeking impulses..." *Era of Atomic Power*, pp. 63-64, 66.

One may question whether some ecclesiastics realise how desperate the situation of our world is. Will Christians realise, for instance, what a terrible thing the passing of the 'idea of progress' may be, or will they, with typical religious shortsightedness, welcome it *à la mode* of the Anglican report on Evangelism? For the passing of the myth - that dogma in Hulme's sense, is a disaster of the first magnitude. We have so long grown up to hope that the future will be better than the past that, if the hope is to ebb from us, we will need more than a reminder of the eternity of God to keep us from nihilism...

In emphasising the "beastliness of mankind" in response to the myth of progress, in other words, one must offer some superior myth, or the masses would lapse into a nihilism which was the very seedbed of totalitarianism. Among neo-orthodox theologians, MacKinnon admitted, Niebuhr had faced this, and his own arguments implied that he regretted some of his more strident denunciations of the myth of progress in his *Signposts*. It was pointless to offer platitudes about "the love of God... to a generation for whom that love has no meaning."

We must say further - 'Thus and thus and thus may you hope; for that love, though focussed and defined in Christ, holds in its embrace the whole human achievement. There are limits set by human finitude and human sin... to what we may hope for; but that does not mean that history is sound and fiery signifying nothing. It is tragic, certainly, but its very character as tragedy derives from the majesty of the achievement of the sons of men. If men have hoped too much, their sin was certainly less than those who hoped nothing, who, like Judas, made sure of the thirty pieces of silver and thereby suffered a judgment far greater than those of little faith, who were merely 'slow to believe the scriptures'. Perhaps the depth of the Church's willingness to serve in the present will be tested by its readiness to strive that men be enlightened at their own level.

The Church had to recognise, therefore, that "nihilism is our deepest enemy"⁷⁵. Mere conservatism was not enough. Angered by the report of the Commission on

⁷⁵ D.M. MACKINNON, 'Notes on the Responsibility of the Church', *BELLP*, Vol. 113, ff. 170-172, and see *Era of Atomic Power*, p. 31. MACKINNON later stressed: "It is not simply a matter of the atom bomb: it is the pressure in all directions towards nihilism that engages us... What gives to the episode of the atom bomb its peculiar force... [is] that there we catch ourselves behaving as if we judged the nihilists right." ('The Moral Implications of the Atomic Bomb', *Humanitas*, Vol. 2, No. 3,

Evangelism⁷⁶, he argued that churches must resist the temptation "to exploit man's predicament in the interests of apologetic, to thank God for Hitler, for what was done at Hiroshima, because 'they may fill our Churches'." It was no use preaching Christ as the only solution to human problems when so many did not believe this; the Church must so preach the Gospel to them as to emphasise its "witness to that which underlies the struggles of our civilisation". One of Britain's leading preachers, D.R. Davies perhaps, had announced that "History is a mug's game." MacKinnon replied:

Such language is both silly and dangerous; silly because it leads men to ignore and belittle their achievement, dangerous because it is a mere addition to the swelling chorus that pronounces the Thrasymachean's delight... History is tragic; but it is not a mug's game. The West has most certainly neglected the element of tragedy. Every moment in the ascending spiral brings the possibility of a new catastrophic fall. But for all that the insistence that we take history seriously and that we find in its movement a veritable parable of the stuff of which the universe is fashioned, needs to be purified, not discarded...⁷⁷

If the disclosures of atrocity were causing MacKinnon to underline his disagreements with Protestant condemnations of science and progress and to insist on the tragic element in Christianity, the crucifixion was itself a potent source of tragic imagery which could reach all manner of people. Sutherland had ample recent precedents to draw upon. There was Spencer's *Crucifixion* of 1934, in which English villagers are depicted going about their daily labours, swooning before the Cross and, in one man's case, hammering a nail into Christ's hand, spare nails held casually in his mouth.⁷⁸ There was also David Jones's poignant tailpiece to his poetic novel

1948, p. 29.) MacKinnon's reflections on tragedy may have been influenced by Roger LLOYD's *The Mastery of Evil*, London, 1941, which insisted that "The effect of the Gospel is to accept the tragic interpretation of life but to destroy the brooding fatalism of tragedy." (p. 114.) T.S. ELIOT applied similar ideas to literature in a speech at Brussels, 4 December 1949, *TSE*, M.S.: 'Essays, Addresses and Verses 1939-1956.

⁷⁶ See above, p. 35, n. 88.

⁷⁷ D.M. MACKINNON, 'Notes on the Responsibility of the Church', *BELLP*, Vol. 113, ff. 170-172. Baillie agreed that "it was tremendously important to realise the danger of nihilism." Minutes of the Second Meeting of the Commission on the Era of Atomic Power, 2-3 March 1946, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, ff. 182-188. See also Extract from letter from Donald MacKinnon (December 1945), ff. 104-106. MacKinnon's warning about the Thrasymachean was echoed in *Era of Atomic Power*, p. 33. For a similar discussion, see F.R. BARRY, *Church and Leadership*, London, 1945, pp. 13-14.

⁷⁸ A similar example of this tendency to depict a crucifixion attended by British locals in modern clothing is Michael Rothenstein's drawing of *The Deposition*, 1940. However, this composition seems more expressive of the camaraderie of war than of the tragedy, cruelty or atrocity of the Cross. Sutherland may also have seen Duncan Grant's *Victory of Calvary*, 1943, commissioned by Bell, another possibly more "accessible" image of Christ crucified than the average traditional scene, but this entirely lacked the element of suffering. (See above, p. 139, Plate 15.)

about the First World War, *In Parenthesis* (1937), in which a wire-entangled sacrificial lamb, or a scapegoat perhaps, stands impaled upon a spear against a background of blasted trees in no-man's land. More recently, Robert Henderson Blyth had completed his *In the Image of Man* in 1946 [Plate 2]; a depiction not of the crucified Christ Himself, but of a bombed statue of the crucifixion, surrounded by the ruins of civilisation⁷⁹. All of these images translated the tragedy of Christ's death into contemporary terms, either by staging it in anachronistic settings, or by the more subtle method of associating it with modern atrocities. A still more crucial precedent was Picasso's monumental painting of the Nazi bombing atrocity of the Spanish Civil War, *Guernica*, painted in 1937⁸⁰. *Guernica* itself was a reinterpretation, if not a parody, of the Nativity. It was a Nativity invaded by atrocity: the animals in the stable stirred into a terrified frenzy, the baby slain, the mother with upturned head and a mouth frozen in a scream of anguish, the dove of the Holy Spirit replaced by a dazzling electric light. Sutherland was experimenting with similar images of mourning women in 1946: his *Weeping Magdalen*⁸¹ and *Deposition from the Cross*⁸² echoed Picasso both in imagery and in style, to the verge of slavish imitation⁸³. Elements of these influences can be detected in the Northampton *Crucifixion*, but Sutherland returned for his basic composition not to these, but to the Isenheim Altarpiece. He retained the mortise and tenon joint at the apex of the cross, and experimented in pencil sketches with devices which would make Grünewald's cross still more explicitly an instrument of torture, bending the arms of the cross downward so that the body of Christ dangled suspended⁸⁴. Showing his sketches [Plate 24] to members of the Parish Church Council, Sutherland explained that such devices were attempts to plumb the depths of Christ's suffering and the cruelty of its perpetrators. He had not chosen to give "a treatment detached, formal hieratical (?) & impersonal",

⁷⁹ This image is discussed above, p. 64.

⁸⁰ Oil on canvas, 351 x 782 cm, Prado Museum, Madrid, illustrated in Lorraine LÉVY, *Picasso*, London, 1991, pp. 96-7.

⁸¹ Oil on canvas, size and ownership unknown, 12 December 1946, illustrated in HAYES, *Sutherland*, Pl. 74.

⁸² Oil on millboard, 152 x 121.9 cm, 23 November 1946, illustrated in *ibid.*, Pl. 75.

⁸³ The influence was also evident in other Sutherland images of the same year: *The Lamp, Smiling Woman*, and *Woman in a Garden*. It is possible to suggest literary parallels also. See, for example, Edith SITWELL, 'The Shadow of Cain', in GARDNER, *The Terrible Rain The War Poets, 1939-1945*, London, 1966, p. 197, a response to the atomic bombs: "When the last Judas kiss / Has died upon the cheek of the Starved Man Christ / these ashes that were men / Will rise again / To be our fires upon the Judgment Day..."

⁸⁴ Sutherland continued to paint crucifixions after the Northampton commission was completed. See, for example, the *Crucifixion* (1947) in Pallant House, Chichester (Hussey Bequest 1985; 155) [Plate 22]. This was perhaps an attempt to overcome a difficulty which Sutherland had foreseen in a letter to Hussey on 20 May 1945 (*WH*, M.S., 345): "I'm still very absorbed by the idea of a Crucifixion. The very difficulties are fascinating. The very shape of the Cross has become a symbol so familiar, that the Act it stands for must have become to many almost unreal." The cross with the downward-bending arms reappears at the base of the *Christ in Glory* tapestry in Coventry Cathedral.

such as Eric Gill had used in Westminster Cathedral, but had given "a psychological or psychic & real treatment". The former type of symbolism, he decided, "is easier & to my mind inclined to be too soothing."⁸⁵

The image of the *Crucifixion* that found its way into St. Matthew's Church [Plate 23] dispensed with some of the less subtle emphases on the cross as an instrument of torture, but it remained an image of atrocity⁸⁶. The ribcage was deliberately enhanced, hinting at the emaciation of the figures in *K-Z*. Blood poured in profusion from the hands, head and side of Christ. The crown of thorns was prominent, the head cast downwards in death. Sutherland had been compelled to dispense with the blue skies which had formed the backdrop to his thorn-tree paintings; these would have been aesthetically out of place in the church. He replaced them with rectangular constructions borrowed from the background of Francis Bacon's *Study*, and a blend of dark blue and a royal purple, which with the addition of a rope barrier at the base of the cross, emphasised the nobility of the sacrifice itself, and demanded that the victim be approached with respect⁸⁷. The parallel with Grünewald remained strong, but Sutherland omitted the figures of the two Marys and the Apostle John: the modern tragedy of the crucifixion must include dereliction and loneliness⁸⁸. This tragic element, enhanced by Sutherland late in the process of refining his image of the *Crucifixion*, suggested as MacKinnon had done that the correct Christian interpretation of the death of Christ was that by it, history was "purified, not discarded". It was this, as much as the uncompromising presentation of an icon of a dead Christ, which made Sutherland's *Crucifixion* an identifiably Catholic image⁸⁹, in spite of its testimony to the "beastliness of

⁸⁵ Graham Sutherland to Walter Hussey, 3 December 1944, *WH*, M.S. 345. He added: "That is not to say that the form of composition shouldn't have great formality. It should, since emotions in art must be crystallised & the moment frozen. I think these ideas apply to other subjects... the 'Agony' in the Garden for instance which I haven't entirely abandoned as a subject."

⁸⁶ H. Lettbridge realised this, telling Hussey in a letter (19 November 1946, *WH*, M.S. 346):

"Northampton is in your debt for initiating the commission of this stupendous work... My own reaction was one of embarrassment in looking at it; I felt that I was personally intruding upon His degradation; as one might shrink from an inspection, out of curiosity, of a mauled and raped child. I wanted to go away and weep and repent... I believe that it is a 'converter'."

⁸⁷ See DAVIES, 'Anglicanism's Appreciation', p. 179. For Hussey, the "little railing" served the function of "checking the thoughtless intruder and yet associating the spectator with the scene" (Walter HUSSEY, 'Art in the Church', *The Studio*, September, 1948, and see *WH*, M.S. 279). It is tempting to compare the rope barrier in Sutherland's painting with the fences and borders which commonly surround war memorials, discussed in Jay WINTER, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: the Great War in European Cultural History*, Cambridge, 1995, p. 96.

⁸⁸ Sutherland also dispensed with the skull at the foot of the cross, which had appeared in some of the undated sketches. See *WH*, M.S. 347.

⁸⁹ HUSSEY, 'Art in the Church', also recognised the "icon-like quality produced by the Figure being fully modelled and everything else almost flat", and commented that this gave the picture a "combination of timeless symbolism and contemporary immediacy."

mankind". The very identification of the Christ figure with the victims of the Nazi war crimes ensured that the image could not be interpreted as a portrayal of a substitutionary judicial execution. Rather, Sutherland's Christ was a figure who participated in the corporate suffering of atrocity.

Hussey's own critique of the image emphasised its particularity: it was "profoundly disturbing and purging" because it dispensed with the "cotton-wool" wrapping which had turned most representations of the crucifixion into "mere symbols". By not sentimentalising it, Sutherland had brought home "the effect of human sin and the cost of man's redemption", and so vividly contemporary an image prevented the viewer from "protecting himself by covering it all with a patina of historical perspective". This was the portrayal of "a mystery of the Christian faith, an event which took place at a particular point in history and yet [is] true today and indeed an eternal reality."⁹⁰ Hussey's Easter sermon for the following year might also have been a commentary on Sutherland's painting:

Some years ago it used to be... a comforting thought men and women had inside them, that whatever else they might do, they had at least grown out of the cruel barbarity of crucifixion.... The happenings of the war & since have convinced us that once the heart and mind of man has gone wrong, has been captured by the Devil, it takes little time for his open acts to become as barbarous as they ever were, and all the years of so called Civilized progress count for nothing. The Cross on Calvary is an apt and literal symbol for much of the world today... it is also the measure of God's love for mankind...⁹¹

For Sutherland and for his ecclesiastical patrons, there could be no doubt that the Nazi war crimes deserved condemnation by the Church, through imagery as much as through verbal expressions of horror. The Commission on Atomic Power could not make this assumption about the Allied use of the atomic bombs⁹². Indeed, the

⁹⁰ *ibid.* A less encouraging correspondent, responding to Sutherland's "contemporary" style, wrote: "I was quite sure that if my aunt (who lives up that way) goes to St. Matthew's, she'll give the vicar a bit of her mind, shake her umbrella in his face and will have to be put out by the verger." He enclosed a photograph of a robot, to further inspire Sutherland's "fertile imagination". Letter from Graham Sutherland to Walter Hussey, 23 February 1947; enclosing an anonymous letter from Tangier, 21 January 1947, M.S. 345. Sir Eric Maclagan, however, giving his address at the unveiling, described the painting as "at once new and traditional... This tradition may at first be unfamiliar, as the modernity of the technique may be unfamiliar, to those who look at it." (*WH*, M.S. 346.) Kenneth Clarke's judgement was also favourable in a letter to Hussey, 28 August 1946, *WH*, M.S. 347.

⁹¹ Walter Hussey, 'A Gospel for Today' No. 5, 'The Cross', sermon, 1947, *WH*, M.S. 239.

⁹² Another St. Matthew's commission, Norman Nicholson's 'The Outer Planet: An Allegory' written for the Dedication and Patronal Festival in 1949, did portray the exploding of the atomic bomb as an

vexing problems of casuistry raised by the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki left the Commission divided and confused. Walter Oakeshott, the conservative political philosopher, took the line that the atomic bomb introduced no new moral problem, because obliteration bombing had been equally devastating. Yet somehow, the moral code must be rebuilt, and sanctions imposed. These must be derived from "the regard for human life and personality, restraint, the devotion of our existence to causes other than the pursuit of individual pleasure or the pursuit of power."⁹³ At the Commission's second meeting, Baillie attempted to explain the widespread shock at the use of the bombs: "we seemed to be ourselves adopting the notion of total war". The bombing was "indiscriminate, and was a mean and brutal method", the like of which had been roundly condemned when perpetrated by the Axis. Challenged to explain how the voluntary use of atomic bombs differed from area bombing, Baillie admitted that there was no intrinsic difference:

He said the difficulty about protesting against pattern bombing was that we had been continually cheated about it, we were always being assured that there had been no change in our bombing policy when in fact there had been a change. We were therefore cheated into not protesting and he thought our protests now ought to go back to pattern bombing.⁹⁴

It was undoubtedly a vindication which Bell and MacKinnon would have preferred to have heard earlier, but now it led Oldham to ask "whether it was agreed that we should condemn that we took the initiative in taking the further step towards a still more destructive method of war". The group were not agreed.⁹⁵ Oldham wondered whether modern total war could ever be called 'just', and Birley replied that total war

atrocities. It opened with a description of creation: "The great continuous sun./ Focussing his beams as through a glass./ Condensed his brightness into a drop/ ...so into one grain/ Was bled the fire of the sun..." However, "WHEN LOVE DIES/MAN IS DIVIDED.../ The solar laws compel the dark, and cold/ Contracted molecules of murder hold/ the bright potentials of a new-born star.../ Rip the centre out, annihilate the atom./ And let the fire within burn through."

⁹³ Note by Walter Oakeshott, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, ff. 160-161.

⁹⁴ Kathleen BLISS advanced a similar argument in her Editorial for the *CN-L*, No. 251, 9 January 1946: "Some are inclined to the view that [the bomb]... will bring about no fundamental change. The same things, they argue, that are now said about the atomic bomb might have been said about area bombing, if it could have been foreseen. This is to get things the wrong way round. If there is a relation between the bombing of Germany and the bombing of Hiroshima, it is the former that has to be assimilated in our thought to the latter, and not *vice versa*."

⁹⁵ "We are acutely conscious of the fact that this division of opinion is but one aspect of the deeper dilemma" (*Era of Atomic Power*, p. 49.) MACKINNON affirmed Baillie's sense of having been "cheated" in 'The Moral Implications of the Atomic Bomb': "The way towards [the dropping of the atom bombs] was prepared by the 'obliteration bombing' of Germany and indeed of Japan itself: and the shock it occasioned was partly the overt expression of a disquiet... which had already been rendered vocal by the remarkable utterances in the House of Lords by the Bishop of Chichester."

had always existed, but Christianity had imposed limits on it. Dropping the atomic bombs had applied the methods of total war "to defend the policy of limited war". For Baillie, who was not a pacifist, this was a form of ethical hair-splitting: "If we gave up the distinction between a just and an unjust war the Christian could not square his conscience with bearing arms at all." Bell agreed, arguing that to compromise the doctrine of the Just War demanded that Christians reassess the pacifist position:

Those who took part in a war must realise that they were making a new break with Christian tradition. The other people were taking the more Christian line and should be protected by the Church.

It was at this point that Oldham made the connection between Bell's fears about the ramifications of the collapse of the Just War tradition, and the conclusion towards which the Moot had been groping. Bell's position implied, he said, that "the continuity of the Christian tradition was irreconcilable with the defence of civilisation". It was this perception which revealed a growing gulf between two sections of the Commission. Baillie could not see why Christians should defend a civilisation which had abandoned their values; what was important now was the preservation of "Christian integrity", but Routh "did not want to say anything that would suggest that when war came the Christian should wash his hands of it." Bell felt that to emphasise this would be "throwing dust in people's eyes. If there was any emphasis it should be on the other side." Routh wanted to preserve the best aspects of British patriotism, and while Bell agreed with this, he insisted that "in this report we must say something about the Church's distinctive genius in relation to life". This would include "experiments in living, a revival of the patronage of art and drama"; it would also include preserving the Christian ethical witness intact in the face of the atrocity of modern techniques of warfare⁹⁶. It was a conviction with which MacKinnon agreed⁹⁷, but the issue was not resolved. Under pressure from

⁹⁶ Minutes of the Second Meeting of the Commission on the Era of Atomic Power, 2-3 March 1946, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, ff. 182-188. "It was agreed that the Commission should try to state as sharply as possible the two points on which this discussion had concentrated:... a. That war with atomic weapons was outside the limits which had traditionally been recognised as 'just' by Christian thinkers,... b. That Christians still have a duty in the 'defence of civilisation'." See Alan M. SUGGATE, 'The Christian Churches in England Since 1945: Ecumenism and Social Concern', in Sheridan GILLEY and W.J. SHEILS (Eds.), *A History of Religion in Britain: Practice and Belief from Pre-Roman Times to the Present*, Oxford, 1994, p. 476. OLDHAM, remarked that the notion of a Just War was obsolete in his *CN-L* Editorial, No. 269, 18 September 1946.

⁹⁷ The issue had still not been resolved at the draft-revision stage. George BELL wrote to D.M. MACKINNON, 9 April 1946, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, f. 213, saying that Routh's side was still being stressed at the expense of his and MacKinnon's, and that he wanted the insertion of the statement: "some members of the commission accordingly took the view that in no circumstances should a

MacKinnon and Bell, the Commission duly noted in the final Report that "there must be points at which the Church is prepared to utter a clear, prophetic 'No.'" It acknowledged that "Some members of the Commission" felt that Christians could never approve the use of an atomic weapon,⁹⁸ but in its context, this admission merely served to highlight the Commission's lack of unanimity concerning its most fundamental dilemmas. The morality of the decision to annihilate Hiroshima and Nagasaki was neither condemned nor approved; the Report merely observed that the question required "rigorous examination."⁹⁹ The principle of a nuclear deterrent was tacitly accepted¹⁰⁰. Reviews of this aspect of the Report were discouraging. The pacifist Ernest Bader found it "tragically negative and most depressing"¹⁰¹, while the *News Chronicle* headlined its review, 'Church has "No Solution" for Atomic Power'¹⁰². Raven was as upset by the finished product as he had been by the draft, telling Bell that it contained "passages which almost explicitly state that the end justifies the means and plainly imply that Christian democracy can only be defended by total war". Raven found the situation intolerable; Bell advised him to talk to MacKinnon, adding that he "would be very sympathetic"¹⁰³. Raven, Bell and MacKinnon were to be disappointed again when the Archbishop's Commission on *The Church and the Atom* (1948)¹⁰⁴, presided over by E.G. Selwyn and appointed to provide an Anglican response to the ecumenical report, failed to address the crucial question, "Can it be right to refuse to use the atomic bomb, if its use is the only way of preserving civilization?" Bell complained that it failed to strike a note of Christian

Christian approve the use of the atomic bomb or similar weapon of wholesale massacre, either by way of threat or reprisal." MacKinnon's agreement with Bell was made explicit in his 'Moral Implications of the Atomic Bomb': "we have made a very frightening breach with our tradition indeed. For we have yielded ourselves... to acceptance of the idea of war as a process which somehow takes charge of us..." (p. 26, and see pp. 28-29).

⁹⁸ *Era of Atomic Power*, pp. 51-53.

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 50.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

¹⁰¹ Ernest BADER, 'Some comments on the Churches Report on Atomic Power', *BELLP*, Vol. 113, ff. 223-224.

¹⁰² *News Chronicle*, 3 May 1946; *BELLP*, Vol. 113, ff. 228-229.

¹⁰³ Charles RAVEN to George Bell, 9 June 1946, George BELL to Charles Raven, 17 June 1946, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, ff. 231, 232. OLDHAM reported Raven's dissatisfaction in his Editorial, *CN-L*, No. 269, 18 September 1946. Bell continued to urge that "To use atomic and similar weapons is beyond the pale for a civilised nation" (letter to Professor Smith, 23 December 1949, f. 265). The Report also stood in stark contrast to that of the Church of Scotland Assembly, (Draft Report of the Assembly Church and Nation Committee, c. January 1949), *BELLP*, Vol. 113, f. 273, which argued that since a just war was now impossible, Christians must be committed to an "effective pacifism". MacKinnon admitted in 1967 that "I regard the time I put in helping to prepare this report as almost wasted." (Donald MACKINNON, *Borderlands of Theology and Other Essays*, London, 1968, pp. 34-35, and see RUSAMA, *Moral Issues*, pp. 160-164.)

¹⁰⁴ See ARCHBISHOPS' COMMISSION on *The Church and the Atom*, April 1948, and RUSAMA, *Moral Issues*, pp. 162-165. This commission was appointed as a result of the Dean of Chichester, Duncan-Jones, having moved in the Church Assembly that a committee ought to be appointed to consider *The Era of Atomic Power*. Unlike Bell, he was satisfied with the results.

compassion¹⁰⁵, but was encouraged when the 1948 Lambeth Conference concluded that war was now "a blasphemy and an anachronism"¹⁰⁶.

If the 1946 Report could not reach a satisfactory conclusion on the legitimacy of the bombing, it could at least document the range of possible responses to a world in which atrocity was increasingly common, and try to relate them to the Christian tradition. The atomic bombs called for the resolution of the Yogi-Commissar dialectic identified by the Moot. Oldham quoted from Hodges' discussion of the problem in a letter to the Commission in November 1945¹⁰⁷, and the issue was raised by MacKinnon during the first meeting¹⁰⁸. He argued that the doctrine of the Resurrection offered a resolution by synthesising the conceptions of eternity as "timelessness" and as "future beatitude":

If the eternal was future, then you were ready to sacrifice anything for that future (*commissar*); if you thought of the eternal as something over-against the temporal to which you could attach yourself here and now, you chose a mystical attitude of withdrawal (*yogi*).¹⁰⁹

The Yogi position, MacKinnon argued, was related to that of the absolutist pacifist. He distinguished between three positions on modern warfare. The first was "a purely non possumus attitude towards modern civilisation and its seemingly most characteristic expressions, eg. the atomic bomb". A second, represented by the Just War tradition, "thinks that Christian moral theology supplies us with all that we need in the way of a signpost concerning what is and what is not permissible." By convincing those holding this position that atomic war was unjust, one compelled

¹⁰⁵ RUSAMA, *Moral Issues*, pp. 168-171. MacKinnon was as critical of this report as of *The Church and the Atom*: (See *Borderlands*, p. 181.)

¹⁰⁶ It maintained: "We can have either war or civilisation - not both." However, it could not see the way clear to recommending specific means of settling international disputes which would guarantee against their use. (*Lambeth Conference*, 1948, Part I, p. 30; Part II, pp. 13-14, and see Timothy D. WILBY, 'Attitudes to War in the Church of England 1939-1983', M.A. Thesis, University of Durham, 1987, p. 15.) The World Council of Churches, with Bell's support, saw atomic weapons as foreshadowing "the annihilation of man and all his works." (RUSAMA, *Moral Issues*, pp. 168-171.)

¹⁰⁷ J.H. OLDHAM, First draft of "Letter to the Commission on the New Era of Atomic Energy", c. November 1945, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, ff. 65-71. The quotation was of Hodges' insistence that "If Christianity expects to enter into fruitful discussion with the world, it will have to talk to the world about time..."

¹⁰⁸ By this stage, Arthur KOESTLER had published his essay on 'The Yogi and the Commissar'. The Commissar "can be defined as the human type which has completely severed relations to the subconscious." The Yogi "believes that the End is unpredictable and that the Means alone count... [and] rejects violence under any circumstances." See Ronald BLYTHE, *Writing in a War: Stories, Poems and Essays of 1939-1945*, Harmondsworth, 1982, pp. 282-292.

¹⁰⁹ British Council of Churches Commission on the Era of Atomic Power. Record of the first meeting, 4-7 January 1946, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, ff. 122ff.

them to revert to the first position. Finally there was "the relativist position, which says that yesterday we used gunpowder, today the bomber, tomorrow bacteria, etc. but we will get used to that as we got used to the other things." That was a view which brought the concept of Christian civilisation into serious doubt. MacKinnon wondered whether the Just War tradition could hold, but was certain that it was held less and less. It had serious implications for the establishment of the Church and "the Christian's relation to politics", and ultimately the Church would have to make a clear decision on the morality of atomic warfare.¹¹⁰ The conclusion of the Yogi that in the midst of catastrophe it was the saving of individual souls, not the survival of civilisation, that mattered, was unacceptable for those seeking the middle way in the belief "that civilisation of the Western pattern was a worthwhile enterprise and therefore it was necessary to have some means of stopping the Hitlers from ruining it." Routh was less sympathetic with the Yogi argument than MacKinnon, maintaining that it meant that civilisation would have to be surrendered to anyone who even threatened to use atomic weapons. The "muckers out" who rejected the possibility of using the atomic bomb were also "muckers-out on society"¹¹¹. He proposed that the Report should promote a "Middle Way", which:

rests on the conviction, which the one extreme lacks and the other has never stopped to reason out, that our Western civilisation with its Christian tradition still has health in it, that it is a great experiment still containing in it the power of life and growth - now more than ever at a time when it has emerged triumphant from two civil wars, and has revealed its power not merely to keep intact all that is valuable and enduring in that tradition, but to generate, in the very throes of its crisis, new ideas, new experiments, new possibilities of growth, perhaps even a new type of men to fulfill them.¹¹²

Once again, the final Report bore the stamp of Routh, and largely avoided MacKinnon's view that in the case of the atomic bomb, such a position might not be possible. It asked whether the "advocates of withdrawal" were guided by the desire

¹¹⁰ British Council of Churches Commission on the Era of Atomic Power. Record of the first meeting, 4-7 January 1946, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, ff. 122ff. In May 1946, Canon Lindsay Dewar proposed, but failed to gain acceptance for a statement by the Convocation of Canterbury: "That this house condemns the action of the Allied Nations in using atomic energy for the purpose of destruction upon the two Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and deplores the terrible precedent created by the use of this weapon in warfare." See *Chronicle of Convocation*, II-2, No. 1, and II-3, No. 2 (October 1946).

¹¹¹ British Council of Churches Commission on the Era of Atomic Power. Record of the first meeting, 4-7 January 1946, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, ff. 122ff. Baillie pointed out, however, that the "idea that it was not worth while to marry because a blow-up was coming was not unlike some things in the epistles."

¹¹² Dennis ROUTH, 'Letter on Atomic Power', *BELLP*, Vol. 113, f. 141.

to make "their greatest contribution to the problem of twentieth century man, and give birth to a new and positive way of life... [or more] by an understandable but unfruitful horror or despair"¹¹³. Such a question ignored the perception stressed in MacKinnon's writings throughout the war, that the one other solution, martyrdom, could hardly be construed as a refusal to face up to responsibility: it might be the only possible response for an exponent of the Middle Way, when confronted by the pressure to use a weapon which the Just War tradition must condemn.

In a later letter to the Commission, MacKinnon insisted that "One has not penetrated the inwardness of the Yogi's attitude unless one sees it as an expression of a belief that the wounds in human society are only to be healed on the plane of spiritual action." Yet there were many adherents to Catholic tradition for whom concerns about the Yogi-Commissar dialectic meant nothing: what mattered to them was the inward Christian life, the liturgy, and "the life of the Church as a worshipping community," not civilisation. MacKinnon found this tendency in the novels of Greene and Waugh. Here was a thoroughgoing retreat into the spiritual life which did not shirk the temporal consequences. This tradition of "Christian otherworldliness" was a reminder that the Christian could resolve the contradiction between Yogi and Commissar, "because in the realised eschatology of the Church's life, he is held in the embrace of the meta-historical, historically manifested, love of God." If the Churches of Britain would only reject openly the methods of modern war, in the name of "ultimate norms that cannot be transgressed", it would at least influence some people to behave differently. MacKinnon's argument was consistent with his address to the Christendom Group seven years earlier¹¹⁴. At some point, the Church would be compelled to pinpoint a moral limit, not because it adhered to the position of the Yogi, but because it believed in "realised eschatology", and in the life of the Church as the extension of the Incarnation:

We have got to see how far our relativism has taken us. We do not allow men even the possibility that loyalty to absolutes might help to refashion the texture of relatives.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Draft of *The Era of Atomic Power*, Chapter III, 'The Three Ways' (adapted in the final version as the substantially different and tantalisingly brief Chapter III, 'The Choice Before Society'), *BELLP*, Vol. 113, f. 154. The final draft replaced the terms "Yogi" and "Commissar", with "Withdrawal" and "Secular Futurism" respectively. The term "Middle Way" was replaced with "Responsible Citizenship". This missed MacKinnon's point entirely. *Era of Atomic Power*, pp. 24-31.

¹¹⁴ For a discussion of his 'The Task of the Christendom Group in Time of War', *Christendom, IX*, No. 34, June 1939, see above, pp. 32ff.

¹¹⁵ D.M. MACKINNON, 'Notes on the Responsibility of the Church', *BELLP*, Vol. 113, ff. 170-172.

Pressed to choose between the collapse of civilisation and compromising the Church's witness, the Catholic Christian must affirm Maritain's dictum, "The Church does not die, civilisations die."¹¹⁶ Maritain had affirmed that "For the Christian the true religion is essentially supernatural and, because it is supernatural... It transcends all civilisation and every culture; it is strictly universal."¹¹⁷ "So often I find," MacKinnon wrote to Bell, "that world-affirmers (like Routh) neglect the questionableness of the modern world's most precious achievement, and world-renouncers the magnitude of what it has accomplished."¹¹⁸ MacKinnon repeated the convictions of the Oxford Conference of 1937, and of Bell's *Christianity and World Order*, but with the chastened consciousness that Christians had much to learn from the outside world:

The Church remains the Church - transcending, in its life, exhaustive involvement in any conflict save that in which Christ glorified his Father in obedience unto death. Yet for all that, the resources of Christian insight must be used to invigorate all that is profound as well as authentic in our developing tradition. And Christians must learn much concerning the true ordering of human society from post-Christians.

"If war came," he sadly confided in Bell, "I fear I would be a pacifist now. But in fear and trembling, as I thought of all that was being thrown away."¹¹⁹

The response of MacKinnon and Bell to the disclosures about the atomic bomb was therefore to affirm the absolute demands of Catholic Christianity¹²⁰. The

¹¹⁶ A letter by Dennis Routh (December 1945) *BELLP*, Vol. 113, f. 106, reveals that even he feared that Western civilisation might be destroyed. Vidler was still more pessimistic (Comments from non-members of the Commission': A.R. VIDLER, December 1945, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, f. 109v.) Drafts of the report agreed that: "the devastation caused by a war waged with atomic bombs and other equally destructive weapons would be irreparable." (Draft of *The Era of Atomic Power*, Chapter I, 'Atomic Power', *BELLP*, Vol. 113, ff. 143-144.) J.H. OLDHAM, in his Memorandum on the Commission on the Age of Atomic Power, 28 November 1945, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, ff. 88-94, and his *CN-L* Supplement, 'The Control of Atomic Energy', No. 269, 18 September 1946, feared that attempts to avert atomic war would culminate in the formation of a one-world government, susceptible to tyranny. See also John Foster DULLES, Address for the British Council of Churches Commission on the New Era of Atomic Power, 15 November 1945, *BELLP*, Vol. 113, f. 97.

¹¹⁷ Jacques MARITAIN, *True Humanism*, London, 1938, pp. 88-90.

¹¹⁸ MacKinnon's italics. Donald MACKINNON, 'Memorandum', *BELLP*, Vol. 113, f. 112. The statement would have equally well represented the Catholic Anglican position had "world-affirmers" been replaced by "liberals" and "world-renouncers" by "the neo-orthodox".

¹¹⁹ *BELLP*, Vol. 113, f. 178. See also 'Comments from non-members of the Commission': Christopher DAWSON (December 1945), f. 112.

¹²⁰ A further example is MACKINNON's 'The Tomb Was Empty', *CN-L*, No. 258, April 1946: "What is this life of Jesus which rises from the dead?... It is a life whose movement expresses the intensely human story of retreat from the broad highways of success and assurance to the narrow

ultimate model of the obedience of the Christian was the "obedience unto death" of the Cross. W.H. Auden wrote a Litany for St. Matthew's for 21 September 1946 which encapsulated the response of MacKinnon and Bell to the Commission: "the sudden instant of absolute demand comes sooner or later to each of us who of ourselves can initiate nothing but the prayer that, when it comes, we may not exemplify one of the innumerable modes of refusal."¹²¹ On the other hand, the tendencies to descend either into nihilism or a series of reflex condemnations of humanity as totally sinful must be avoided. Ultimately, the Church must find ways of expressing this conviction to a public which, as Geoffrey Vickers pointed out to Oldham, was as concerned about the threat of nuclear war as the Commission had been, but lacked the voice to express its fears. An early draft of *The Era of Atomic Power* had castigated the general public for evading the issues raised by the atomic bomb. Vickers provided Oldham with a fictitious but eminently believable response from "the man in the pub":

"What's this abaht evashun, gov'nor? I ain't evading anything. What are you doing abaht the ruddy bomb, anyway? Chairman of a Commission, are you? Well, I 'aven't refused to serve on it 'ave I? 'sfer as I can see, yer don't know what to do abaht it yerself, except that we oughter live more Christ-like. An' so we ought and that's a fact, but that's so as to save our ruddy souls, not because we're scared your ruddy civilisations's goin' to be blown up. No guvnor, we know yer don't mean it but yer didn't ought to talk to us like that."

Anglican Church leaders in particular were compelled to face the fact that their positions in the established Church gave them a responsibility to protest against atrocity, but this critical role must arise from a concern that was more eschatological. The Church was there "to save our ruddy souls"¹²². In September 1946, using Auden's litany, the parishioners at St. Matthew's prayed "to be delivered... from making our society or our age the final revelation of the truth, from justifying present sin as a historical necessity that future good may come."¹²³ It is hardly surprising that the stronger protest against atrocity was not the ecumenical Commission's consensus

defiles of failure and bewilderment... No Socratic indifference... marks the Christ on the threshold of his final hour. But for all that he goes on his way unhesitatingly to death in unflinching obedience to his Father's commandment." (p. 8.)

¹²¹ W.H. AUDEN, 'Litany and Anthem for S. Matthew's Day' written for the Church of S. Matthew, Northampton, for the Dedication and Patronal Festival, published as a pamphlet, 21 September 1946, *WH*, MS. 284.

¹²² Geoffrey VICKERS to J.H. Oldham, (February 1946?), *BELLP*, Vol. 113, f. 162. The final Report still criticised public "indifference to the bomb". *Era of Atomic Power*, pp. 15-16.

¹²³ AUDEN, 'Litany and Anthem for S. Matthew's Day'.

report, but Sutherland's impassioned debut in the production of liturgical art, a project which successfully combined, as Bell had argued was ideal, the protesting Christian conscience with artistic endeavour. Both Gilbert Shaw and H.A. Hodges had hinted that the most powerful Christian archetype would prove to be the image of Christ crucified; Hussey's commission affirmed the fact.

The degree to which the commissions at St. Matthew's, Northampton, epitomise what this thesis has argued about the Catholic tradition in wartime Anglicanism, cannot be fully appreciated until one visits the church itself. Alan Doig has commented that with Malcolm Pollard's *Risen Christ*, added in 1992, which hangs above the chancel arch, the *Madonna and Child* and the *Crucifixion* ensure that "Birth, death and rising in glory now form a credal triangle at the heart of the church." Doig makes a similar comment about Hussey's later commissions for Chichester Cathedral: one is presented with a "group of objects" which seem to possess a "calm completeness". The works of art take their place in the overall "performance" which draws together the art, the architecture and the liturgy.¹²⁴ Yet there is more to it than that. As one walks down the nave of St. Matthew's, Moore's and Sutherland's works stand in the transepts, facing inwards towards the worshipping congregation. Moore's sculpture stands serenely before the entrance to the Lady Chapel to one's left, while the *Crucifixion* hangs on the transept wall to the right. Moore's work may symbolise birth, but it also epitomises the neo-romantic concern with the nurturing body, and celebrates the Incarnation¹²⁵. Sutherland's work represents far more than mere death: it is at once an image of atrocity and an image of Redemption, and Sutherland's public protest against the "continuing beastliness of mankind". After each communion service, the altar upon which the Eucharist is celebrated is carried from its place before the chancel, and stored beneath Sutherland's painting, as if to underline the continuity between the sacrifice of the Cross and the sacrifice of the Eucharist. The church and its art-works document the Catholic preoccupation with synthesis and balance: between the doctrines of Incarnation and Redemption, between the aesthetics of neo-romanticism and artistic modernism, between peaceful detachment and impassioned protest, and between the consciousness of beatitude and the conviction of the sin which perpetrates the most horrifying atrocities. The congregation, flanked by these two images and

¹²⁴ Alan DOIG, 'Architecture and Performance: Dean Walter Hussey and the Arts', *Theology*, January/February, 1996, pp. 17, 18. The remaining furniture in the transept was removed, after Sutherland wrote to Hussey: "Please a cri-de-coeur!! do consider having a gangway-at-least - in front of my picture: Even the devotional aspect is ruined by the hemmed-in feeling of the chairs. As much space at least as is in front of the Madonna." Letter to Walter Hussey, 18 December 1946, *WH*, M.S. 345.

¹²⁵ See STANSKY and ABRAHAMS, *London's Burning*, p. 65; HUSSEY, *Patron of Art*, pp. 37-39.

participating in the liturgy, is constantly reminded that the Catholic Anglican is called upon to seek the "middle way", not merely in liturgical worship, but under "the conditions of actual life", where the problems of casuistry are fraught with awful dilemmas, and the conflicting claims of Yogi and Commissar, active and contemplative, Incarnationalist and Redemptionist, "Catholic" and "Protestant", assail the Christian from either side. In the same year as the unveiling of Sutherland's painting, Auden's Litany for St. Matthew's included a petition which made explicit what was implied by the Church's iconography:

May the Holy Spirit ever guide us safely up the narrow way between the two pitfalls, between the stoic pride that denies the Incarnation, and the epicurean prudence that rejects the Crucifixion.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ AUDEN, 'Litany and Anthem for S. Matthew's Day'. See also *WH*, M.S. 284.

Conclusion

What was the source of the strength and vitality of Anglican Catholicism and other expressions of Christian "orthodoxy" in the thirties and forties? That such an appeal existed, and corresponded to an erosion of theological liberalism, is accepted by writers such as Hastings and Wilkinson¹. These authors provide several explanations for this orthodox resurgence. Wilkinson sees "neo-orthodoxy", broadly defined to include both Protestants and Catholics, as an episode in the ongoing development of liberalism, occasioned by the cultural and political climate of the inter-war years and by the failure of the League of Nations. Hastings sees the primary appeal of Catholicism, at least for a certain élite, in the fact that traditional theology provided different but intellectually satisfying ways of thinking about the world and its problems. He makes the interesting assertion that: "The wider cultural swing back towards both religion and orthodoxy in religion precedes the swing back of the theologians." He points to the influence of the poetry of Hopkins, popularised by Charles Williams's 1930 edition, and discusses the influence of Barth and Niebuhr.

These arguments are persuasive, and a good deal of the evidence presented in this thesis supports them. However, there were other consistent themes in Catholic thought which may also explain its appeal. The case-studies here presented suggest that many Catholic Anglicans, clerical and lay, saw the cultural, political, social and religious conditions of the 1930s and the 1940s as a window of opportunity for Catholicism in England. They appealed to a living tradition which had for centuries been a formative influence in European civilisation. Now the future of that civilisation, threatened by an alien, anti-Christian ideology, depended upon the survival of that tradition, and upon its contribution to the reconstruction of society and culture. The embodiment of the tradition was the Church - a collective with a given body of dogma. Of course, the Nazi Party was also a dogmatic collective, but its enforcement of dogma was a denial of freedom, and a trampling of the sanctity of the individual. Catholics argued that their dogma gave access to the truth; their collective was sacramental, an institution through which God expressed Himself, a

¹ Adrian HASTINGS *A History of English Christianity, 1920-1985*, London, 1986; Alan WILKINSON, *Dissent or Conform? War, Peace and the English Churches 1900-1945*, London, 1986.

"mystical body of Christ". If so, assent to Catholic dogma and critical obedience to the Church were guarantors of freedom: "the truth shall set you free". The Catholic emphasis on the direct link between Christology and ecclesiology is a key to understanding the appeal of Anglican Catholicism in this period, explaining at once the Anglo-Catholic insistence on apostolic succession, and Sayers's tendency to see ecumenism (or "catholicity") as depending on dogmatic agreement. Liberalism and Evangelicalism, by contrast, had thrived on individualism: on individual interpretation of the scriptures, on a gospel of individual salvation. A consciousness of this may be detected in much of the Catholic material discussed in this thesis: the rise of totalitarianism, the coming of war, the social disruptions of the thirties and forties, demanded a collective response, and Catholics in the Anglican Church, by definition, always had been collectivists.

Yet this insistence on the importance of dogma was tempered by the consciousness of a tradition that was living, open to intellectual innovation and cultural change, and to engagement with cultural workers outside their own tendency or their own Church. MacKinnon's willingness to engage with Barth, Bell's willingness to appoint artists who delighted "in splashing about with bright colours on a large surface", Eliot's willingness to insert metaphors about tube stations and bombing in a poetic discourse on mystical detachment, Sayers's willingness to use slang in the dialogue of *The Man Born to be King*, Hodges' exploitation of concepts from psychology and sociology, Hussey's willingness to exploit the talents of Sutherland, Moore and Britten - these are but a few examples. Yet innovation was not allowed to destroy tradition: MacKinnon did not become a Barthian; Bell appointed modern artists to renew an old association; Sayers used slang to remind people that Jesus was incarnate in a real world. Here was an intrinsic strength of Anglican Catholicism: an ability to engage with the changing culture, and a corresponding capacity to criticise it from a position at once of detachment and engagement. This had been demonstrated theoretically in the twenties by *Essays Catholic and Critical*, a work in which Catholic orthodoxy showed itself capable of adapting to Biblical criticism without hoisting a white flag. If the thirties and forties presented a "window of opportunity" to Catholics in the Church of England, it was because cultural conditions encouraged the practical deployment of those strengths. Attempts to do this were not always successful: Bell's artists' guild never materialised, Sayers's "Oecumenical Penguin" sleepeth yet, the Moot agonised too long over its impotence, and MacKinnon's originality was neutralised in the report on atomic power. Yet the successes were considerable, and the failures rarely a complete waste of time. Wilkinson may be right in seeing neo-orthodoxy as

essentially a stage in the steady development of liberalism, but it is equally possible that Catholicism is best-equipped for long-term survival, because of its ability to give to both a measure of critical acceptance. It was this determination to pursue a middle way, neither liberal nor neo-orthodox, which found expression as much in the theology of MacKinnon as in the ministry of Bell².

It is significant that Wilkinson should have singled out Bell as a paradigm of creative dissent in the twentieth century English Church³. Bell's ministry was a product of the realisation that one could not criticise a culture without engaging with it. His conviction that the "incarnational status of the human spirit" meant that the Church's witness must be worked out "under the conditions of actual life", was the basis of his eventual acceptance that Hitler should be assassinated⁴, and equally, the motivation behind his commissioning of modern art⁵. The latter was as much an act of creative dissent as the former⁶. One scholar has recently argued that "if one were to write a history of religious art of the last hundred years it might be summarized as the virtual extinction of such art as a significant activity by significant artists", and that the majority of genuine spiritual art in the twentieth century has been "executed by artists spontaneously and independently, outside the churches"⁷. Bell's and Hussey's patronage can only be properly appreciated once one accepts that, before their efforts, English Church art was languishing in a kind of mass-produced Victorianism⁸. It required a sacramental, Incarnational theology, a genuine Christian aesthetic, and a determination to prefer creativity to happiness, to pull church

² A similar point has been made recently by Adrian HASTINGS. For him, "prophecy... includes two essential elements... The first is as clear a rational and sophisticated understanding of the world as one can come to, an understanding historical, sociological, psychological... The second remains fidelity to a tradition, a faith, a shared discourse out of which one speaks; not a rigid, uncritical fidelity but still the acceptance of a language and culture of meaning and value; not just a shared subjectivity but a well-tried road opening on to the realism of an objective knowledge of things." ('Introduction', *The Shaping of Prophecy: Passion, Perception and Practicality*, London, 1995, p. 6.)

³ See also A.M. CHANDLER, 'The Church of England and Nazi Germany 1933-1945', Ph.D. Thesis, Cambridge University, 1991, p. 230: "[Bell], and Temple in his different realm, led the Church of England from *pontification to participation*." (Chandler's italics.)

⁴ Andrew CHANDLER, 'Have We an Ethic of Resistance?', *Theology*, XCVIII, No. 782, March/April 1995, pp. 82-92.

⁵ Horton DAVIES, 'Anglican Appreciation of Modern Art', in Donald S. ARMENTROUT (Ed.), *This Sacred History: Anglican Reflections*, Massachusetts, 1990, p. 180, argues that the doctrinal centrality of the Incarnation in Anglicanism has encouraged its support of visual art.

⁶ WILKINSON implicitly recognises this in his 'Bishop Bell and Germany', in CATTERALL and MORRIS, *Britain and the Threat to Stability in Europe 1918-45*, London, 1993, p. 80.

⁷ Graham HOWES, 'Religious Art and Religious Belief', *New Blackfriars*, July/August, 1984, p. 336.

⁸ One exception must be recognised: Fr. Bernard Walke's commissioning of Roger Fry and the local Newlyn Group of artists to paint pictures for St. Hilary's parish church in Penzance. Walke was persecuted by ultra-Protestants for his "ritualism", and "died in a ditch escaping from their thuggery." (Michael DAY, *pers. comm.*, 6 August 1996; and see Anthony MOTT, *Twenty Years at St. Hilary*, London, 1982; Keith WALKER, *Images or Idols? The Place of Sacred Art in Churches Today*, Norwich, 1996, pp. 46-48.)

decoration out of that rut⁹. I have attempted to demonstrate that these were characteristic concerns of wartime Catholic Anglicanism. For Wilkinson, the churches in the first half of this century were hampered by their failure "to listen to the poets"¹⁰; it is surely significant that those in the Church who were most supportive of the arts were also those who raised its clearest dissenting voice.

The appeal of Anglican Catholicism in this period must indeed be attributed to its capacity for dissent. It had, in a sense, always been a dissenting tradition within its own Church. Its long-fought campaign for liturgical change had at times been costly, and had ensured that Anglican Catholics could not submit themselves to Erastianism. Church leaders such as Bell recognised that in times of national crisis, when national leaders were more strongly tempted than usual to make political and strategic decisions without reference to Christian ethics, it was imperative that Catholic Christianity should revive its dissenting spirit¹¹. In wartime, the anti-Erastian vein in the Catholic tradition found, at least to a certain extent, its energies channelled away from the concerns of ceremonial, and towards a series of issues which were of urgent relevance in the face of the Nazi threat: the defense of human rights through resistance to area bombing and the internment of refugees, the support of spiritual art, the popular representation of Christian dogma and ethics, and the attempt to provide a Christian voice on reconstruction. While some Catholics channelled their energies into resisting the Church of South India, the broader Catholic tradition saw Catholicity as a mandate to define the orthodoxy which stood at the basis of its ethical witness, and to support ecumenism with both passion and discernment¹². These were genuine attempts to foster a critical tradition, based not on abstract principles or party allegiances, but on the needs of persons united in the

⁹ Sir Kenneth CLARK realised this in 1943 (*WH*, M.S. 335), when he unveiled Henry Moore's *Madonna and Child*, and spoke of the Church's failure in the previous century to commission works of sculpture "in a living style". He exhorted his audience to bear in mind the words of Anselm: "Credo ut intelligam" ("I believe in order that I may understand".)

¹⁰ WILKINSON, *Dissent or Conform?*, p. xiv.

¹¹ See, for example, John Collins's insistence that members of the Fellowship of the Transfiguration of Our Lord "are to fight under Christ's banner against all injustices and everything that is contrary to the will of God both in ourselves and in the world..." (Tenth pastoral letter, R.A.F. High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, 12 December 1944, John Collins Papers, Lambeth Palace Library, M.S. 3287, f. 14.)

¹² This was the burden of Bonhoeffer's last words, addressed to Bell: "Tell him that for me this is the end but also the beginning. With him I believe in the principle of our Universal Christian brotherhood which rises above all national interests, and that our victory is certain..." WILKINSON, 'Bishop Bell and Germany', p. 88. RUPP *'I Seek My Brethren': Bishop George Bell and the German Churches*, London, 1975, p. 10, notes the significance of Bell's quotation of F.D. Maurice's *Church as Family in Christianity and World Order*: "Our Fathers in God testify of a universal brotherhood which has no limits of language or race, they do not testify of the exclusion or excision of any portion of the Church, but rather that all are one in Christ Jesus."

person of the suffering Christ¹³. That tradition was gathering fresh momentum when Bell, walking in his garden with T.S. Eliot, suggested that he write a play for the Canterbury Festival, and the poet chose as his subject the martyrdom of Thomas á Becket, the archetypal defender of the freedom of the English Church¹⁴. It was the same tradition which Bell himself had identified in the words with which the thirteenth century Bishop Robert Grosseteste met the requests of a nepotist pope:

In a filial and obedient spirit I disobey, I refuse, I rebel.¹⁵

*

The chief obstacle facing the intellectual exponents of Catholic dissent was the plain fact that they represented a cultural élite. A growing consciousness of the problems this entailed may be traced in the pages of *Christendom* in the 1930s and early 1940s. Eliot had recommended himself to the Christendom Group in 1933 as a kind of jester for the clerisy, representing "the common man... the highly intelligent ignoramus who hopes to be able to express his confusion with clarity, and ask the right questions..."¹⁶ One can only wonder what the common man as represented by Sayers's Tommy Atkins would have made of the questions he asked, concerned as they were with the wisdom of the Church and the purgatorial value of suffering. The report on the 1939 Conference concluded with the disquieting question, "Is the renewed and valuable insistence on our theological basis tending to make us ecclesiastically introverted?"¹⁷ In 1943, MacKinnon answered in the affirmative:

The men of the Christian renaissance, who have shown us the old things made new, have spoken in language so

¹³ Dorothy L. SAYERS, 'Is This He That Should Come?', *CN-L*, No. 8, December 1939: "... the Peace which descended upon the world at [the first] Christmas did so, not in the shape of a treaty or a scheme of ethics, but in that of an energetic and formidable personality."

¹⁴ The degree to which Bell may be taken as the personification of this tradition in the twentieth century is ironically attested by the scrawl which the Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden left in red ink on a letter from Bell pleading with him to take action on behalf of those arrested after the Bomb Plot against Hitler: "I see no reason whatever to encourage this pestilent priest." The phrase "pestilent priest" was traditionally attributed to Henry II, who had used it of Becket. WILKINSON, 'Bishop Bell and Germany', p. 87.

¹⁵ Robert Grosseteste, quoted in G.K.A. BELL, *A Brief Sketch of the Church of England*, London, 1930, p. 28. Fittingly, Bell and Bonhoeffer first met in order to discuss the possibility that Bonhoeffer might translate this book. Peter WALKER, *Rediscovering the Middle Way*, London, 1988, p. 14; RUPP, *'I Seek My Brethren'*, p. 8.

¹⁶ T.S. ELIOT, 'Catholicism and International Order' (Opening address to the Anglo-Catholic Summer School of Sociology), *Christendom*, III, No. 11, September 1933, p. 177.

¹⁷ M.B.R.K., 'The Christendom Group Conference, 1939', *Christendom*, IX, No. 34, June 1939, p. 138.

refined that one can recommend their books to candidates for the Political Theory special subject in Oxford P.P.E. The masses remain unheeding, and listen to those who speak their language.¹⁸

The case-studies explored in this thesis suggest that the problem was not only one of language; there was also the vexing question of how to direct Catholic discourse along channels accessible to "the masses". The Moot found repeatedly that its activities resulted in the publication of another book on Christian sociology by Faber and Faber. Bell found his forum for dissent in the House of Lords and the columns of *The Times*, and championed Church art, a medium which in times past had communicated Christian dogma to an illiterate public. That public was no longer illiterate, but it did not necessarily read *Hansard* or *The Times*, and was forgetting how to read iconography. MacKinnon wrote *Signposts* destined for the bookshelves of Anglo-Catholic clergy, and wondered whether a night was coming in which "the language of martyrdom alone can be spoken."¹⁹ Repeatedly, it seemed, the Catholic engagement with culture, even during the wartime flowering of good middlebrow culture, was limited by its élitism.

Perhaps this was to be expected, when one considers that Catholicism consciously rejected the appeals to relevance made by other forms of Anglican spirituality. Liberals attempted to make Christianity relevant by distilling its dogma almost into non-existence. Evangelicals did so by the romantic means of offering doctrinal certainty to individuals confused by crisis. The neo-orthodox insisted on their dogma of original sin as the only true explanation of crisis, and assumed that people would automatically recognise this truth when it was expounded to them. In face of all this, Catholicism appeared to be merely present, with its ritual, its creeds, and its regular observance, whatever cultural ferment it was undergoing within itself. On the whole, it was not prepared to sacrifice intellectual or liturgical integrity for the sake of popular appeal. Yet in its more sublime moments, it achieved a holy simplicity of which St. Francis or St. Clare might have been proud.

¹⁸ D.M. MACKINNON, 'Problem For Pilgrims' (Review of John BAILLIE, *Invitation to Pilgrimage*, 1941), *Christendom*, XIII, No. 49, March 1943, p. 26. "Our task is... to reconstitute tradition, to concretize it in a novel relative, that of a technological civilization... We must not run away and, because the world is so desperately un-Christian in dogma and feeling, abandon the masses, for whom surely the Messiah died." MacKinnon would surely have appreciated the irony of OLDHAM's Editorial of the *CN-L* (No. 170, 27 January 1943). A correspondent had chosen not to resubscribe to the *CN-L* because its content was too esoteric, but had enclosed a payment for two subscriptions for members of the clergy. Oldham responded that the problems of modern society were so complex that it was impossible to simplify the discussion of them without misrepresentation.

¹⁹ D.M. MACKINNON, 'And the Son of Man that Thou Visitest Him', *Christendom*, VIII, No. 32, December 1938, p. 271

Catholicism had its working-class adherents, as it had always done, particularly in Tyneside and the East End, and priests such as Gilbert Shaw, who, notwithstanding his Moot membership and his mysticism, found his ministry of Catholic compassion in a disused beer-hall. Here was one small "patch of ordered freedom"²⁰: an embodiment of the realisation, also reached by Eliot, Hodges and MacKinnon that to speak of "Yogi and Commissar" was to introduce a false dichotomy. Catholicism must accept the *via crucis*, the possibility that it may be engulfed in crisis, obscured by the elegant sophistries and institutionalised violence of a world "gone a-whoring after strange Gods"²¹. Prophecy and mysticism alike are lonely enterprises²². Yet Anglican Catholicism also possessed lay theologians of the calibre of Sayers. It was she who most convincingly overcame the problem of finding a language and medium for Catholicism which had both intellectual appeal and popular relevance. Nowhere was this success more apparent than in the moment in *The Man Born to be King* when the import of Catholic Incarnational Christology was brought home by a grieving and helpless Mary on the road to Golgotha. Anyone who has been a parent can appreciate the agony and dereliction with which she spoke so simply of the tortured Christ as "my child."²³

²⁰ Letter from J.M. MURRY, 14 September 1942, *MOOTE*, BAI-05-15, pp. 1-2.

²¹ George BELL, 'The Church and the Future of Europe' (1943), *The Church and Humanity, 1939-1946*, London, 1946, p. 110.

²² This is recognised, in a newer but disturbingly similar context, by Mary C. GREY, *Prophecy and Mysticism: The Heart of the Postmodern Church*, Edinburgh, 1997, p. 41: "Even if all we do for God is to keep alternative values, possibilities and hopes alive, if we give them space we are keeping God alive in the world, embodying 'windows of vulnerability' (the phrase is Dorothy Soelle's), so that God's transforming power can act."

²³ Dorothy L. SAYERS, 'King of Sorrows', *The Man Born to be King*, London, 1943, pp. 294-295.

Appendix

1

**"The Church and the Countryside":
Pastoral Letter of the Bishop of Chichester, Rogationtide,
1944**

[BELL PAPERS, Lambeth Palace Library, Volume 72 (War 1939-45), ff. 57-60.]

George, By Divine Permission Bishop of Chichester. To the Clergy and all the Faithful of the said Diocese, Health and Benediction in the Lord.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN AND CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST,

It is an old custom of the Church on the four days before the feast of Our Lord's Ascension, to call men to pray for God's blessing on the Earth and the fruits of the Earth. The days appointed for these... [prayers] are called Rogation Days. From their very commencement they have been marked by perambulations and processions, in which the people make supplication to God that He will preserve the fruits of the earth and send seasonable weather, and also take occasion to beat out the bounds of the parish. For not only is it the duty of every Christian man to pray that God may replenish the soil and prosper all those who work upon it; but it is also the part of every good citizen to maintain as well as he can "the liberties, franchises, bounds and limits of his town and country."

In former times the Church kept a regular round of Days and Feasts marking the chief seasons of the country year. *Plough Monday* was the day in early January when the plough was blessed by the priest for its task of ploughing the earth. At *Rogationtide* God's blessing was asked in field and farm, in orchard and garden, on the sowing of the seed. At *Lammas*, at the beginning of August, the first loaf made from the newly gathered corn was offered in God's House by those who baked it. And at the *Harvest Thanksgiving*, the crown of the agricultural year, workers in the fields, gardens, orchards and homesteads and the general body of parishioners, brought their offerings to the Church, and praised God for all His blessings.

These feasts were not simply picturesque ceremonies, with no meaning behind them. They bore witness to man's faith in God as the God of Nature and the giver of all good things; and, as the Creator, intimately concerned with the welfare of all that He has created. They were also expressions of a healthy community life, in which all classes of men, women and children in the countryside joined together, alike for work and worship. They took their place in a pattern of life of which God was the

centre. And, when God is really the centre of life's pattern, everything else falls into its place. Times have changed much in the last two centuries. The tendency everywhere is for the machine to gain the mastery, and for life to become more and more artificial, more and more wanting in community, in love of the home, in care for beauty, and in faith in God. "For long enough," says T.S. Eliot, "we have believed in nothing but the values arising in a mechanised, commercialised, urbanised way of life; it would be well for us to face the permanent conditions upon which God allows us to live upon this planet." We need now to get back to a right attitude to Nature, which implies also a right attitude to God. Let the Church and the Countryside rediscover one another, and who knows what awakening may take place in the heart of the nation! It is in this spirit that I invite you to observe Rogation Sunday, now happily chosen by the Minister of Agriculture as Farm Sunday, and the Rogation Days, which, in this fifth year of the world war, have come round again to remind us of the deep things of God.

(1) First of all, then, let us remember that these days are days of prayer for the livestock and the crops. We who are children of the Earth bring the Earth itself before the Heavenly Father. We bring the sower and we bring the seed. We bring the beasts and the birds and those who tend them. We acknowledge that the earth is the Lord's and all the fruits thereof; that God is the God of Nature; that He quickens the corn, and drives the plough. We acknowledge that the capacity of the Earth to provide us with food is God's greatest gift for the physical welfare of mankind. We acknowledge our dependence on the sunshine and on the rain for the increase which God gives at the different seasons of the year. We acknowledge our duty to treat the Earth with proper reverence, so nurturing it that its fertility may never fail, and so using it that none may be deprived of their rightful share in its wealth. Further, we acknowledge that these who are called to work upon the Earth for the producing of food are following a vocation blessed by God, as well as rendering one of the greatest services to their fellow human beings. We therefore acknowledge our responsibility also for securing that all those engaged in the industry of agriculture shall have fair and healthy conditions in which to live and work to-day, and shall be free from fear for the future. Let us then pray God to bless the soil and its produce, to bless the beasts and to bless all who labour on the land.

(2) There is a second purpose which I would ask you also to bear in mind at Rogationtide. In the old Homily for Rogation Week, issued by Queen Elizabeth, one of the main reasons given for beating the bounds of the parishes in procession was the duty of guarding against "strange encroachments". Men were bidden to be

content with their own, and not to encroach on one another's land, or claim more than what "in ancient right and custom our forefathers have peaceably laid out unto us for our commodity and comfort."

Nowadays the encroachment against which we should be most on our guard is that of the town on the country. This encroachment takes various forms and has various causes, economic and social. It may be the result of demands made by the Town for new housing estates or factory sites outside its boundaries, or for holiday-making in conglomerations of railway carriages and caravans, and in colonies of cheap bungalows and week-end cottages. It may be due to the lure of the Town, attracting some of the most vigorous of the youth in the villages away from their natural home, by the offer of higher wages, better living conditions, and ampler facilities for amusement.

The Town and the Country are necessary to one another and each should welcome the other. But the townsman often needs to learn a greater reverence for the beauty of the Countryside and the customs of the countryman, even in such simple matters as the avoidance of litter, and closing gates behind him in his walks through his fields. And the whole nation has still to be won to a deeper understanding of the basic importance of the land, and of all who work on the land, in the national economy. Had that basic importance been recognised in the past we should never have allowed the economic conditions in the rural areas to compare so badly with conditions in the towns, or have paid so little heed to the great drift of labour from the land. When agriculture is established on a sound economic foundation and country people are provided with adequate housing and education and medical services, adequate facilities for healthy recreation, adequate water and electricity, and adequate means of developing village life and industries on lines true to village genius, the whole position will be transformed! Surely in times like these we should consider our ways, and should resolve that, not only during the war but in peace time as well, the vital importance of the land should be fully understood. Once again, I venture to declare that we must get back a right attitude to Nature, which implies a right attitude to God.

(3) I have a third point this Rogationtide to which to call your attention. In order to emphasise the close connection between religion and the land, and between the Church in England and the Countryside, it seems to me that some new action is required. Accordingly, with the help of some friends intimately concerned with the agricultural industry in this diocese, I have inaugurated *The Church and Countryside*

Association, with separate branches for West and East Sussex. The principal objects of the association are as follows:

- (a) to promote an improvement in the public attitude to the purpose and status of agriculture, and a full recognition of it as an essential national service;
- (b) to bring home to urban and rural dwellers the inter-dependence of town and country;
- (c) to study the conditions, needs, possibilities and attractions of rural life in agricultural districts; and
- (d) to emphasise the connection between the countryside and the Church (including a revival of seasonal festivals, relating the life of the village to the village church; co-operation between members of different congregations in the village; and the gaining of greater knowledge of country conditions by clergy of different communions working in the country.)

The Duke of Norfolk and Sir Merrick Burrell are Vice-Chairmen, and I am Chairman, of the West Sussex Branch. The Bishop of Lewes is Chairman of the East Sussex Branch, and he is supported by Sir George Courthope, Colonel Warren, and other leading agriculturalists. The Farmer's Union and the Agricultural Workers' Unions have both expressed their readiness to give all the help in their power. And we have the friendship and support of the Young Farmers' Clubs. Membership of *The Church and Countryside Association* is open to all clergy and laity in the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Evangelical Free Churches, who are in sympathy with its objects, and the subscription is fixed at one shilling per annum. Subscription can be sent to the Hon. Secretary, Church and Countryside Association, at the Palace, Chichester (for those living in West Sussex); and to the bishop of Lewes, 56, Wilbury Road, Hove (for those living in East Sussex). Those who are willing to help in organising local groups, or in other ways, are invited to send their names to the same addresses. It is my hope and that of those who are working with me, that through fellowship in gatherings and discussions all over the County, the objects of the Association may be steadily advanced. It is our desire not only that the interest in the country may be deepened by these means, but that those living in the towns may see how vitally they are affected by the welfare of the countryside; and that thus the interdependence of Town and Country may be brought home to urban and rural dwellers alike.

The revival of agriculture involves a spiritual revival. A right attitude to Nature, let me say it again, implies a right attitude to God; for worship and work must be

linked up with one another. And it is, as I believe, on the recovery of a right attitude to God alike in work and worship that the rebirth of Britain depends.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Given at Chichester on the Feast of S. Mark, in this year of our Lord, 1944.

George Cicestr:

Appendix

2

"Assisi":

A poem by G.K.A. Bell (late 1930s)

[BELL PAPERS, Lambeth Palace Library, Volume 204 (Chichester 1929-1958), ff. 6-7.]

Far, far from here are the world's cares
 And all its troubles cease.
 For the tired soul Assisi wears
 Her panoply of peace.

Peace murmurs in her citadels
 And whispers in each gate,
 And love comes calling from the bells
 Of Churches small and great.

For treading where S. Francis trod
 In this tumultuous day,
 I feel the Holy Lamb of God
 Above each sacred way.

Where Giotto's radiant genius paints
 His visions on the walls
 The spirit of those glorious saints
 Upon my spirit falls.

I see the Crucifix which spoke
 I mark the Sultan's fire,
 And watch Obedience place her yoke
 Over the kneeling friar.

I see the holy man bend low
 To multitudes of birds,
 And watch them waiting in a row
 To catch his wondrous words.

I see him on a mountain side,
 At prayer with bated breath,
 Receiving from the Crucified
 The tokens of His death.

I see him by S. Damian's door
 A dying man, and there
 Kneeling beside him, on the floor
 The sisters of S. Clare.

And last, above the Altar stone,
 There placed, where honoured most,
 Behold S. Francis on his throne
 With the angelic host!

O Christ, who through Thy poorest saint
 The fumbling Church didst raise,
 And teach a shepherd how to paint
 In those immortal days;

Help us in our profaner years
 To see the things they saw,
 Who heard the music of the spheres
 And lived by faith's pure law!

Teach us in this material age
 Of buying, selling men,
 To take the saint once more for sage
 And worship God again.

Appendix

3

Memorandum from T.S. Eliot for the Archbishop of
 Canterbury's Commission on *Catholicity* (1946)

[L.S. THORNTON PAPERS, Borthwick Institute of Historical Research.]

The background of these notes is given in a paper I contributed to *Prospect for Christendom*. I am aware that the thesis there stated is, in that form, still open to grave misunderstanding, but I am obliged to take it, for the moment, as a satisfactory statement so far as it goes.

I assume that every primitive *culture* (in the anthropological sense) at the beginning shows no division between "religious" and "secular" activities. From a "religious" point of view, the cultural element is of religious origin; from a "secular" anthropological point of view, the religion springs out of the culture. There is no point in trying to reconcile these two opposite assumptions. What matters is, that at any stage of society, however developed, the religion and the culture will continue to influence each other.

The particular concern of this committee, I believe, is the problem of re-union of religious bodies in this island. Now, according to my premisses, the formation of a schismatic sect may partly be due to cultural differences expressing themselves in religious differences; and whether this is the case or not; the religious separation will be followed by a cultural separation.

The separation of the Eastern and the Western Church is too large a subject for me to touch upon, and I am too ignorant to venture to say anything about it. Ideally, in a united Christendom, there would be a general Christian culture, with an indefinite number of local and racial realisations of this culture - which would, indeed, only be actual in its variety of local forms. In an ideal united Church the local variations would be checked by each other. That is to say, each society (as conscious in its spiritual leaders and superior intellectual members) would be aware of what pertained to it as local, and of what was universal, it would not confuse its *universal* faith with its *particular* forms of devotion and worship; and it would not confuse its religion with its culture. But I have called this an "ideal" condition because the struggle between local culture and universal faith is endless. It is observable in the Irish, that their devotion to the Roman See has received constant stimulation from their resentment towards England. Ireland is not the only case of

religion and nationalistic feelings supporting each other. A universal faith is always in danger from the local cultures, though it is only in these local cultures that it can, so to speak, be realised in the *whole lives* of the individuals.

We have, in the history of Western Europe, a "European Culture" of which there are some vestiges left. The growth of national cultures in the middle ages exceeded the capacity of the Church in those times to contain them: just as the C. of E. failed to contain Methodism. The separation of the C. of E. brought about a distinct English sub-culture, and the Reformation in Scotland a distinct Scottish sub-culture. The formation of dissenting sects in England has produced a number of sub-sub-cultures: but for practical purposes, in our time, the sub-sub-cultures represented by the several Free Churches are almost indistinguishable from each other.

What may here be revealed is that a sub-culture is always inferior to the culture form which it has branched off. (I hope that this will not be taken too literally: I do not mean that one can grade "cultivated" and "uncultivated" persons according to their religious confession. Nor do I mean that the culture of England is inferior to that of Ireland - in some important respects it has been vastly superior! There is also a complication when a sub-culture has been long and widely established: for England the Roman Catholics may be considered as forming, like the other dissenters, a sub-culture of their own in relation to the Anglican culture.) It should also be remarked that the parent culture that the parent culture is also diminished by the separation of any sub-culture out of it. (Not every minor sect, of course, is significant enough to be said to constitute a sub-culture.) In short, a re-union on the highest level should be also a re-union of cultures such that the culture of all the parts would be superior to what it is in fragmentation.

A re-union on the highest level must also be a re-union on the deepest level of the natural life of Christians. Such schemes as South India seem to be a work of ecclesiastics (if I can say so without odium, of ecclesiastical politicians) without theologians. It is the business of the theologians on this committee to insist on the place of theology in re-union schemes. But what you have to unite are not merely governments, but peoples. So any re-union is flimsy which is not also a re-union of cultures.

This last sentence indicates how vast are the differences to be overcome. A re-union will be the re-union of parts *all of which have changed* since their separation: a very different thing from putting together the pieces of a broken pot. These parts have learnt to do without each other, to a certain degree. (Yet protestantism

depends, I think, to a larger degree than is suspected, upon the continuing existence of that against which it protests.) The new whole could not, accordingly, be identical with the original whole, though we might hope that it would be something like what the original whole would have become by that time if it had remained whole.

The new whole (I am confining my frame, both because of the terms of reference of this committee and because of greater manageability, to the union of dissenting bodies with the C. of E. in England) would find itself in a very different situation from the original whole. It would be a union of Christians against a non-Christianity of indefinable extent, but certainly representing the great majority of the inhabitants of this country. In the process of growing together it would find itself confronted with the obstacle of the unreligious pseudo-culture in which we live. (This process, as my terminology indicates, would not be quite *inter pares*. The superior culture would have to assimilate the inferior. Here, the resentment of dissenters against their social inferiority plays its part in preventing assimilation: they do not generally wish to *achieve* equality, they wish to obtain the recognition of an *actual* equality.)

The desire for a unity of religion and culture is universal. It plays a large part in fostering the acceptance of totalitarian governments, which offer the appearance of such a unity.

Now I do not think that Anglicanism, which is the communion of the main traditions of English culture, is now strong enough to assimilate the dissenting elements. I think that it would be merely adulterated further by them. We can find some justification for this guess, from considering the British Council of Churches. It is not merely that no document put forward by this body can have any more weight than the sum of the individual members can give it - members who cannot speak authoritatively even for their own denominations. It is rather that the sum of a number of "churches" produces something less, instead of something more, than a *whole* individual "church". The views expressed should not only spring from more definite theological sources than such a composite body can supply; they should express the mind of a Church through many generations, as *interpreted*, for the situation under consideration, by its best minds of the present generation. But this is impossible for an organisation which has no ancestry. The view of any one church mind, whether it be the Anglican, or the Presbyterian, or the Congregationalist, or

any other, would be more likely to carry weight, than a view arrived at by negotiation and compromise between them.

Similarly, the *culture* corresponding to the religion of an artificially united church would, I believe, be something mediocre and without character. It would in fact be so negative that it would have little resistance to the non-Christian environment. I am here depending upon my thesis that a religion must have its appropriate culture, just as a culture cannot be created, and cannot maintain itself, divorced from religion. The belief that as Christianity developed in a pagan environment, so it can accommodate itself to the environment of today, simply is not true. Early Christianity took over a culture which was still strong, while the religion that had formed it was in decay: somewhat as a hermit crab takes over the shell of a deceased crustacean [sic.]. The present time, when our culture is still weaker than our religion, and in a state to contract the most virulent disease, is a most inappropriate moment for experimenting in this way with what is left of it.

A predisposing cause of the present inclination towards reunion is probably this very weakening of our culture. At a time when the attachment between religion and culture is strong, the minutest details of difference of ritual and behaviour assume, in inter-Christian conflict, an exaggerated importance. Looking back upon such disputes, from our contemporary world, much of the matter of controversy and violent feelings seems absurd: we do not understand how much these apparent trifles symbolised for the participants in the struggle. That was the excess of identifying the culture with the religion: our characteristic error today is to separate the two, and imagine that we can satisfactorily sustain our religion and yet share in a culture which has less and less connection with it. It is partly because we are all immersed in a more and more uniform non-Christian declining culture, that we are ready to unite on a basis of an abstract Christianity. The progressive levelling of society, the demolition of social barriers between the Christian groups and the disappearance of the positive characteristics of all of them, dispose people to belittle even the genuine theological differences.

And yet, on the other hand, it is now the social traditions, rather than the pure religious beliefs, that are a strong obstacle to any really organic re-union. As the religious traditions of England have tended to follow class divisions, the dissenting point of view must, to an Anglican, often appear to show an irritable sensibility rather than a sweet reasonableness, and to mask social prejudice behind religious conviction. But it must be recognised that a certain group loyalty, a loyalty to the

tradition of a sect, is by no means ignoble, but rather a good and healthy feeling. How, in re-union, is each group to retain its loyalty to its own past? The *individual* convert can assimilate himself to another tradition: but we are not concerned with individual conversions. The facile way of re-union, rendered so much easier by the general state of society to-day, is for *everybody* to give up his traditions: and this is re-union on such a low religious and cultural level, that we can say that the only hope for Christianity in England is that such re-union will be avoided.

The assumption behind South India is, that if you can only find a formulation, however ambiguous or deceptive, which will bring people together in name, the *growing together* will follow afterwards. The belief behind what I have been saying is, that exactly the reverse of this process provides the greater hope. In India, for instance, I fear that a nominal union such as that of the present scheme, would merely expose the Indian Christians more completely to the insidious influence of Indian culture: so that one would not be surprised, in a generation or two, to find Indian deities ensconced in chapels in Christian churches.

Enthusiasts for re-union at any price should be invited to consider, as dispassionately as they can, the question whether a partially re-united Christianity might not, under contemporary conditions, be indeed *weaker* than a divided Christianity.

[BELL PAPERS, Lambeth Palace Library, Volume 217 (Chichester V-Z), ff. 143-158.]

I

The purpose of this memorandum is to urge that the contemporary attitude of ecclesiastics towards marriage would be a great deal more credible and effective if it were accompanied by a proper attitude towards the experience which frequently precedes marriage. Marriage may be entered upon from many causes, but one of the most common is that of "falling in love". The state of experience intended by that phrase is a state about which a good deal of our popular literature did, and to a certain extent still does, circle. It might indeed be held that "falling in love" in life derives from literature, and very largely, in England, from the Elizabethan, Jacobean and Romantic poets. I should not myself accept this, but it is a possible objection, and its result might be to suggest that the whole thing was a literary, fortuitous, and transient production in the West of emotions and ideas not common to man. The answer might be that our experiences do, as a matter of fact, largely depend on literature for the value attributed to them; that life derives from literature as much as literature from life; and that the statements of the great poets are statements which should profoundly illuminate our habitual emotions.

This is only a possible reply to a possible objection, for I allow that this "falling in love" has had a widely spread sentimental and pseudo-Romantic side. It has led to a good deal of wallowing as well as to a good deal of work: It has tended to lead its initiates to regard this kind of love and all that accompanies it as a personal possession, instead of being a - generally transient - vision of reality, and to a good deal of irritation, disappointment, and bewilderment when they find that they are not getting what they rashly expected. And this in turn has led to a general

hankering after and pursuit of a thing which, by its nature, cannot be controlled or produced at will. It is natural that the moralists of the Church should have deprecated such a pursuit, but it is perhaps a pity that they have tended to deprecate the thing sought as much as the search.

This "falling in love" seems not to be identical with direct sex appetite. There may be many - and very happy and good - sex relationships which do not include it. It is that state of things in which the beloved is seen in a state of glory: light emanates from her [I mean this in the most coldly literary sense. I allow that in a dark room one could not find anything by that light without the electric light. But I attribute this to our fallen state (and the consequent dullness of our senses), and our ignorance of the technique. As in the charismatic ministry, which is later touched upon.]¹; her looks and movements are infused with aboriginal virtue; the lover is in a state of adoration, and she is a thing worthy to be adored - with the *dulia* certainly, but adored. The lines in which Milton causes Adam to describe Eve (and Milton will not be thought to be a peculiarly Romantic poet) are one example:

Yet when I approach
Her loveliness, so absolute she seems
And in her self complete, so well to know
Her own, that what she wills to do or say,
Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best;
All higher knowledge in her presence falls
Degraded, wisdom in discourse with her
Loses discountenanc'd, and like folly shows;
Authority and reason on her wait,
As one intended first, not after made
Occasionally; and to consummate all,
Greatness of mind and nobleness their seat
Build (*****) in her loveliest, and create an awe
About her, as a guard angelic plac'd.
(P.L. VIII, 546-59.)

But these lines, however superb, are a mere statement of what appears to be the exact truth. They may be companioned by the lines in which Shakespeare described the accentuation of the physical senses caused in this state:

¹ The square brackets are as used by Williams.

But love, first learned in a lady's eyes,
Lives not alone, immured in the brain,
But, with the motion of all elements
Courses as swift as thought in every power,
Above their functions and their offices.
It adds a precious seeing to eye;
A lover's eyes will gaze an eagle blind;
A lover's ear will hear the lowest sound,
When the suspicious head of theft is stopped:
Love's feeling is more soft and sensible
Than are the tender horns of cockled snails:
Love's tongue proves dainty Bacchus gross in taste.
For valour, is not love a Hercules,
Still climbing trees in the Hesperides?
Subtle as Sphinx; as sweet and musical
As bright Apollo's lute, strung with his hair;
And when Love speaks, the voice of all the gods
Makes heaven drowsy with the harmony.
~~Never durst poet touch a pen to write
Until his ink were tempered with Love's sighs:
O! then his lines would ravish savage ears,
And plant in tyrants mild humility.~~
[Love's Labour's Lost, IV, iii, 324-346.]

Many other quotations could be given, both of verse and prose. I suppose, however, the phenomenon will not be denied, and it is this phenomenon and experience, vision and adoration, which is meant by Romantic Love, or at least for which the term is here used. I could hardly summarize this memorandum better than by saying that, recognizing this fact, we should recognize that there may be a Romantic Theology attached to it, as there are, in other relations, Moral, Pastoral and Mystical Theology. Romantic Theology would deal (a) with the meaning of this vision (b) with its consequences. It is this which appears to be neglected by our teachers, and as a result their marriage exhortations are lamentably lacking in conviction, and we are left to discover superstitions instead of to practise the gospel.

(a) It may, of course, be held that this vision is an illusion, and (by those who sentimentalize the awful accuracy of the poets) it may even (blasphemously) be called a "poetic" fancy or some such disgusting name. But we have to consider three things. (I) that we are speaking of it under the authority of the Faith, and that the

Faith has, from the beginning, united the body and the soul in a very particular manner. We are told this often enough when it is a question of the Sacraments - especially of Holy Communion. But, in spite of the recurrent Manichaeism which haunts the Church, we cannot dissociate the Incarnation from physical experiences. There is of course the problem of pre-Incarnation experience. But that has to do with the relation of time to eternity, and we could not deny the possibility of effects working two ways in the temporal sense. More especially as I understand that our best science tends to deprecate the idea of temporal causation altogether. (ii) It will be admitted that the Faith claims to interpret normal human experience, as well as to impose supernormal. (iii) This particular vision and adoration establishes - perhaps only for a brief time, but definitely - a state of *goodwill*, of *caritas*, universally felt, in its postulants: a state of rather more conscious force than casual good temper, though extremely unlikely to be overthrown without decisive action to support it. So far forth, its fruits exhibit its nature; it is a vision of the Good.

Bearing these facts in mind, it seems that we might go as far as to assert that this vision is the beloved-in-reality, of the beloved as she (or he) is in the glory of God, in (I should prefer to say) eternity. It will be allowed that this vision and adoration do not always increase, and do at their greatest, very often diminish, sexual desire; they even abolish it by bringing momentarily into existence another state in which we "neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels." In that state, as Browning said of the angels, we "apart, Know ourselves into one" (Ring and the Book, Pompilia 1833-4). This state of vision, adoration and goodwill, seems to be one in which the two persons exist in love, that is (humanly speaking), by virtue of the Incarnation, beholding each other in Christ, and the presence and power of Christ are with them. (I do not, of course, infer anything so heretical as that sex desire is alien from that presence and power.) It is a delight in each other, in that manifest glory, which makes their pleasantness, and that power which causes their actual physical hearts to labour under the stress of their passion. But, in this particular moment of Romantic Love, it is rather a contemplative than an actual passion. (But I should deprecate their becoming all solemn and pious over it; they

had better enjoy it. It is the attitude of pastors we are considering - not, primarily, theirs. Incidentally, love-play might well be more encouraged than it is.)

I suggest, very strongly, that in general discussions of marriage a quite inadequate amount of attention is paid to this state of things preceding marriage, and that Romantic Love is usually referred to *de haut en bas* as a thing no one can trust, whereas its authority is one of the few things men can, and in effect do, trust. I admit that they often trust it wrongly, and make mistakes about it. But we cannot ever correct those mistakes if we deprecate and disparage the whole vision.

(b) Consequences. The great danger of this state is two-fold: (i) it is thought to be everlasting (ii) it is identified with the person of the beloved. As regards (i), "the right faith is, that we believe and confess" that the vision is not necessarily everlasting, but is necessarily eternal. It undoubtedly seems in most cases (I do not say in all, nor that it must) to withdraw itself. How far this is due to our fallen nature becoming incapable of retaining it, and how far to action from its own nature, is another matter. But it does generally go. The emotional oaths of fidelity which have burst from us, and (more sinfully) been asked of the beloved, are left in the air, from which the glory has been withdrawn. I suggest that the recognition of the difference between eternity and everlastingness would be of the greatest value both to lovers and to preachers on the subject. But unless we give proper value to Romantic Love, we cannot realize its eternal nature and its everlasting authority. By that phrase I do not so much mean the indissolubility of marriage as the recognition of that vision and *caritas* as a directing force in life, of our duty to become that which we have seen, and of a return to God as our only means to that. Of that return (a return to a Source infinitely greater than its apparent beginning) I conceive the whole work of Dante, from the opening of the *New Life* to the close of the *Divine Comedy* to form the best account. Of this process, the "quiet affection" of which we hear so much, is a necessary part. But it would facilitate credibility if "quiet affection" were sometimes spoken of as if it were a part of the way of the soul instead of the remains of a firework which has fizzled out.

(ii) Parallel to the confusion between eternity and everlastingness is the confusion between the person and the glory of the beloved: and even more difficult to resolve because the intellectual assertion can do so little in an affair largely emotional. The glory and the vision are greater than the vehicle by which they are manifested. But the realization of this in the heart is a work of sanctity. It is allowed easily enough when the glory has vanished. But the difficulty of allowing it at the proper time is seen when it is considered how rapidly and strongly a state of jealousy arises if the beloved changes her mortal mind. Jealousy is, obviously, compatible only with a desire to possess, and a sense of outrage that the desired thing should be in another's keeping. But on the whole hypothesis the glory belongs to itself, and not to any mortal; and the mortal's only duty is to adore it when it appears whether between the beloved and oneself or between the beloved and another. Jealousy also is utterly destructive of *caritas* whether towards one or towards all, and *caritas*, as a way and an end, is the moral of the whole business. Jealousy identifies the desired state with the beloved, and, in a frantic effort to retain that desired state, it proceeds to destroy it. It arises from a want of faith in the vision as distinguished from the vehicle of the vision. And the fact that it is still justified or excused by so many is an example of the difficulty there is in establishing truth. Not until we attack jealousy as strongly as, and at the same time as, adultery, shall we succeed in being intelligent. For jealousy is so far worse than adultery that it is love of oneself only, and it is even more definitely an infidelity to the original adoration (which indeed adultery by no means necessarily is). The question of whether the beloved is, in any particular circumstances, justified in adulteration, is a wholly separate matter. However wrong she may be, there is no moral excuse for that combination of lechery and hate which we call jealousy.

The mention of adultery raises another point. It has to be recognised that, unfortunately, this state of Romantic Love does not confine itself to unmarried persons of opposite sex and marriageable age. It would be much easier if it did; it is one of the tragic beauties of the thing that it does not. I do not for a moment suggest that this should make any difference to the monogamic order of the Church. The Church is supernaturally committed to monogamy (with certain modifications). I

think its officers would be wiser not to try to pretend, as some of them occasionally do, that this is clearly the happiest natural state for everybody. It may - possibly - be socially convenient at present, but that is all one can say. The Church, however, must and should maintain its monogamy. But it must allow that this state of vision and adoration does, however annoyingly, arise between married persons and third parties, and it must not disparage or underrate that state because of these conditions. It will be in an inconceivably stronger position if it acknowledges that high beauty. I was very much struck by St. Augustine's remark (I rely on Dr. Mortimer's article in *Theology*, June, 1936) on the "difficulty he had in convincing adulterers that they were doing anything wrong." It is one of the difficult things about this state of love and goodwill that, while and where it is in existence, it abolishes any sense of guilt though it sharpens humility. In such circumstances, the clergy are up against a supernatural difficulty; they (necessarily) have to deal with the presence and power of the Christhood. Christ always was a little hard on institutional bodies.

I do not say that all, or most, adulteries arise from such states, although I believe that they are more common than they are realised to be, and that the general habit of talking of all "adulterous" states of mind as if they were only sexually appetitive is rash and ill-advised. For any Church, that is to say, based on a supernatural idea. It would be a much stronger position admit that the vision and adoration exist and are true and holy, and to urge that, the thing being supernatural in itself, may be as well followed and fulfilled one way as another - though with more difficulty.

I have alluded to the charismatic ministry. I think it certain that powers of healing exist in that state far more than are usually recognized, but we are inexpert in dealing with them. We have no faith, and it will take us some time to get it. It is a fact that lovers, quite apart from sex, do assist each other towards health, and all that we need for a greater outflow of energy is the faith in that Love (there existing) which they had not at Capernaum. Love is energy, and it is for us to find the *modus operandi*. But we ought not to doubt the promises of Christ made to the disciples

concerning their power over deadly things. What he could do in Galilee and the early Church he can and will do in the bodies of lovers.

I urge then:

(i) that the state of vision and adoration in innumerable cases of young love should be recognized and *spoken of with reverence*. (This is where we so often fail.) And that we should consider it in relation to the great theological ideas of the Church.

(ii) That it, and not merely marriage, should be recognized as the opening of a way for the soul to that complete *caritas*, which is God.

(iii) That it should be recognized as a thing in itself, having authority, eternal, and infinitely more than the human vehicles by which it manifests.

(iv) That the powers implicit in it should at least be considered.

(v) That marriage should be more frequently related to it, and not it to marriage.

(vi) That jealousy, as an infidelity to and contradiction of it, should be denounced, *semper, ubique, in omnibus*.

(vii) That the principle of the vision and the maxim of behaviour should be recognized as being: "not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the manhood into God.

(viii) And last - and least - that monogamy should be maintained urgently, by the Church, as a way of serving and fulfilling that Divine Glory: to whom be ascribed, etc., etc.

II - Dante: References

It is difficult to pick out particular points without working through the whole works. I know that a great deal is to be said about the literary conventions in which Dante worked. I accept Beatrice as a real person, though I allow the incidents may be altered or arranged. But I give a very few as showing the consistency and the idea of Beatrice as the beginning and continuation of the way. (She is, no doubt, Theology also; so is each young man's young woman - and I hope vice-versa - in

Romantic Love.) Her "death" is extremely significant, in view of the habitual departure of the glory.

The New Life

relates

Practically all the second section
Section VIII- the end of the second poem (which

to Beatrice)

Section XI- especially the first few lines
Section XII- the Latin saying of Love
Section XIX- the poem
Section XXIV- the mystery of the names
Section XXVI.
Section XLIII.

Divine Comedy

Hell II, 70-72
(But she is not mentioned much in Hell)

Purg. VI, 43-48.

XV, 64-78.

XVII, 91-139. All the discourse on Love.

XVIII, 73-75.

XXVII, 49-54.

XXX, 37-48.

73-75

103-end

XXXI, 1-81 (c.f. especially 46-8, 79-81.)

118-145 (esp. 118-126: the two natures are

seen

in the beloved.)

Paradise

(In this she is everywhere intermingled.

I note only)

III, 64-87 (the first condition of heavenly love).

IV, 118.

V, 94-6 (c.f. the increase in the beauty of Beatrice during the progress through Heaven).

VIII, 13-15.

XIV, 7-8.

XV, 31-6.

XVIII, 4-21.

XXI, 1-12.

XXXI, 79-93 (The conclusion).

Any translation would, I imagine, serve. All those which, not knowing Italian, I normally consult, seem to say the same thing.

I need hardly say that the whole of the Gospels are full of the most illuminating remarks, and that sentences which are understood intellectually in relation to the Faith can be understood sensationally in the experience of Romantic Love. But I restrain my tendency to send an underlined copy of the Gospels because I am aware that without the full sense of the fundamental idea it will seem silly or even heretical.

And I submit all that I have said to the judgment of the Catholic Church.

[W.J. PHYTHIAN ADAMS, 'Gospel and Creed', *The Church Quarterly Review*, Volume 131 (1940-1941), pp. 192-212.]

We confess one GOD in Three Persons, the Father, the son and the Holy Spirit; Eternal Almighty Love; Maker, Redeemer and Sanctifier of all things visible and invisible.

We believe that the Father sent the Son into the world, that the world should be saved through him: who by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit was born Jesus Christ Our Lord of the Virgin Mary. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, died, and was buried: and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures; he ascended to the Father, and by him was highly exalted, and was given power to send forth the Holy Spirit, that all who believe in him might be made partakers of his Sonhood.

And we believe in the Holy Church, the Body of Christ, the Habitation of God in the Spirit; wherein we are born anew; wherein being sanctified we are builded together in love, that we all may be one, even as God is one.

And we believe that in the fullness of time all things both visible and invisible shall be summed up in Christ: to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be the blessing and the honour and the glory and the dominion, for ever,

AMEN.

Appendix

6

"The Need for Freedom in Dogma":
Memorandum by Oliver Quick, undated (c. 1943)

[BELL PAPERS, Lambeth Palace Library, Volume 213 (Chichester P-R), ff. 89-112.]

It is quite manifest that if the Church of England is to regain and retain after the war any firm hold upon the minds of the English people, she must do something radical towards reconstructing her dogmatic theology. Three *ομολοούμενα* may be stated as the basis of the present discussion:- (1) Church teaching has little hold on the mind of the average Englishman who is enquiring after God; (2) This fact is largely due to defects in that teaching and in the theological system from which it is derived; (3) The War, in shaking men out of their conventional assumptions has made them ask questions, and has thereby provided an admirable opportunity and an imperative demand for the work of reconstruction to be taken in hand.

What, then, are the general outlines of the plan on which the work should be started? Let us first examine the current suggestions which seem to find most favour.

Amid the babel of argument, reproach and appeal, which at present voices the religious mind of the people, two demands of special insistence can more or less clearly be distinguished. There is the demand for less dogma on the one hand, and the demand for more definite teaching on the other. The first demand seems to proceed mainly from the laity, the second from the clergy, and the two demands seem to be in radical opposition to each other.

(1) There is an enormous mass of lay opinion, shared by many clergy of liberal views, which feels that Church teaching is "out of touch" with the popular mind, mainly because the Church refuses to forget the obsolete shibboleths of dogmatic theology, and to learn a new and living language of brotherhood. This mass of opinion, so widely supported by arguments of varying merit, is the intellectual counterpart of what is expressed by the classic popular phrase: "We are all going the same way." The one thing needful is, that all men of goodwill should agree to forget theological differences and set out side by side to help each other along the road. That is what the fellowship of the Catholic Church ought to mean.

The one barrier which hinders the realization of this ideal is the official orthodoxy of the Church herself. She insists on trying to exact from her members assent to various propositions, historical and theological, which men do not understand, or cannot be expected to believe. She will back her claim by her appeal to infallibly inspired men or books, and though time after time she has been proved wrong, she will not learn her lesson and abandon altogether the appeal to authority in matters of belief. The waves of scientific discovery are continually invading her most carefully chosen positions, and yet she still endeavours to do in earnest what Canute did in jest, with the result that she is continually making herself ridiculous by having to shift her ground. The throne of dogma is imposing, but insufficiently mobile, and must be abandoned altogether. The Church must frankly give up theological tests. Documents like the Athanasian Creed should retain only an antiquarian interest. The Church must be content to point her children to Christ's example, and leave that example to make its own appeal.

The more intellectual exponents of this view would indignantly repudiate the charge that they are trying to shirk the intellectual problems of religion. Their one claim, they maintain, is for freedom to follow truth. Faith should remain readiness to follow wherever new truth may lead, and consequently to revise all beliefs at the shortest notice, whenever need arises. It is precisely the pursuit of truth which demands that all beliefs should be held as tentative. Truth may be absolute and eternal, but opinions are not. Truth is at least strong enough to take care of herself, and true faith will trust her to do so. It is false faith which seeks to protect her with barriers that only hide her form, and to declare her in confident assertions which only drown her voice. Most of all in the pursuit of truth it is dogma and dispute which hinder, freedom and brotherhood which help. Intellectual freedom cannot live with dogma, not brotherhood with theological dispute. The Church must frankly forsake the old companions for the new.

We must recognise the strength of the current thought and feeling which is setting in this direction. Unquestionably, it has gained in volume from the experience of the War. For the great lesson of the war is the effective force and the compelling appeal of brotherhood and freedom. They are the spirits which have served England so well; shall we not seek to win them for the Church at the cost of almost any sacrifice?

It is, however, a matter of the gravest doubt whether the sacrifice suggested would do anything to secure the result desired. Consider the multifarious varieties

and shades of belief and doubt which go to make up the decidedly complex and baffling creeds of modern England. Without attaching too serious an importance to a burlesque like Mr. R.A. Knox's *Reunion All-round*, we may well wonder what would be the result of abandoning any attempt to give the average man any authoritative guide among the maze of contradictory teachings. What will be the effect on his mind, if he is bidden simply to choose what he thinks suits him best, since authority cannot presume to settle what is best for him? The answer will depend on the temperament of the individual. The enthusiast will become the devoted follower of some system of teaching which has, in the first instance, caught his fancy owing to some quite haphazard freak of circumstance. He will submit his judgment to some private pope, and remain intellectually satisfied, until perhaps some still more irrelevant chance leads him to transfer his allegiance to another. His cooler and more level-headed neighbour will reflect that since all beliefs seem to have an equal chance of being right, they are all doubtless equally wrong. He will give up the search for religious truth, and cultivate an easy-going tolerance which he will mistake for Christian charity. A third, of a more critical disposition, will loudly demand whom he is to believe, until the absence of any answer to his questionings reduces him to uneasy and disappointed silence. Doubtless there will be some, perhaps many, who will suffer little loss and possibly even derive benefit from such a state of affairs. Those whose personal religious experience takes such definite and certain form that they do not need authoritative guidance, will not feel the effects of the general confusion. Those who have qualifications and opportunity for original studies may pursue them with a freer mind. But surely it should be the glory of the Church of Christ to provide first for the needs of the plain man, while she allows those of the intellectual and the mystic to take second place. To assume that to do so must be to betray the cause of truth, would be simply to refuse Christianity a hearing.

The majority of clerical opinion, always for good and evil conservative, is well aware of the dangers just indicated. Many priests who have had most experience of the popular mind, would maintain that the existing theology of the Church is quite sufficient to meet the emergency, if only it were plainly taught and clearly understood. We are, they say, confronted by an almost terrifying obstacle of sheer ignorance, but ignorance which the war is making conscious of itself and therefore ready to overcome. But it will assuredly not yield to hesitating answers and divided counsels. We must be able to tell men definitely and plainly what is our belief and what ought to be theirs: otherwise the spiritual harvest even now ripening will be garnered by other religious bodies than that which is in communion with the see of Canterbury.

The dangers, however, of definite teaching are perhaps more subtle and not less threatening than those of undogmatic freedom. Are we sure of maintaining the distinction between what is definite and what is merely cut and dried? Must we seek not so much to satisfy as to educate the minds and souls to which our teaching is offered? And will the perfectly explicit precepts and ready-made solutions of the past really stimulate all in the modern spirit which most deserves to be encouraged? We must desire to give the tender plant of spiritual life healthy nourishment, so that it may stand firmly in its own roots, not to provide a stake against which it may lean, if it be securely fastened.

Neither the abolition of dogma nor the provision of "definite teaching" can by itself constitute the remedy which we need, though the arguments in favour of each contain much that is true and still more that is worthy of careful consideration. The real defect of both demands is that they seem to lead rather to an evasion than a solution of the fundamental problem. To remove dogma would be to shirk the responsibility for that teaching with authority which must be surely heard in the Church of Christ as it was from the lips of the Founder. Yet "definite teaching" in practice is too often the very counterpart of the teaching of the scribes. At best it is apt to remove the divine discontent which is the very spur of individual progress. Both methods are too easy, too unexact to be adequate to the terrifying complexity of the situation in which the modern mind finds itself. What is really needed is a reform much more radical and therefore much more truly conservative than either.

If the Church would enter an a new life in the future, her first need is a new willingness to learn from her past. The English Church has of course her revolutionaries and traditionalists, liberals and conservatives. Indeed, her controversies are mainly conducted by the affixing and acceptance of labels, and that is why they are so largely superficial. Thus, the Church of England is becoming more and more clearly divided into three camps, one of those who wish to return to medievalism, one of those who wish to break with it completely, and one of those who "dislike extremes". It sometimes seems as if only a few isolated individuals really desire to further a deeply sympathetic and fully critical study of what is old, in order that its lessons may be clearly interpreted in the light of modern thought and vigorously applied to modern circumstances.

A clear instance of our false attitude to the past is to be found in the whole science of the direction of souls which centres round the sacrament of penance. In medieval times a serious attempt was made to use in the confessional the results which had so far been reached by scientific study. The truth of this statement is not at all diminished by the fact that all science, whether mental or physical, was at the time almost a department of theology, and was mainly in clerical hands. To-day, there are many English priests who discourage the use of the confessional altogether, and prefer to substitute for it the quiet talk in the vicar's study. There are many again who earnestly desire to see the medieval system re-established and who anxiously exhort young priests to study the "moral theology" derived from mediaeval masters. There are hardly any who seem to remember that since the middle ages a new science vitally relevant to the whole subject, the science of psychology, has come into existence; and certainly no organized attempt has been made to place the results of psychology at the disposal of Anglican priests, for use in their ministry. The subject is not hinted at in the curriculum of the theological college, and the writer knows of no text-book which would cover the ground suggested. The result of this neglect is found in the complaints of nerve specialists that their patients have suffered harm, sometimes beyond repair, from ignorant treatment received in the confessional.

Our present concern, however, is with the more immediate province of theology. And here the question is in some respects even less satisfactory. For the "Catholic" party seems almost exclusively interested in ecclesiastical and liturgical restoration. To ancient dogma and theology proper it pays but little attention and is often disposed to allow a great latitude in the treatment of the creeds, provided it receives a similar tolerance for the liturgical changes it desires. In result, ancient theology and dogma retain their interest only for their assailants who treat them as a broad target for their criticisms, and for the student, whose concern is chiefly antiquarian and historical. There appears, on the whole, but little attempt to discover what purpose ancient theology and dogma were really meant to fulfil, whether they met a real need, how far the same or a similar need exists to-day, and if so, how it is to be met by the same or similar means. Yet surely it would be hard to exaggerate the importance which this kind of enquiry might possess.

It is only possible to sketch here in vaguest outline the course which such enquiry might take and the results to which it might lead. Let us take certain historical commonplaces as a starting point.

How were the theological creeds determined in regard (1) to their substance; (2) to their form?

(1) Their substance was determined by heresies. The Church believed that she had the mystery of divine revelation entrusted to her stewardship. The mystery was far beyond all powers of intellectual expression, much more of formulation. It was essentially a gospel and therefore was more readily interpreted in the experience of the heart than in the language of the head. Dogma need never have been formulated, the Church could have been content to follow Christ and treasure her Bible, if the heretics would have allowed her to do so undisturbed. But for good or for evil they would not. So mysterious and so exacting, for all its divine simplicity, was the Christian gospel, that it could not be bit that men should seek to make it easier by reducing it to the level of current and more familiar ideas. Two classes of heresy can be broadly distinguished: (1) That which aimed at popularizing the gospel for the masses; (2) That which aimed at rationalizing it for the intellectual and enlightened. Of the first class, Arianism is typical, o the second, gnosticism. The essence of Arianism was to make our Lord into some kind of demi-god or inferior deity, a conception which was quite familiar and readily acceptable to the heathen masses. Its triumph, so nearly achieved, would have meant a return to idolatry. the endeavour of gnosticism was to explain the Christian revelation in terms of that semi-oriental mysticism which repudiated the material world as evil or despised it as unreal. The most spiritual philosophy of the time was largely coloured by this interpretation of the world, even Platonism being pressed into its service. Its prevalence would have meant the perversion of the Christian mystery into a mysticism which ministered to the sense of superiority enjoyed by the cultured few, while it shut out from the higher grades of spiritual achievement the ignorant majority.

Both heresies struck at the roots of the Christian gospel, and therefore the Christian Church was compelled to defend her faith against them. The result is found in the famous homoousian of Nicea and the clauses of the Athanasian Creed which deal with the person of our Lord.

(2) The form of the creeds was determined by the language of the current philosophy derived from Aristotle. The heretics of both types made use of philosophic terms in defining their belief and up to a point they had to be met with their own weapons, for they would not recognize any other terms as excluding them. The orthodox at Nicea were most reluctant to insert the word "homoousian" in the

Creed, on the ground that it was unscriptural. Various alternatives were proposed and only rejected because the Arians insisted on accepting them. Homoousian they would not accept, and therefore it was allowed to stand.

Generalising from such facts, we draw the all-important conclusion that the primary function of true dogma is negative, not positive. It was intended neither to explain nor to add to the faith, but to keep its mystery whole and undefiled for the benefit especially of the more ignorant members of the Church. And hence we reach a sharp distinction between dogmatic and speculative theology. Dogmatic theology is meant to be authoritative; what it lays down must be accepted at least by all those who teach in the Church's name. But at least in its intellectual meaning, it is negative. It cannot tell the intellect what it must hold as true, for the truth of the Christian revelation is so far beyond the grasp of intellect, that to make any such attempt would be madness. Yet dogma can and does tell the intellect that it must reject certain theories as false, if it would not itself be false to its highest calling. Consider the propositions that our Lord is perfect God and perfect man, of one substance with the Father &c. No series of such intellectual propositions can possible enjoin in our minds what they are to hold about Christ. The content of our faith is made up of devotion, love and service, and though the intellect may and must struggle to express in its own language what they mean, yet it would be mere impertinence for the intellect to attempt to formulate that meaning with any pretence of final authority. Nevertheless, the intellect may and must declare dogmatically that the fullness of that devotion, love and service depends on the rejection of any theory which would make our Lord either a demi-god or a superman, or His incarnate life either merely a theophany or merely the perfection of human saintliness. Dogma is concerned to insist that the truth must lie much deeper than any of these too facile explanations.

The purpose of speculative theology on the other hand, is positive. It does try to express, as far as intellectual language can, what Jesus Christ means to the soul of man; it does try to theorize about His Person, His work, and even His consciousness. But such theories have no right to claim any sort of final authority, or exact any sort of universal assent. Rather they should be eagerly on the look-out to accept and to incorporate the corrections and the contributions which the latest philosophy and science have to offer. Of old, theories of our Lord's relation to God and man were expressed exclusively in the categories of the Aristotelian philosophy of substance. Nowadays, the newer philosophies of will must surely have some revisions and further suggestions to recommend. How can the Hegelian conceptions of the

concrete universal and of the self-transcendence of the finite be applied? What new light can be thrown on our Lord's consciousness in the flesh by psychological theories of the subliminal, or on the Holy Spirit's operation by the Bergsonian hypothesis of the *élan vital*? To shirk the ventures which these questions suggest, is not faithful stewardship, but intellectual sloth.

The relation which ought to be maintained between dogmatic and speculative philosophy can be quite clearly defined. Intellectually, the truth of Christian revelation is still a treasure hid in a field. Dogma does not display the treasure, it marks out the boundaries of the field, and thereby shows speculative theology where to dig, if it would find an ever more abundant variety of riches. From secular philosophy and science, speculative theology should receive a constantly improving equipment for the work. But if it ignores the limits which dogma sets, then the warning of authority is clear that what it seems to discover will be sham metal which must be prevented from debasing the currency of Christian thought.

So long as the due relation between dogmatic and speculative theology is maintained, the way is kept open for the Church to grow in the knowledge of the truth. But the distinction on which that due relation depends has almost from the beginning been confounded, and herein Rome has been grievously in error. In her practice, if not in her theory, she has often invested the speculative doctrines of scholasticism with the authority which properly belongs to dogma, and she has no right now to complain if the modernist insists on treating all dogmas as merely speculative theories. Is it too much to hope that the Church of England may clearly take up a third position at once more primitive and more liberal? Or must our traditionalists continue to assert that their only doctrinal difference from Rome concerns the infallibility - a conviction which enables them to take over and preach at second-hand without further criticism almost the whole system of Roman teaching? And must our liberals continue to rail against "shibboleths" until they convict themselves of the very verbalism which they are trying to condemn?

It remains to apply to modern circumstances the principles we have so far reached. Perhaps the most important difference between the modern situation and the ancient is to be found in the existence to-day of an active and even militant agnosticism. In the days of the Roman Empire agnosticism doubtless existed, but it was rather felt as a vague despair by the unsatisfied soul, than formulated into a system of thought by the enquiring mind. It was perhaps barely self-conscious, and at least never contradicted its own nature by appearing in the intellectual arena as a

rival competitor for the prize of truth. The antagonists with which the Christian faith had to contend were themselves faiths not less definite and assured; and therefore, the dogmatic line of exclusion was more easily drawn and more clearly marked and its negative purpose less liable to be misunderstood. Now that the challenge to the Church proceeds, nominally at least, not so much from rival faith as from doubt, there is the more danger lest in answering it the Church should seem to assert by authority more than her divine warrant will justify. We must not allow a false antithesis between faith and doubt to confuse the issue. Faith and doubt both contradict themselves when the one claims perfect knowledge and the other denies that anything can be known. Faith and doubt ought not to be opponents; they ought to be fellow guides by whose help the human mind pursues an even deeper penetration into the mystery of the universe. Faith assures the mind of a distant goal to be reached, doubt reminds it what an infinite journey still demands its effort. Apart from faith the mind could not be sure that there is any goal towards which to press. Apart from doubt, it might suppose that the goal were already won. If the revelation of God in Christ has not brought salvation the mind's journey becomes a random wandering in a pathless desert. The heresies show not the true road, but easy bypaths which have been shown to lead nowhere. The aim of dogma is to keep the mind on the steep and difficult track of true progress, while it does not suffer it for an instant to be satisfied with what it has already accomplished. Surely if we can only make it clear that the Christian creed represents a much deeper agnosticism than any system of thought which claims that much-abused title, we should be able to reconcile to the Christian faith much honest "doubt", that now conceives itself to be a revolt against dogma.

When, however, we have allowed its full value to the distinctively modern feature of agnosticism, it remains true that the resemblance between the ancient and the modern situation is more striking than the difference. Two types of heresy perplexed the ancient Church, the popular idolatrous type represented by Arianism, and the intellectual-mystic type represented by agnosticism [sic.]. Reflexion would seem to show that these two types of heresy are permanent, and that in different disguises they are always lying in wait to lure the human mind out of the true path which alone leads to the knowledge of God.

The essence of idolatry is the worship of an intermediate being, something greater than man, but less than the true and only God. The One God, the Spirit Who must be worshipped in spirit and in truth, is too wonderful and excellent for human knowledge to reach, to exacting for human frailty to serve. To demand of man that

he should worship Him alone is asking too much. "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem to worship." How often do men hear the terrible Old Testament warnings which these words recall, and yet never reflect how potently that same spirit of idolatry is working among men to-day. The Roman Catholic still cries to Virgin or to Saint, because he fancies them more like himself, more sympathetic to his need. The English Churchman still worships Jesus, not because He is God, but because He seems to be a being more human than God. And as the idolater in worship addresses himself to some being less austere and far removed than the Almighty God, so in conduct he acquiesces in a lower standard than the worship of the almighty god would imply. He seeks to put himself right with the spiritual world by some form of merely outward observance, by any kind of service less exacting than the concentration of his whole being. Idolatry is no more dead to-day than it was when the Book of Deuteronomy was written.

And what of the intellectual mystic heresy? As the idolater seeks to worship an intermediate being, so the false mystic tries to dispense with any mediator. He claims that true religion consists in the immediate inward union of the human spirit with the Divine. That union is the true and only fulfilment of the soul's quest for God, and though the material world may be used to assist that quest in its earlier stages, yet the material helps become hindrances unless they are gradually transcended and removed, so that the purely spiritual experience may be won. The older heretics of this type were not concerned to deny the historic facts of our Lord's life an apparent reality in the world of sense. But since the whole material world was to them unreal or evil, our Lord's manhood must have been from the beginning an unreality if his perfection were to be maintained.

They affirmed our Lord's Divinity, but insofar as He was perfect God, he was pure Spirit untainted by the material world, and his physical humanity was a mere appearance caused by the reflection of the Divine life in a distorting mirror of sense. The Incarnation was no more than a theophany. In its modern form this type of heresy is naturally inclined to join hands with modern criticism. Spiritual religion must not be dependent on the historic and outward. What Jesus Christ was in the flesh matters nothing - his very existence as a historic person is a matter of indifference. Probably there was an original man, Jesus, but we relay need not trouble ourselves to make sure. What matters is the spiritual ideal associated with his name. That spiritual ideal of a life and of love and service is detachable and should in any case be detached from any particular historic figure. It is the Divine

life which is gradually being realized by religious souls. Its perfect realization may be called indifferently God or the Kingdom of God, for it is that for which the word God truly stands, while it seems to require a certain communion of souls, a spiritual society or system, in order really to exist. If then we allow ourselves a lax use of old theological terms, we may speak of a diffused Incarnation, since God realizes Himself through human souls which seek His Kingdom. But the whole process and its fulfilment belongs to purely spiritual experience - the flesh; i.e. the outward and material, has no part in the divine life. It is in his spiritual experience that man may become divine.

I have purposely stated the modern form of this heresy in that shape in which it is most diverse from the ancient; i.e. in its most intellectualist and least mystical form. But in all its forms the essential starting-point of the heresy is the disparagement of the outward, the historical, the material. Its essential goal is the identification of the human nature with the Divine in spiritual experience. And its essential fruit wherein its evil character is manifested is its exclusiveness, its inevitable disparagement of the plain man. If Jesus Christ be God in the flesh, then any side or activity of human life in which Jesus is followed brings man equally into communion with God. The London van-boy can live as truly in that communion as the theological professor or the contemplative monk. The historic Incarnation takes up the whole of our common manhood, with all of its fleshly activities, into God. The whole of human life, not any special department of it, becomes the sphere in which communion with God is to be realized. Every man, however commonplace, has a distinct and equally important share therein, and the divine simplicity of the Incarnate Life gives him an equal chance of winning that share. But directly the truth of the historic Incarnation is lost, the sphere of communion with god tends to be confined to spiritual experience, and those who have special opportunities for cultivating and knowing about spiritual experience have access to god in a much greater degree than their less favoured brethren. This result, even if it be not theoretically cogent, is at least practically certain.

We have sketched the purpose which the ancient dogmatic theology fulfilled. A study of modern conditions would seem to show that a very similar need exists to-day. Yet ancient dogma is no longer operative, and the need is not met. What suggestions can be made for a constructive policy to meet it?

We have already drawn the familiar distinction between the substance and the form of the creeds, the substance determined by the heresies, the form by the

philosophic categories of the day. We have suggested that the heresies are in their substantial nature permanent, while intellectual forms of expression vary from age to age. It would seem, therefore, on the face of it, a reasonable conclusion that the substance of dogma should remain permanent, but that the form of its expression should be brought up to date.

The doctrine of our Lord as perfect God and perfect Man; i.e. as uniting perfectly two natures without destroying or confusing the distinction between them, remains the only answer both to the popular-idolatrous and to the intellectual-mystic heresy. It is the only means of preserving the gospel of a Mediator between God and Man who is yet not an intermediate being, the gospel which maintains at once the austere holiness and the utter sympathy of God, which protects depths of mystery beyond the grasp of the wisest and most gifted and yet throws open the fullest fellowship with God to the simplest child and the most unlearned layman. It is a gospel worth fighting for now as it was worth dying for of old, and it is a gospel more subtly endangered by modern tolerance, than it was by ancient persecution.

This is the gospel which the Athanasian [sic.] Creed strove to keep whole and undefiled; and the requiring of assent to a formula from the Church's teachers still seems the only safeguard which can at least prevent subversive heresy from gaining an official sanction. But the Athanasian Creed no longer speaks a living language. Facts have proved that anyone in general agreement with what he conceives to be the Spirit of Christianity, can subscribe to its terms without any intolerable strain of conscience. To fling charges of insincerity is a method of retort as ineffective as it is unedifying. The function of dogmatic creeds in relation to the Church's faith is somewhat analogous to the function of the Upper House in the legislature of the State. Both are designed to let ill-considered innovations from gaining official recognition and authority. Not long ago certain politicians complained that the Upper House was an obsolete body not capable of doing its duty. Some proposed to curtail its powers. Others replied that if the charge were true, the proper course was not to weaken the Upper House still further, but to strengthen it by reform; and these seemed to have logic on their side. If our dogma is obsolete, it is inefficient; and the obvious remedy is not to destroy it but to make it efficient by reform. People who talk loudest about shibboleths, sometimes seem to forget that the original device to which they allude was at least eminently effective for its purpose. Our dogmatic shibboleths are obsolete, because our modern Ephraimites can pronounce the word with a conscience as clear as their articulation.

Yet there are reasons on which it is impossible here to enlarge, why it is as undesirable as it is impracticable for the English Church to substitute a new creed for the old one, however truly the new might reinforce the old. The creeds do not belong to the Anglican, but to the Catholic Church, and it is the Catholic Church as a whole which alone can re-state them.

A similar problem confronted the Elizabethan reformers and they solved it not by means of new Creed, but by composing articles of religion to determine the sense in which the English Church interpreted the Creeds. This method had the great advantage of leaving the Catholic creeds untouched as a witness to the eternity and the universality of the revealed faith which they implicitly enshrine, while the more precise interpretation of the Articles enabled them to fulfil the practical purpose of dogma in relation to the circumstances of the time. The purpose of the Articles was therefore essentially occasioned in regard to their form; and it is surely a strange loyalty which insists on keeping that form sacredly intact while it seeks to overcome its obvious inappropriateness to changed conditions, by weakening the formula of assent.

The reform we need in dogmatic theology is the setting forth of new articles of religion; or their equivalent. To confess our inability to do this is to confess our failure as stewards of the mystery of God. If the English Church is a true and effective fellowship of Christian believers it cannot be beyond its powers to express in modern language in relation to modern controversies what it holds to be essential to the maintenance of the eternal revelation of Christ. But it should always be reconciled that such a formulation must be considered as in the true sense dogmatic. Those who cannot assent to it must regard themselves as excluded at least from the official ministry of the Church. Not attempt is made to silence them or to induce them not to follow their conscience in the search for truth. Their sincere criticism should always be welcome; but they must not be allowed to speak in the Church's name or to claim her outward authority for their teaching. On the other hand, those who do assent to the formula, should understand that they do not accept it as an explanation or complete positive statement of the Christian faith, but only declare their belief, that any teaching contrary to it would weaken or pervert the gospel-mystery.

Such a formula could obviously not be produced in a hurry, there is need of much time for study and prayer, reflexion and consultation, in order to decide how much ground the definitions should cover, and what degree of precision they should

attain. But the formula, once secured, would surely go far to make our Church the possessor of a body of teaching definite in outline yet not "cut and dried" in meaning. The known agreement on the formula would make for definiteness, the recognition of its negative purpose, would prevent its being mistaken for a complete positive exposition, and would stimulate every individual enterprise to present the faith in a new and brighter light. Modern thought in every branch of study is full of illuminating ideas, if only they could be wisely directed on the central truth of Christ which should be their focus.

[Known dates of attendance, given in parentheses, are derived from Roger KOJECKY, *T.S. Elliot's Social Criticism*, London, 1971, pp. 237-239. Official members of the Moot are marked with an asterisk.]

In addition to those listed below, a number of others were suggested during the first meeting of the Moot as prospective members. These included A.D. Lindsay (Master of Balliol), W.G. Peck, Charles Raven (Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge), and William Temple (then Archbishop of York). During the Moot's early stages, Oldham also considered forming a "Party" to implement the initiatives of the Moot. Included in his provisional list for "Party" members who were not members of the Moot were: W.H. Auden, R.H.S. Crossman, V.A. Demant, Dorothy Emmet, George Every, O.S. Franks, C.S. Lewis, Michael Roberts and Charles Williams. Early drafts of the findings of the Moot were also sent to Anthony Eden, Basil Liddell Hart, Desmond Hawkins, Lord Stamp and Arnold Toynbee.

The Moot also spawned a number of smaller groups. In 1939, "sub groups" met to discuss the role of the universities. H.A. Hodges visited a similar group operating in Manchester, organised by George Every, and attended by L.C. Knights and D.W. Harding. After Mannheim's death in 1947, the Moot dissolved, but a similar group met on two further occasions to discuss papers by Michael Polanyi.

The attenders and contributors to the Moot were:

Acheson, Russel R.: Born 1916. Priest in training from 1945; late scholar of University College, Oxford; received B.A. in 1939 and M.A. in 1945. (Later Canon of Bristol.)

*Baillie, John: (1886-1960.) Scottish theologian. Professor of Divinity, University of Edinburgh, 1934-1955. Ecumenist and apologist, member of the Church of Scotland. (April, September 1938; January, April 1939; August, December 1941; March, September 1942; January 1943; June, December 1944.)

***Bliss, Kathleen:** (1908-1989.) Anglican member of British Council of Churches 1942-1967. Main speaker at Amsterdam meeting of the World Council of Churches in 1948. Member of St. Anne's Society. Editor of *The Christian News-Letter* (1945-1949). (June, November 1943; January, June, December 1944.)

***Channing-Pearce, Melville:** Born 1886. Anglican layman influenced by neo-orthodoxy. (December, March 1941.)

***Clarke, Fred:** (1880-1952.) Educationalist. Director of the Institute of Education, London. Clarke's Chair at the Institute was taken over by Karl Mannheim in 1946. (February, April, July 1940; April, August, December 1941; March 1942; November 1943; January, December 1944.)

***Dawson, Christopher:** (1889-1970.) Roman Catholic lay historian. Gifford Lecturer, 1947. (April 1938; January, August 1941.)

Demant, Vigo Auguste: Born 1893. Anglo-Catholic priest. Graduate of Durham (Science), Oxford (Anthropology), and Ely Theological College. Vicar of St. John the Divine, Richmond (1933-1942), then Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral (1942-1949). Member of the Christendom Group and contributor to the Malvern Conference.

***Eliot, Thomas Stearns:** (1888-1965.) Anglo-Catholic layman. Publishing executive for Faber & Faber. Poet, dramatist, literary and social critic. Contributor to the Oxford and Malvern Conferences and to the Archbishop's Commission on *Catholicity*. Editor of *The Criterion*, occasional editor of the *Christian News-Letter*. (April, September 1938; January, April 1939; April, July 1940; January, August, December 1941; September 1942; June 1943.)

Farmer, H.H.: Born 1892. Professor of Systematic Theology, Westminster College, Cambridge, and Stanton Lecturer in the Philosophy of Religion in the University of Cambridge. (April 1938.)

***Fenn, Eric:** Born 1899. Personal assistant to J.H. Oldham. Had served as a secretary to the S.C.M. in the 1930s, and had assisted Oldham in organising the Oxford Conference. Also employed by the Religious Broadcasting Division of the B.B.C. from 1939. Unofficial secretary of the Moot. (April, September 1938; January, April 1939; February, July 1940; January, August, December 1941; March 1942; January, June, November 1943; January, June 1944.)

Hall, Noel Frederick: Born 1902. Director of the National Institute for Economic and Social Research. (April 1939.)

***Hetherington, Hector:** Born 1888. President of the National Institute for Economic and Social Research; Principal of Glasgow University. Chairman of the Commission on Workmen's Compensation. (January, April 1941; September 1942; January, June 1943.)

***Hodges, Herbert Arthur:** Born 1905. Professor of Philosophy, Reading University, from 1934. Liberal-Catholic layman. (All meetings of the Moot except February 1940.)

Iredale, Eleanora: Participant in the Oxford Conference, instigator of, and fundraiser for, *the *Christian News-Letter*. (April, September 1938; January, April 1939; April, July 1940; January, April, December 1941; March, September 1942; January, June 1943.)

Jenkins, Daniel Thomas: Born 1914. Congregationalist minister and Barthian theologian; author of *The Nature of Catholicity* (1942). Later President of the Christian Frontier Council. (November 1943; January 1944.)

Kenyon, Ruth: Founder of the Church Socialist League (Hastings Branch), COPEC delegate, Labour Party member, and regular participant in the Oxford Anglo-Catholic Summer School of Sociology. Her involvement in the summer schools resulted in the publication of *The Catholic Faith and the Industrial Order* (1931). Wrote the "Notes" section of *Christendom* until her death in 1943.

Lampert, Evgueny (Eugene): Born 1913 in Russia. Russian Orthodox philosopher and theologian. Lived in Berlin in the 1920s, then studied philosophy and sociology at the French University, Strasburg. Converted to Christianity, and studied at the Orthodox Theological Academy of St. Sergius in Paris; moved to England to work on a doctoral thesis, published as *The Divine Realm* in 1944. (March 1942.)

***Löwe, Adolf:** Born Stuttgart, Germany, 1893. Professor of Economics and Sociology, University of Kiel (1926-1931), and of Political Economics, University of Frankfurt am Main (1931-1933). Lecturer in Economics and Political Science,

University of Manchester (1933-1940). Moved to the U.S.A. in 1940; Alvin Johnson Professor of Economics, New School of Social Research, from 1941. (April, September 1938; January 1939; February, April 1940.)

MacKinnon, Donald: (1913-1994.) Anglo-Catholic layman. Fellow and Tutor at Keble College, Oxford (1936-1937), Lecturer in Philosophy at Balliol College (1945-1947), Wilde Lecturer in Natural and Comparative Religion, Oxford, (1945-1947). Regius Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Aberdeen, (1947-1960). (December 1944.)

MacMurray, John: (1891-1976.) Protestant layman. Involved with the S.C.M. as a student in Glasgow, but moved away from the institutional Churches in response to his military experiences in the First World War. Chair of the Philosophy of Mind and Logic, London, 1928-1944. Delivered a major series of broadcasts in the late twenties and early thirties, later published as *Freedom in the Modern World*. Attracted by Marxism in the 1930s. In the 1940s, became Fellow, Tutor and Jowett Lecturer in Philosophy, Balliol College, Oxford, then Professor of Moral Philosophy, University of Edinburgh. Became a Quaker late in life.

Mairet, Philip: (1886-1975.) Editor of *New English Weekly* from 1934 until 1949. Regular attender of Anglo-Catholic Summer School of Sociology from 1937. (January 1941; June 1944.)

***Mannheim, Karl:** (1893-1947.) Sociologist. Took degree in Philosophy at University of Budapest. Professor of Sociology at University of Frankfurt before being expelled by the Nazis in 1933. Affiliated with the University of London, at the School of Economics; joined Institute of Education in 1940 as a part time lecturer. Left the School of Economics to take up Chair of Sociology and Education at the Institute of Education. Born in Budapest, 1893, of Jewish parentage. Died in 1947. (All meetings of the Moot except April 1938.)

Maritain, Jacques: (1882-1973.) French Roman Catholic philosopher. Author of *True Humanism*, the work which provided the focus for discussion at the third meeting of the Moot. Maritain and various members of the Moot met in London on 11 May, 1939.

Miller, Alexander: (1908-1960.) Presbyterian minister from New Zealand. Had been active in the S.C.M. and the peace movement, and came under the dual

influence of Marxism and Barthianism. Moved to Britain in 1939, and worked with Dr. George Macleod at the Iona Community. (June, November 1943; January, June, December 1944.)

***Moberly, Walter:** Born 1881. Law Don, Oxford. Chairman of University Grants Committee, Vice-Chancellor of Manchester University. Contributor to *Men Without Work* (1938), author of *The Crisis of the University*. (All meetings of the Moot except June, November 1943.)

***Murry, John Middleton:** (1889-1957.) Anglican layman and pacifist apolitical. Literary critic, married to Katherine Mansfield until her death in 1923. Editor of *Peace News* throughout the war. Retreated to a pacifist farming community in wartime. Previously a member of Pax, a predominantly Catholic peace society. (April, September 1938; January 1939; February, April, July 1940; April, December 1941; September 1942.)

Newbiggin, Lesslie: Born 1909. Church of Scotland Madras Mission. S.C.M. secretary in 1930s. Took major part in negotiations leading to formation of the Church of South India; appointed Bishop in Madurai and Ramnond. Later moderator of the United Reformed Church. (September 1938.)

Niebuhr, Reinhold: (1892-1971.) Neo-orthodox theologian. Professor of Christian Ethics, Union Theological Seminary in New York City, formerly pastor of Bethel Evangelical Church in Detroit, and ex-chairman of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Disavowed his pacifism in 1932. His highly influential *Moral Man and Immoral Society* was first published in 1933. (June 1943.)

***Oakeshott, Walter Fraser:** Born 1903. Master at Winchester, then High-Master at St. Paul's. (September 1938; April, July 1940; January, August, December 1941.)

***Oldham, Joseph Houldsworth:** (1874-1969.) Lay missionary and ecumenist. Born in Scotland, served with the Y.M.C.A. in India and studied theology at New College, Edinburgh. Organising Secretary of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference in 1910, and editor of the *International review of Missions*, with a particular interest in African mission. From 1934, Chairman of Life and Work. Scottish Free-Churchman, but on moving to England in 1921, became an Anglican. Chairman of Life and Work from 1934. Attended organisational meeting of the World Council of Churches in Utrecht, 1938. Organiser of the Oxford Conference, the Christian

News-Letter, and the Christian Frontier Council. Chairman of the Moot. Honorary President of World Council of Churches, 1948. (All meetings of the Moot.)

*Oldham, Mary: (All meetings of the Moot except January, August 1941; March 1942; January 1943.)

Pakenham, Frank (Lord Longford): Born 1905. Personal research assistant and unofficial public-relations officer to Sir William Beveridge. After the production of the Beveridge Report in late 1942, continued to assist Beveridge in an enquiry into full employment. (January 1943.)

Paton, William, (Sen.): (1886-1943.) Ordained in Presbyterian Church of England, 1917. Y.M.C.A. secretary in 1920s; succeeded Oldham on International Missionary Council, 1927. Associate General Secretary of World Council of Churches, 1938. (September 1948.)

Polanyi, Michael: (1891-1976.) Philosopher and scientist. Born in Budapest; came to England from Germany in 1933. Professor of Physical Chemistry, University of Manchester, then Professor of Social Studies at Manchester (1948-1958). The Society for Freedom in Science was inspired by Polanyi's *Rights and Duties of Science*. (June, December 1944.)

Reeves, Marjorie: Mediaeval historian and educationalist. The Moot met several times in her room in Norham Gardens, Oxford, but she was not present at all of these meetings. Occasional contributor to the *Christian News-Letter* on Christian education, and author of the *C.N-L* Book, *What is Christian Education?*, 1942. (March 1942.)

Russel, G.: (April 1941.)

*Shaw, Gilbert: (1886-1967.) Anglo-Catholic priest. Founder of "The Sydney", an institution for the support of the unemployed in London's East End. Served at All Saints, Poplar, and then at St. Anne's Society, Soho, from 1943. Chairman of G.J. Palmer & Sons, parent company of the *Church Times*, from 1947. Unofficial advisor to the Government and to the Archbishops on occult practices. (September 1938; January, April 1939; February, April, July 1940; January, April, August, December 1941; March 1942; January, November 1943; January 1944.)

Symons, W.T. ("Christopher"): Factory inspector and social credit economist; author of *The Coming of Community* (1931). (January 1944.)

Tawney, Richard Henry: (1880-1962.) Anglo-Catholic historian and sociologist.

Tillich, Paul: (1886-1965.) Protestant theologian. Expelled from Germany in 1933 because of his connection with the Religious Socialists. Professor of Philosophical Theology at Union Theological Seminary, New York.

Tomkins, Oliver: Born 1908. Anglican theologian and church leader. Associate General Secretary of World Council of Churches, in charge of its London office, (1945-1953). Assistant secretary of Faith and Order Continuation Committee, (1945-1948); Secretary of Commission on Faith and Order (1948-53). Active in the Student Christian Movement. Later Bishop of Bristol (1953-1975). (January, April 1939.)

Torrance, Thomas F.: Born 1913. Barthian theologian. Former student of John Baillie; supplied a reply to a paper by H.A. Hodges, for discussion by the Moot.

Vickers, Geoffrey: (1894-1982.) Ex-army officer who received a Victoria Cross for his service in Flanders in the First World War. Took degrees in Greats and Classics, then worked as a solicitor from 1923. Moved away from Christianity in the 1920s. Reinstated as an infantry lieutenant in 1940, and went on an intelligence mission to South America, before working as a civil servant with the Ministry of Economic Warfare as Deputy Director, then Director. Member of the Joint Intelligence Committee of the Chief of Staff, and founder of the Association for Service and Reconstruction, which promoted a mild form of social democracy. Knighted in 1945; became legal advisor to the National Coal Board in 1947. (April 1940.)

*Vidler, Alexnder Roper: (1899-1991.) "Liberal-Catholic" theologian influenced by neo-orthodoxy. Secretary of the Christian Frontier Council. Warden of St. Deiniol's Library, Hawarden (1939-1948); Honorary Canon of Derby (1946-1948); Canon of Windsor (1948-1956). Editor of *Theology*, occasional editor of the *Christian News-Letter*. (All meetings of the Moot except April 1938; December 1941.)

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Almighty and everlasting God, who from thy eternity dost always direct the operations of thy glory: Mercifully subdue thy beauty to our understanding and with that beauty illuminate our distress, through the intercession of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

- Charles Williams,
Undated Collect.

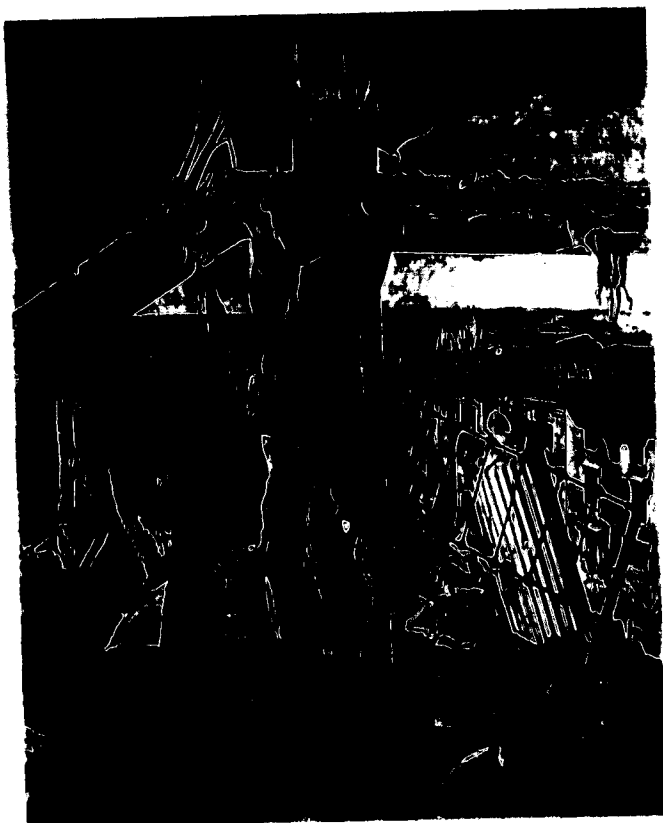
Plate
1

Francis Bacon, *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion*, Oil on board, each panel 94 x 73.7 cm, 1944. (Tate Gallery N06171.)
(Photograph: Tate Gallery)



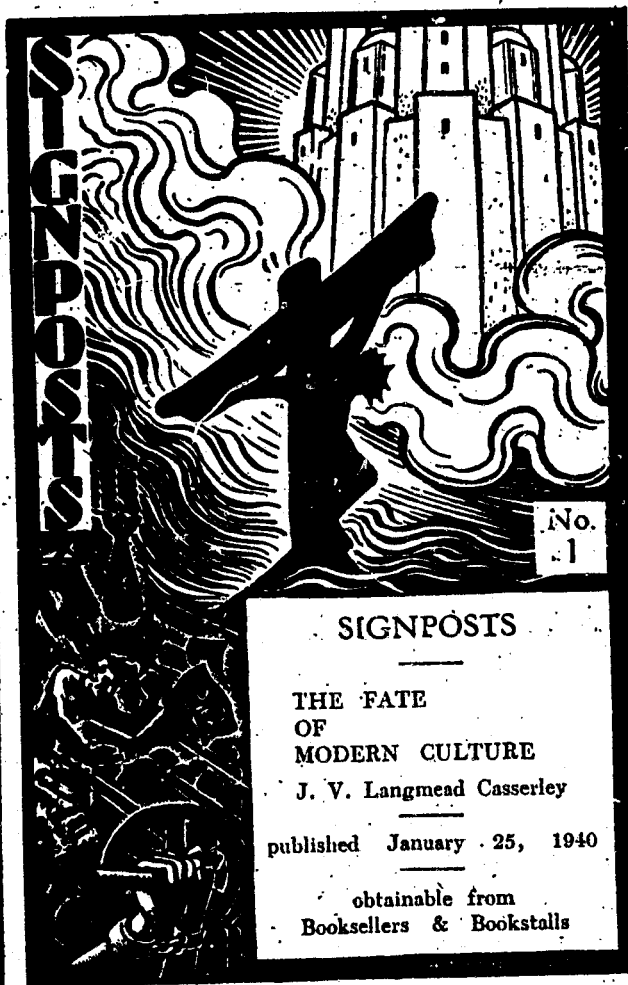
Plate
2

Robert Henderson Blyth, *In the Image of Man*, Oil on canvas, 49.5 x 39.5 ins, 1945-1946. (Imperial War Museum IWM:PST:16010.)
(Photograph: Imperial War Museum)





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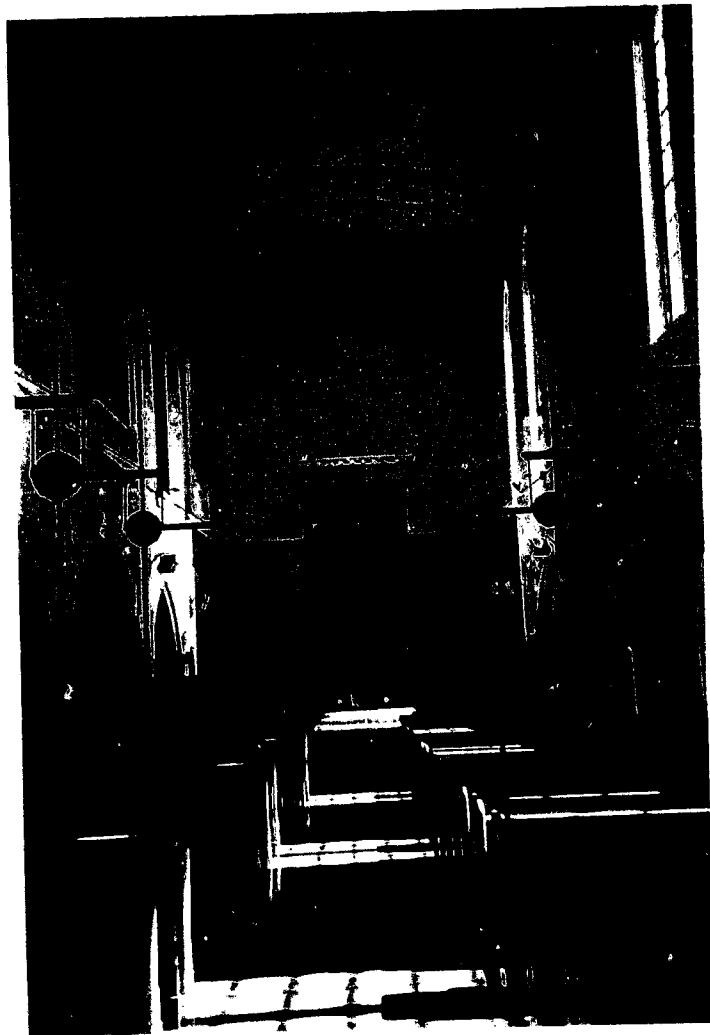
Plate
4

E.W. Tristram, *Scenes from the Baptism of Christ*, murals behind the altar, St. Elisabeth's Church, Eastbourne, 1938.
(Photograph: St. Elisabeth's, Eastbourne.)



Plate
5

E.W. Tristram, Scenes from the *Baptism of Christ* (continued), and view of St. Elisabeth's from the west end of the nave.
(Photographs: St. Elisabeth's, Eastbourne; the author.)



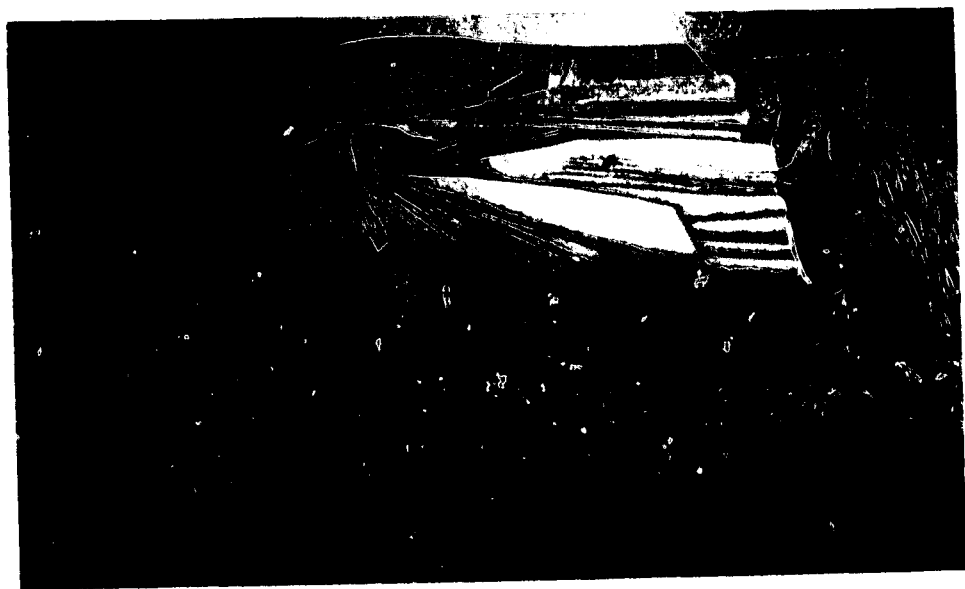
Plate

7

Hans Feibusch, scenes from *The Pilgrim's Progress*, wall paintings in the crypt, St. Elisabeth's, Eastbourne, 1944.

(Photographs: Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne.)

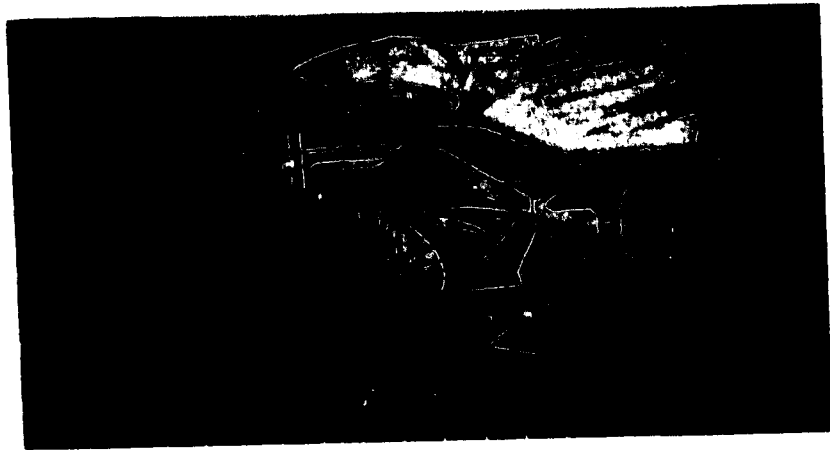




**Augustus Lunn: *The Great Commission*, painting behind the altar
Bishop Hannington Memorial Church, Hove, 1941 (details).**
(Photographs by the author.)

Plate

8



Augustus Lunn: *The Great Commission* (details, continued).
(Photographs by the author.)

Plate
10

Vanessa Bell, *Annunciation*, wall painting in the nave, St. Michael and All Angels, Berwick, 1943.
(Photograph: St. Michael and All Angels, Berwick.)



Plate
11

Vanessa Bell, *Nativity*, wall painting in the nave, St. Michael and All Angels, Berwick, 1943.
(Photograph: St. Michael and All Angels, Berwick.)



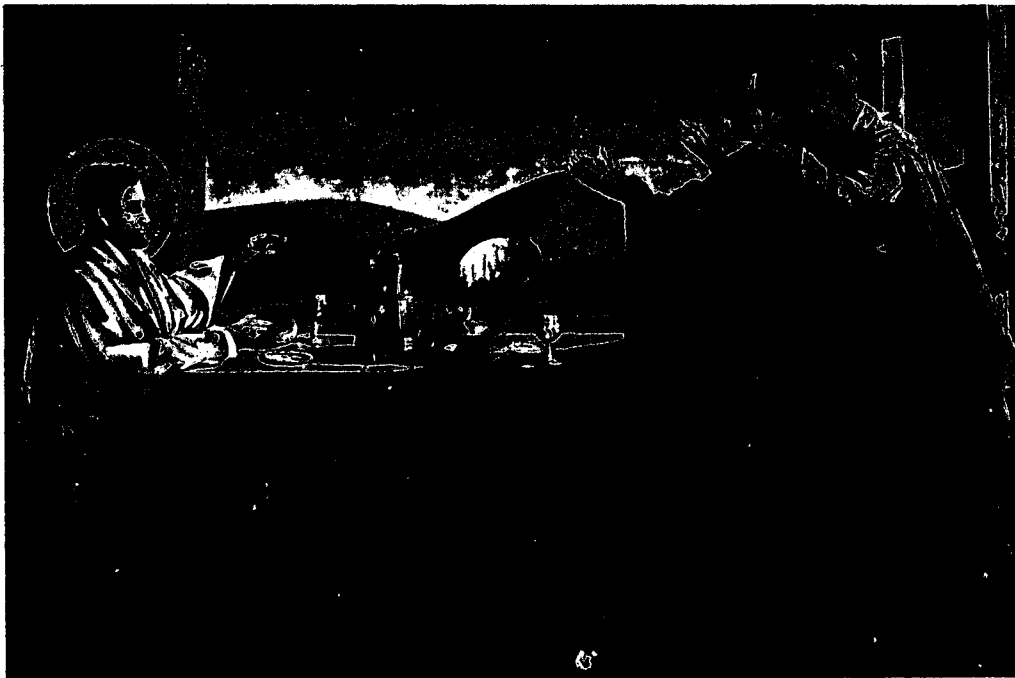
Plate
12

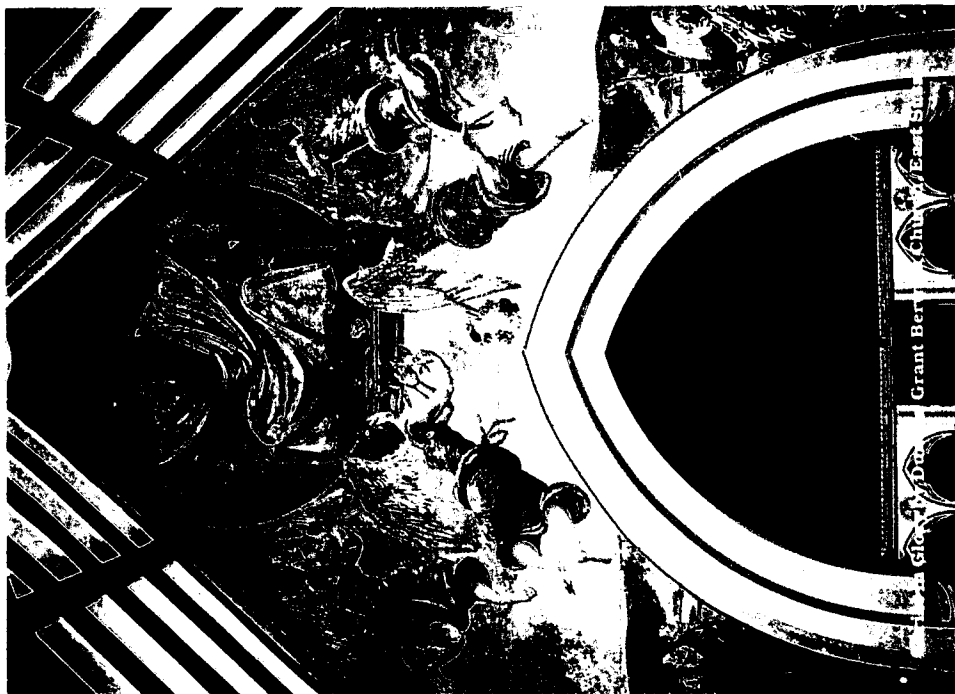
Quentin Bell, *Wise and Foolish Virgins*, wall painting on inside of chancel arch, St. Michael and All Angels, Berwick, 1943.
(Photograph: St. Michael and All Angels, Berwick.)



Plate
13

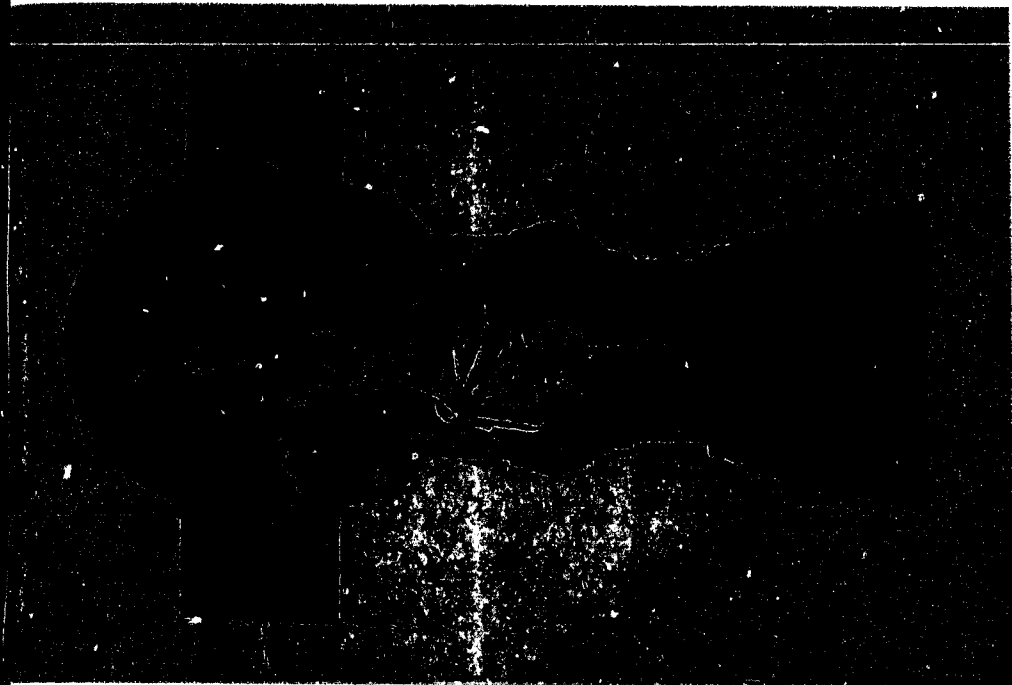
Quentin Bell, *Supper at Emmaus*, reredos, St. Michael and All Angels, Berwick, 1944.
(Photograph: St. Michael and All Angels, Berwick.)





Duncan Grant, *Christ in Glory*, wall-painting on chancel arch, St. Michael and All Angels, Berwick, 1943.
(Photographs: St. Michael and All Angels, Berwick)

Plate
14



Duncan Grant, *The Victory of Calvary*, painting on west wall, St. Michael and All Angels, Berwick, 1944.
(Photograph: St. Michael and All Angels, Berwick)

Plate
15

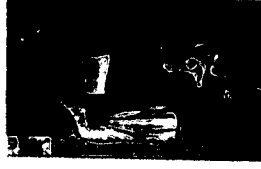


Plate
16

Duncan Grant, *Four Seasons*, paintings on screen (nave side), St Michael and All Angels, Berwick, 1944.
(Photographs: St. Michael and All Angels, Berwick)

Plate
17

Quentin Bell, *The Cycle of Life*, paintings on screen (choir side), St. Michael and All Angels, Berwick, 1944.
(Photographs by the author.)

**Plate
20**

**Henry Moore, *Madonna and Child*, St. Matthew's Parish Church,
Northampton, 1943, (a) from north transept; (b) from Lady Chapel.
(Photographs: St. Matthew's Northampton.)**



Plate
21

Graham Sutherland, *Thorn Tree*, 1945.
(Reproduction published in *Penguin New Writing*, Vol. 10, 1947.)



Plate
22

Graham Sutherland, *Crucifixion*, oil on sundeala board, 1947. Pallant House, Chichester, Hussey Bequest (155).
(Photograph Pallant House, Chichester.)



Plate
23

Graham Sutherland, *Crucifixion*, oil on hardboard, south transept, St. Matthew's Parish Church, Northampton, 1946.
(Photograph: St. Matthew's, Northampton.)



Plate
24

Graham Sutherland, Study for the Northampton *Crucifixion*, 1946.
(Tate Gallery.)
(Photograph by the author.)

