ABSTRACT

Your Own Personal Jesus:
Individualized Religious Sectarianism in the Mid-Victorian Novel

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This Dissertation explores four novels from the mid-nineteenth century, two of which are by canonical authors, Charles Dickens and George Eliot; two not as well known, Charles Kingsley and Charlotte Yonge. The nineteenth century, in particular the century's central decades, was a time of great religious debate and division. Theological and popular elements within the Anglican Church sought to pull it in two different directions: The one towards the rights and practices of the Roman (Catholic) Church, the other towards the 'Bibliocentric' ideals of the Reformation. I argue that each of the novelists represented in this dissertation speaks to one of four divisions occurring within the Church at this period: High-Church Anglo-Catholicism (Charlotte Yonge), Broad-Church Christian Socialism (Charles Kingsley), Low-Church Evangelicalism (George Eliot), and 'No-Church' Protestant Dissent (Charles Dickens).

Your Own Personal Jesus:
Individualized Religious Sectarianism in the Mid-Victorian Novel

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DEDICATION

To my parents, Edson and Donna Dickinson, without whose constant love and encouragement I could have never made it this far

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The Victorian novel, perhaps much more than has been traditionally recognized by readers, is a medium that owes a great deal to the religious culture of the era in which it was produced. In fact, I would like to argue that the form of the novel itself, so important to the study of this genre, is in many ways tied to the religious beliefs of the era. An understanding of the religious belief of the period is crucial for a thorough understanding of the nineteenth-century novel, and we do a disservice to the proper study of this form by making religion a marginal concern. This being said, it is perhaps easy to understand why modern scholarship sees the religious culture of the Victorian period as marginal to other socio-cultural concerns of the novel genre. Traditionally, it was believed that the nineteenth century witnessed the rise of 'secularization', a cultural move away from Christianity in the English nation as a whole. Yet, recent historical and literary scholarship places true secularization as happening in, not the 1860's, but the 1960's.[1] In other words, the Victorian Era remained a majority religious culture; secularization occurring in the late twentieth century. To put it even more simply (in terms of literary scholarship), Victorian novelists (even Eliot and Hardy) were the product of a religious culture; Victorian scholars the product of a secular.

Since recent scholarship has addressed the existence of this divide between the sacred and the secular[2], I will not give time to it here. I will simply reiterate what is, for my purposes, perhaps the most important result of this bifurcation: for many Victorians,

religion was the sacred foundation of identity rather than simply another piece of the puzzle[3]. Once this is understood, the approach to reading religion in the Victorian novel can become much more nuanced and complex. Recent scholarship has also made *another* important move in this direction by taking into account the multiplicity of sectarian belief systems that made the religious tapestry of Victorian England to be so richly patterned.

However, before reviewing these sources, it may be helpful to orient my approach by giving a brief historical sketch of these religious divisions, and how each originated.

We will begin with what we know: As the Protestant Reformation was sweeping Europe, Henry VIII made a decision that would forever alter religious history in the West. Separating from the Catholic Church in order to secure a divorce from his wife, King Henry declared himself head of the church in England. This move served for his own ends, as well as doing much to appease the growing Protestant fervor in the nation. When the dust settled, the newly-minted church retained some of the hierarchical and ceremonial trappings of Catholicism, while at the same time imbibing Protestant doctrine and practice. Forever after, the Anglican Church would be seen as the *Via Media*, a perfect 'middle way' between Catholicism and Protestantism; by this, King Henry hoped to please both himself—and everyone else.

Unfortunately, this was not to be the case. Seeking to appease both sides, Henry only succeeded in making each angrier than before. Some thought the Anglican Church too Catholic, some too Protestant; as a result, factions within the church itself began to agitate for their own chosen sect.

This is, essentially, the same battle that is occurring within the Church during the nineteenth century. One portion of the population seeks to promote Anglo-*Catholicism*,

another Anglo-*Protestantism*. However, the particularities of religious division in the nineteenth century itself stem from two important historical moments: Catholic Emancipation, and the Rise of Evangelical Dissent.

On Friday the 13th of April 1829, the bill freeing Roman Catholics from their civil constraints was passed in the House of Lords. Three days later, King George IV signed it into law. The Emancipation itself seemed to many at the time the natural result of what was perhaps an even more monumental decision at the turn of the nineteenth century—establishing a political union with Ireland. Overnight, the British Crown found itself "[responsible] for seven million and more persons of whom about five and a half million were Roman Catholics" (Chadwick 8). Owen Chadwick sets the stakes of such union succinctly in his *The Victorian Church*: "Elsewhere in the history of Christianity it has been observed how a state, which by conquest or inheritance or accident acquires a new and large population practicing a different religion from the religion of the old population, is forced to modify its religious policy if it wishes to survive as a state" (8). The union with Ireland, coupled with Catholic Emancipation, was the first step in the destabilization of the Anglican Church in the nineteenth century.

This truth was never more evident than in the weeks that followed the passage of the Emancipation act. The biggest fear among Anglican churchmen and women was that the newly emancipated Irish-Catholic Lords would now be voted into Parliament, and forthwith use their political powers to rescind Protestant freedoms and reestablish Medieval Catholicism—all Bibles in English gathered up by magistrates and tossed into bonfires, priests commanded to conduct services solely in Latin with their backs to the congregation, priests forbidden to marry, laboring men and women forced to give their

children in service to the Church, Oxford and Cambridge Divines divested into oblivion—the possibilities were horrifying. Such radical reactions are not exaggerated. Chadwick paints the picture for us:

> Illiterate citizens were confronted with pictures of Bloody Mary burning heretics, with large-lettered placards about murder and Judge Jeffreys, with the question whether they would have a Protestant or Popish king. Even the king's brother … told the House of Lords that the question was whether the country was to be a Protestant country with a Protestant government or a Roman Catholic country with a Roman Catholic government. Colonel Wilson told the House of Commons that the ministers were deliberately asking the king to build a stepping-stone to the scaffold with his own hands … Cartoonists showed the Tory ministers responsible for the bill, the Duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel, carrying rosaries and kissing the pope's toe (8).

Fears of an Irish-Catholic supremacy in England's government were so intense, that when Parliament reconvened on April 29th, Catholic members were commanded to sign an oath in which they promised not to overthrow English Protestantism.

The public fears generated by this movement might very well have helped to produce its opposite. The rise in Catholicism was followed by a rise in Protestant Non-Conformity. Like the Emancipation Act, this counter-movement was also rooted in a historical event: The Religious Census of 1851.

In this year, Horace Mann conducted a religious census of the entire United Kingdom. For the traditionally-minded Englishman, who believed the unity and stability of the nation to be connected to the unity and stability of the National Church, the results of the census were disconcerting. Mann found that of a national population of 17,927,609 persons, 10,212,563 of these attended religious services on Sunday, March 30th. Over half the population still attended then (57%), but the census foreshadowed the age of skepticism that would soon descend.

A majority of these numbers could be explained by sickness or invalidity. To the nineteenth-century English lay-person, then, even more disturbing than the number of those who did not attend a service, was the number of Non-Anglican Dissenters. Of the over 10-million attendees of some form of religious service, 5,317,915 of these (52%) were Anglican. But the number who attended Non-Anglican or Dissenting chapels was 4,708, 537 (46%). The Anglican Church still held a majority, but only slightly. And when the number of Roman-Catholics is included (186,111, or 2%), the margin decreases all the more. If the Anglican Church declared itself Protestant, then it was something that the Protestants in the nation did not seem to be aware of.

It is from this culture that the mid-century Victorian novel makes its emergence. Thankfully, there have been recent studies in Victorian Literary criticism that have acknowledged the religious sectarian patchwork of the age. The importance of these studies to the critical conversation in the field is that they each acknowledge the high stakes of reading the relationship between Victorian literature and religion in a much more nuanced and complex way than what had come before.

Seminal texts in this area of criticism first includes Robert Lee Wolff's *Loss and Gain* (1977). Though certainly not the first to speak to the influence of religious belief in the Victorian novel, it certainly was one of the first to make the stakes of the argument clear:

> … of all the subjects that interested Victorians, and therefore preoccupied their novelists, none—not love, or crime, or war, or sport, or ancestry, or even money—held their attention as much as religion. And of all the subjects none is more obscure to the modern reader (1-2).

In this work, Wolff does essentially what I have done here—survey the history of sectarian dissent. But before this is done, he gives several examples of what a reader who

is not attuned to the religious discourse of the Victorian era misses in his or her readings. Here are two of the most classic examples:

> The richness and complexity of George Eliot's own religious experiences are reflected in the much discussed but still often opaque philosophical development in her fiction. Without an easy familiarity with the contemporary religious struggles the reader of Trollope misses half the depth, half the fun. That Mr. Arabin and Archdeacon Grantly are High-Church, Bishop and Mrs. Proudie and Mr Slope Low-Church, is not an accident but an essential aspect of their characters and of their behavior. But the mere label "High" or "Low" Trollope himself supplies: what he does not do, because he did not need to, is tell his readers what this party struggle meant, not only in religious doctrine but also in social position, social attitudes, educational background (7).

I am, essentially, expanding Wolff's line of argument. In taking an example from *Great Expectations,* Wolff gives what is perhaps the most direct explanation of the difference between a contemporary and Victorian understanding of religious culture: "We no longer breathe the same air" (4).

Though Kathleen Tillotson, in her *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties* (1954), does not focus directly on religion, she acknowledges that certain texts from the period can only be fully understood once the religious culture of the period is taken into consideration:

> The most 'thorny' of the 'topics of the day' in the eighteen-forties were the controversies in religion, and these are occasionally reflected in most novels of the time, not excepting the historical ones and those concerned with the recent past: the novels of Ainsworth, as later of Kingsley and Reade, have their propagandist slant, while Mrs. Bute Crawley in *Vanity Fair,* Eliza Reed in *Jane Eyre*, the curates in *Shirley,* though all ostensibly pre-1820, gain in definition from their author's awareness of contemporary circumstances (126).

By looking at religion, Tillotson is able to go beyond the canonical authors of the period and bring in those authors (such as Newman and Kingsley), who may have been lost to contemporary readers were it not for her sectarian focus.

In Joseph Ellis Baker's *The Novel and the Oxford Movement* (1932), the novel is approached purely from this sectarian focus. Baker's area of criticism is the literature

produced by the High-Church Oxford Movement alone. This extreme focus makes much sense. One argument that could be made regarding religion in nineteenth century England is that the birth of the Oxford Movement is truly where the inception of sectarian division in this period began, as Evangelicals had been dotting the landscape for nearly a hundred years before. Baker seems to say something similar as regards the landscape of Victorian fiction:

> From the end of the eighteenth century, religious stories had been written by Evangelicals, such as Hannah More and Mrs. Sherwood. But the Oxford Movement, until nearly a decade after its inception, seems to have been almost ignored by writers of fiction—confirmatory evidence that in the religious life of England it played as yet no important part (6).

In a very real sense, a portion of the fiction produced in the nineteenth century simply would not be possible outside of the religious debates which gave them life.

The sources listed here are from some fifty years ago and more. Given the importance they placed on considerations regarding religion in the Victorian novel, it is striking that more work has not been done on the subject. Yet, this is exactly what has been the case until quite recently. The purpose of this dissertation is to help bring the critical work these scholars began into the present day, acknowledging a greater complexity with regard to certain novels and religious sects of the era. In so doing, I join literary critics of our current century such as Knight, Mason, Blair, and King who have reinvigorated this study to a great degree.

Any contemporary work of literary criticism which seeks to engage with the debates surrounding religious sectarianism in the 19th Century must first acknowledge the debt owed to Mark Knight and Emma Mason's *Nineteenth Century Religion and Literature: An Introduction* (2006); a text which laid the groundwork for this growing

field of study. Knight and Mason argue against the traditional "secularization narrative" common to nineteenth-century studies. They argue instead that "To insist on rigid boundaries between the sacred and the secular, as many thinkers have done from the eighteenth century onwards, is to demarcate religious space in a narrow and misleading manner" (3). Analyzing religious history with this view in mind, Knight and Mason suggest that the century participated in "a continual slippage between the sacred and the secular," and as a result, the *Introduction* seeks to "actively destabilize the categories of the sacred and the secular without dispensing with them all together" (3). In 'looking for faith' in nineteenth century culture, Knight and Mason conclude that it must be found in the ever-growing sectarian divide. The centralizing, universal and national creeds of the early Western Christian Church (The Apostles' creed, the Nicene creed, the Thirty-Nine Articles) no longer form a unifying hold on the religious thought or life of the nineteenth-century Englishman. With this in mind, the authors conclude that "In many respects, the so-called secularization of religion in the latter part of the nineteenth century is best understood as a diminution of the power and reach of the Established Church rather than the decline of Christian ideas and culture" (7). A multiplicity of sects necessitated a multiplicity of texts. Knight and Mason see the creeds of the early Church as, in effect, literature. For that forty-six percent of the nation who no longer occupied the pews of the National Church, a new creedal literature had to be created: "For the majority of people in the nineteenth century, the doctrinal intricacies of the Church were experienced through texts that were unlikely to appear in a course of formal theology: hymns, tracts, poetry, and fiction" (7). In other words, the literature of the nineteenth century can be viewed as an attempt to create a unified Christian identity from the intense sectarian

fragmentation occurring in the era. Religious sectarianism is seen in the *Introduction* as both forming and being formed by a new type of creedal literature.

While Knight and Mason focus on a range of literature in their Introduction, Kirstie Blair, in *Form and Faith in Victorian Poetry and Religion* (2012), focuses on the canonical poets of the era. Building on Knight and Mason's idea of 'literature as religious creed', Blair argues that Victorian poetry's experiments with form can be understood as a direct statement of the author's religious sensibilities: "when Victorian poetry speaks of faith, it tends to do so in steady and regular rhythms; when it speaks of doubt, it is correspondingly more likely to deploy irregular, unsteady, unbalanced rhythms" (1). As I argue with the novel, Blair states that religious belief is central to concerns of form:

> One of the central arguments of this book, then, is that canonical poets such as Tennyson, the Browning's, Hardy, Hopkins, and Rossetti produced their religious poetry as part of a context of popular religious poetics, and indeed a context including not only poetry but also tracts, sermons, pamphlets … Victorian poets and their readers shared a vocabulary relating to contemporary debates that we have largely lost. And one of the keywords in this vocabulary was 'form' (5).

Blair's recognition of the multiplicity of 'religious poetics' during the era once again speaks to the necessity of engaging with the growth of religious dissent, as Knight and Mason's recognition of the multiplicity of 'creedal texts' in their work also acknowledges. Blair relates the essence of her engagement with sectarianism in this way:

> Opponents of form tended to be drawn from Evangelical or dissenting religious traditions, which emphasized a personal and individual relationship with God, accessible without the trappings of organized religion. They viewed forms as lifeless external structures, repressive and limiting. Supporters of form, who correspondingly were much more likely to be somewhere on the Anglo-Catholic spectrum, argued in contrast that formal limits were enabling, in the sense that they allowed the speaker to express something inexpressible (7).

Blair suggests, as does Knight and Mason, that viewing the religious culture of the era through the literature of the era may give rise to unexpected religious unities:

"….dissenting poets, coming from a tradition strongly opposed to forms in worship, and Roman Catholic poets, who assume the undeniable and unassailable significance of form, might in the end have more in common with each other than with the Anglican centre" (14). Once again, we see in this analysis a direct comparison between religious belief and form, even among sectarian divisions of a 'central' religious creed (Anglicanism). My desire is to take this sectarian framework and read it through another form—that of the novel.

The argument that Victorian literature, and poetics in particular, creates a unifying creed during a time of religious division is explored by Joshua King in his *Imagined Spiritual Communities in Britain's Age of Print* (2015). Initially, King seems to speak to a unifying act of literature in the period, conveyed through the medium of mass publication:

> In the period following Maurice's death, the early 1870s to the later 1880s, Arnold clarified how he hoped a reformed Anglican Church and national education system would cooperate in shaping the consciousness of the reading nation. Guided by critics of culture administering their influence through the public sphere, Britons of all classes would, with the aid of state-funded literary education, learn to interpret the Bible and the rites of the Anglican Church as a national, public poetry—in effect, a poetic national church. The shared ethical "poetic" language of liturgy and Scripture would enable British readers to rise above their sectarian and class-based identities into supposedly higher, more tolerant selves capable of achieving a harmonious national community (13).

But as the argument unfolds, King shows us that each sect, each new religious ideology, has their own vision of what the imagined religious community should look like. For example, in discussing Tennyson's *In Memoriam:*

> *In Memoriam* struck contradictory chords in a broad range of Victorian Christian readers in the middle and upper classes accustomed to imagining their religious belonging, whether in the nation or in their denomination, in terms of inward faith shared with strangers through texts circulating in a competitive print market. By virtue of its minimal testimony, *In Memoriam* became, almost

> upon publication, a primary medium through and in terms of which a diverse array of commentators could imagine the religious landscape of their nation and the place of their religious subculture—in their view—counterpublic within it (188).

Even in this act of unity, each religious persuasion puts forward its own type of publication. Once again, we have the connection between form and faith. King is not saying that form creates faith, but that many Victorians saw *In Memoriam* as speaking to essential beliefs shared by most in the nation. Due to the fact that these essentials are so broad—God exists, there is an afterlife—each sectarian creed was able to respond to the poem in a much more individual way, imaging themselves in the context of their relation to other religious communities.

In this dissertation, I will be extending the religious-sectarian framework introduced by King and Blair. This extension, of course, comes with one important difference: I am carrying this framework from poetry into the novel. My argument consists of two parts: To begin with, I am arguing that the form of religious life (sectarian system) with which the authors surveyed here are most closely associated is reflected in the form of the novels they created. This first part of my argument essentially takes the framework established by King and Blair and moves it over a new text. Though this is an essential step, the second part of my argument adds an important distinction.

In the second part of my argument, I move beyond the religious sectarianism of the day into how each individual novelist *responds* to the sectarian position in which they are commonly placed. That is, I do not argue that the form of the religious life of the authors matches exactly the form of the novel they write in a strict one-to-one correspondence, but that religious life and form at different points *both adhere to* and *react against* their typical sectarian framework. The religious elements of these authors'

works and their lives should not be dismissed, as they are far more complex and individualized than a simple aligning of author with their denominational stripe. I would like to clarify one more distinction here: all of the authors who laid the foundational work with their respective texts—Knight and Mason, Blair, and King—use the lens of sectarianism in the same way I have. That is, none of these scholars view the authors or works which they critique as directly representing the sects which they are typically aligned with in a strict one-to-one correspondence.

This distinction is brought about, I argue, through the function of form itself. The simultaneous increase in the sectarian plurality of English Protestantism, along with the maturation of the novel form, is no accident. As Ian Watt reminds us, the Protestant Reformation was one of the key factors contributing to the birth of the individual; and the novel form is, I would argue, the most realized cultural product of that birth. As such, the novel is uniquely positioned to respond to the complexities of individual distinctiveness.

Nancy Armstrong expands on this idea in her 2006 work *How Novels Think*. Armstrong first articulates the idea of the modern subject. As Armstrong states, "the history of the novel and the history of the modern subject are, quite literally, one and the same" (3). One of Armstrong's primary distinctions is between the realist novel that perfectly captures the modern subject, and those works belonging to a sub-genre (such as the gothic) that give primacy to concerns of genre expectation over the creation of completely individualized characters that speak to all varieties of human complexity. Armstrong sees individual character in a novel as a product of the tensions which arise from internal desires and external expectations:

> Victorian novels make the turn against expressive individualism a mandatory component of the subject's growth and development. To create an individual,

> however, still requires the novel to offer an interiority in excess of the social position that individual is supposed to occupy. In the novels that appear during the second half of the nineteenth century, the desire to adjust the dynamic of the community to one's notion of it disrupts the community as a whole (8).

I take issue with the fact that religion is conspicuously absent from Armstrong's text. Even a skeptic acknowledges the importance that religious belief, Protestantism in particular, had on forming the identity of the modern individual. Having said that, the argument articulated in the quote above perfectly fits the claim I am making in regards to the religious sectarianism of the Victorian era. Though the nineteenth century saw a greater variety in religious choice than any other previous time, there were still many individuals which reacted against those divides—even those which they were a part of. The result is that the novel provides the perfect receptacle for that individual who is the product of these internal and external tensions. Again, I am arguing that the form of religious life enacted by the author (the sectarian system with which they are associated), is expressed in the form of the novel.

I have chosen four primary authors as 'representatives' (in the broadest sense of the term) of the four major religious divisions of the day (High-Church Tractarianism, Broad-Church Socialism, Low-Church Evangelicalism and Non-Anglican Dissent). As I discuss the ways each novel responds to this framework, I will also take just a brief moment to look at each of the author's personal religious journey.

The reasoning behind the order of my chapters is twofold: in the first instance, I am ordering the chapters from those sects which favor establishment to those who favor disestablishment; from a communal experience of faith to an individual one (the Broad-Church is certainly no friend to the Orthodox Anglican, but I would argue that they are more interested in an inclusive community of worshipers than the Evangelical). In the

second instance, I am ordering the chapters from texts in which the authors most closely and clearly align with their respective systems to those whose connections are much more tenuous. For example, the connections between Charlotte Yonge's form of religious life and the form of encoded Tractarian ideas and images in *The Heir of Redclyffe* is very clear. The same can be said for Kingsley—Kingsley, in fact, is in quite a fortunate position; *Hypatia* actually borrows from a number of novelistic modes and forms, but this is perfectly reasonable since the Broad-Church itself is the most expansive sectarian system. The connection between religious life and form for Eliot is quite a bit more difficult to tease out, as her personal humanism and the Evangelical aesthetic so present in *Adam Bede* give rise to a number of difficult tensions. Finally, Dickens is almost completely divorced from an institutional mode of any kind; *Bleak House* critiques all forms of religious worship, though Dickens himself was a life-long Anglican, if only in name.

In my second chapter, I begin by giving a history of the development of the Oxford Movement, beginning with the Assize sermon preached by Keble in 1838. I then move to Keble's relationship with Charlotte Yonge. It is important to know that Keble, a leading figure of the High-Church Oxford movement, not only prepared Yonge for confirmation, but acted as a religious mentor for her years after, as it allows readers to understand the origin of the Tractarian ideals that find their way into so much of Yonge's writing. Yonge's relationship with Keble establishes not only her orthodox system of belief, but her unwavering commitment to traditional-Victorian authority figures (parents and clergy), a theme that appears over and again in her novel *The Heir of Redclyffe*.

Yonge's rigorous training in Tractarian creedal belief and iconography also gives readers the foundation for much of the novel's almost Medieval symbolism.

The form of Yonge's religious life can be seen in the form of her novel; the values of Tractarianism are embedded in a narrative that looks at first glance to be concerned with the typical Victorian-novel issues of marriage and inheritance. These values are embedded like a secret code through a process that Tractarians such as Keble would come to call 'Reserve' – the embedding of moral and spiritual values in narrative and poetry. Compared to the parables of Christ, this embedding was meant to 'sweeten' the truths of Scripture, hoping to attract a culture which had become progressively skeptical of religious belief. At the same time, a rejection of the gospel embedded in narrative or poetry would be met with less severe judgment, as the reader could claim to not be 'attuned' to the mystery of the spiritual truths hidden within. The Tractarians also viewed Reserve as an antidote of sorts to the direct gospel-proclamation of Evangelicals, who they felt were either far too aggressive, or guilty of 'giving away God's secrets' to an unworthy audience.

The values embedded in *The Heir of Redclyffe*, which originate from High-Church Tractarianism, are the values most commonly associated with a stereotypical view of Victorian English society. This is particularly true in matters of hierarchical authority and emotional conduct. In *Redclyffe*, those characters who either disobey their parents or attempt to subvert Victorian expectations regarding proper emotional conduct do not end well. For example, the characters Philip and Laura Edmonstone are secretly engaged, and neither tells the secret to Laura's parents for years. In addition, Philip does not approach the Morville branch of the family years earlier to ask for financial help

when he and his sister are suddenly bankrupt. The novel ends with both characters guilt-ridden and melancholy.

In contrast, Guy Morville and Amy Edmonstone also fall in love early in the novel, and disclose their understanding to Amy's parents right away. In addition, though Guy fights against and despises the violent temper inherited from his grandfather, he shows nothing but deference and respect for the patriarch to the hour of his death; a respect that is transferred to Mr. Edmonstone when Guy becomes his ward. Despite Guy's death at the novel's ending, Amy lives with a perfect inner peace. It should be no surprise that the ideals of orthodox Anglicanism are precisely those of a traditional (perhaps stereotyped) Victorianism, as the one gave birth to the other. A similar connection can possibly be made to the ideal image of early America, and the Evangelical-Puritanism that created it.

Yet, as I stated in the opening claim, Yonge does not only adhere to, but reacts against this tradition. The most obvious example is that fact that the Church itself, apart from the scene of Guy's funeral, is not focused on in the novel at all. In fact, it is hardly even referenced (the funeral itself does not even take place in England, as Guy is buried in the cemetery of an Italian Church!) Instead, it is the home—both the Edmonstone's home, and that built by Guy and Amy—which functions as a sort of Church. They are both places in which Guy matures in his Christian faith and moral behavior. In addition, Guy becomes a sacramental figure. His saintly death occurring immediately after Amy conceives a daughter creates an almost 'Holy Family', with Phillip as the 'earthly father', while the 'true father' resides in the spiritual realm. Yonge also moves the Church into

the home by replacing sacred iconography with a painting of Guy as Sir Galahad achieving the Grail.

My third chapter explores what can perhaps be labeled as 'the oddest sect': The Broad-Church. The truth is that neither High-Church Anglicanism nor Low-Church Evangelicalism are sects in the most common sense. That is, they are not entities distinctly separate from the Established Church that have their own creeds and modes of worship. However, even though this is the case, an Evangelical Anglican minister has obvious, recognizable differences from a Tractarian Anglican minister. But the members of the 'Broad-Church' seem to have no specific group, even informally.

The 'Broad-Church' is mostly recognized from two of its most popular members: Charles Kingsley and F. D. Maurice. While the Broad-Church does not necessarily operate in terms of strict doctrinal difference, the two most important characteristics of the movement are embodied in Kingsley himself.

Charles Kingsley saw the ideals of the High-Church Tractarian Movement as not only heretical, but damaging to the personal life of the believer. He particularly disliked the Tractarian insistence on the importance of aesthetic practices—fasting, celibacy, tee-totaling, and avoidance of sport or athletic competition. As a response to these severe disciplines, Kingsley encouraged a believer to practice what in later years would be called 'Muscular Christianity'.

As with Yonge, the form of the religious life of the author is displayed in the form of the novel. Both aspects of Broad-Church thought—the respect for the body and its passions, and the dislike of monastic isolation—can be seen through the historical allegory, and mode of sensationalist fiction found in Kingsley's *Hypatia*. Set in 4th

century Alexandria, the young monk Philammon journeys to the great city from the desert cell in which he has been raised all his life. Encountering pagan Greeks, a wandering band of goths, and first-century Cyrian Christians, Philemmon finds that none of them are living a truly righteous life, and he begins to question the monastic values in which he has been raised. At the same time, a rich Alexandrian Jew named Raphael discovers the value of marriage, and is converted to Christianity after falling in love with the daughter of a general whose army is sent to attack Alexandria. Raphael and Victoria's marriage is seen in the novel as the ultimate expression of Christian love, combining the spiritual with the physical in a perfectly balanced harmony.

The depiction of the early Christians, as well as that of the ancient pagans in the novel, are given by Kingsley as a way to highlight what he perceived to be the very serious problems with Tractarian belief and lifestyle. The novel is meant by Kingsley to be a historical allegory, and the fourth-century Christians are representative of the Tractarians. The Luara's monastic isolation does not at all prepare Philammon for the dangers he will meet in Alexandria. In addition, the Catholic (Tractarian) insistence on penance has a psychologically crippling effect on Philamon's sister Pelagia, as her life as a courtesan would require decades of self-deprivation for even the smallest possibility of redemption. Kingsley also demonstrates the importance of the bodily in Christian belief, as the idea of an incarnate God is repugnant to the wise pagan teacher Hypatia. For the pagan Greeks, a deity must be of spiritual nature entirely. Kingsley is demonstrating, then, the importance of the doctrine of Incarnation, as it makes Christianity entirely different from ancient paganism; a difference he believed was being lost to the Tractarians with their insistence on the denial of the flesh.

In speaking to Kinglsey's emphasis on the body in Broad-Church theology, one last point must be made here concerning form; the form of Broad-Church sect which Kingsley himself adhered to so strongly is seen in the form of the novel, not only in its historical allegory, but in the mode of sensationalist fiction Kingsley adopts, perhaps even unconsciously. The sensationalist mode emerges through the Broad-Church emphasis on the bodily so present in the novel itself—Kingsley's depictions of bodies are extreme in their physicality; in scenes regarding both sexuality and sport, such as the description of Pelagia, and in the scenes of Sport and warfare engaged in by the Goths.

Kingsley, perhaps more than any other author in this study, almost completely adheres to his sectarian system of thought in every attribute of the novel. However, there is one scene in which he departs radically from the Broad-Church ideology. Most Broad-Churchman argued for a non-literal interpretation of Scripture. Kingsley, however, does just the opposite. In the novel's twenty-first chapter, no less a figure than St. Augustine himself, preaches a sermon on a "battle psalm concerning Moab and Amalek" (344). While listening, Raphael is struck by the fact that St. Augustine does not read the psalm as a metaphor, but as a literal account of a literal battle. In seeking to be Anti-Catholic, Kingsley ends by being Anti Broad-Church.

In my fourth chapter, I examine Low-Church Evangelicalism through the life of George Eliot and her novel, *Adam Bede*. By the time Eliot wrote *Adam Bede*, she was a self-described skeptic. However, I argue that Eliot's Evangelical background gives her the language and understanding needed to portray characters like the Methodist ranter Dinah Morris in an incredibly sympathetic way; certainly in a way that is much more

sympathetic as compared to the way in which evangelical characters are portrayed in many other novels from the period.

However, Eliot's Evangelical aesthetic can be seen most clearly, once again, in the novel's form. One of the most characteristic attributes of the novel genre is that it allows the authorial voice to 'break the fourth wall' and address the reader directly. Eliot does this a number of times in *Adam Bede*. Most importantly in the novel's famous seventeenth chapter, where Eliot pauses the narrative entirely to address the reader regarding the value of the 'common people' that inhabit the novel. Other authors from the period certainly engage in this address, but whereas authors such as Dickens address the readers from a passion for social justice, I will argue that Eliot's mode of narration echoes strains of Evangelical admonition—a trait of the faith she was raised in that is carried to her work as a novelist.

I argue that Eliot's Evangelical aesthetic is embodied in *Adam Bede* through her sympathetic portrayal of the Methodist characters Dinah and Seth. Many Victorian novels from the period feature Evangelical or Dissenting characters, and almost none of them ever turn out well. Most often, they are grotesque parodies of hypocritical ministers: ignorant, naïve, fat, gluttonous, lecherous, un-loving, crass, and even abusive. But Eliot does something distinctly different. Dinah Morris in particular is a character who is not only sympathetic, but crafted with loving compassion.

Eliot's portrayal of these characters is most often read as a natural outworking of her own project of realism. However, I argue that Eliot's Realism is also rooted in her Evangelical heritage—a heritage which was familiar with the laboring men and women of the small rural villages of England, and which saw these men and women as realized

persons rather than ignorant rustics. Finally, I make an analytical comparison between Eliot's 'realization' of rural Evangelicals and the quintessentially Evangelical message of the 'realization' of God in Christ. The 'Ranter' Morris makes a similar comparison herself in the chapter in which she delivers her sermon, presenting Christ as the God who came down to the poor and destitute of the world in order to redeem them.

If Eliot's Realist and Sympathetic portrayals of her characters originates from her Evangelical aesthetic, then there is one very important way in which she may be said to depart drastically from this creed. The character of Hetty Sorrell, who most, if not all, readers would agree to be the novel's greatest victim, is met by Eliot with an intense degree of reproach. Most Victorianists would agree that Hetty's actions, certainly evil in and of themselves, would not have occurred were she part of a more privileged class or gender. Yet, Eliot takes part in what can almost be described as 'victim-blaming'. To Eliot's narrator, Hetty seemingly does what she does, not because she is put into an impossible situation, but because she is flirtatious, silly, and egotistical. This characterization of Hetty, a 'superficial female motivated by selfish desire for wealth and status', strikes the reader as a type—neither realistic nor sympathetic.

In my last chapter, I examine the religious life of Charles Dickens through the lens of Anglican Dissent, which I argue can be seen in his later novel *Bleak House*. Though Dickens left the Anglican Church for a few years and joined a Unitarian chapel, he would almost certainly never describe himself as a Dissenter; Dissenters were typically Evangelical in their lifestyle and doctrine, a religious ideology which Dickens despised. Instead, I argue that Dickens is a 'Dissenter' in an almost absolute sense of the word, as his criticism of the Church is not bound to any particular sect—Catholic,

Anglican, Evangelical, Dissenting—all fall under the sharp edge of Dickens's social critique. To put this another way: Dickens searches into all the religious institutions of England, looking for that which practices an 'authentic Christian faith'; at the end of this search, true Christian faith is still found wanting.

In *Bleak House*, representatives from each of the major religious sects in the Victorian Era are presented to the reader and then summarily condemned. The High-Church indifference of the Anglican Chapel in Chesney Wold, the Low-Church neglect of home and the London poor seen in the characters of Mrs. Jellyby and Mrs. Pardiggle, and the oblivious imbecility of Dissent embodied in the Reverend Chadband—all sects are examined, and none practice the compassion necessary for a true Christian faith.

To begin with, the orthodox Anglican chapel at Chesney Wold fails to exhibit Christian compassion (and is therefore not truly Christian) as the minister gives deference to the Lord and Lady of the estate (Sir and Lady Dedlock) before the other parishioners—or God. Both Mrs. Jellyby and Mrs. Pardiggle neglect their own homes and children in pursuance of their mission, and it is clear that neither woman embodies a true compassion, as their separate missions seem to be motivated by social duty rather than by genuine concern for the poor or for foreign natives. Finally, Chadband, in his desire to 'improve' the condition of the impoverished street-sweeper Jo, only succeeds in alienating him further.

Dickens's reaction against any dissenting sect may be a reaction of kind rather than any specific doctrinal reserve. For all his condemnation of the Anglican Church, Dickens's sensibilities were most closely associated with that of the Victorian Churchman—he despised both Evangelicals and Dissenters for what he saw as their

histrionic cant, and roundly condemned the Evangelical penchant for giving aid to foreign missions while ignoring need at home. Though perhaps a Dissenter in spirit, Dickens is very much an Anglican in sensibility.

Thankfully, Dickens's critique of the religious society of his day includes a positive element that serves as a corrective to all the negative. Through the action of the primary characters, Dickens seems to suggest that the locus of authentic faith has not disappeared from England, but moved from the Institutional Church to the Individual Home—such a refocusing of sacred space can be seen in the home of Caddy and Prince (a space that is conspicuously absent in Caddy's mother's), in the home of a country bride, and in the home that Esther Summerson creates at the novel's end.

For each of these novels, I hope to show how a consideration of the sectarian debates of the era, as well as the personal religious life of each author, adds a dimension and complexity to the works that would not be evident otherwise. Again, the argument I make is not that the authors own personal religious sentiments (or lack thereof) correspond exactly to certain moves made in their writing. Rather, I am arguing that the form of religious life which each author is most commonly associated went a great way in impacting the form of the novels they created.

Notes

[1] Brown, Callum G., The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularization 1800-2000, 2nd Ed. (London: Routledge, 2009).

[2] In her *Victorian Religion: Faith and Life in Britain*, Julie Melnyk speaks to the difficulty 21st century readers and scholars have when coming to these texts without a 19th Century understanding of religion:

> But twenty-first century people who want to understand this crucial element of Victorian life face significant obstacles. Some of these are a result of our own preconceptions. People raised within a Christian denomination may assume that Victorian Christianity shared the same beliefs and practices. Even within particular denominations—Anglican/Episcopal, Baptist, or Methodist—this is a dangerous assumption. We need to approach Victorian religious life, as we need to approach other aspects of Victorian culture, as anthropologists seeking to understand a wholly different culture. Some aspects of Victorian religious life will seem familiar, others unexpectedly alien, but we need to remain aware of our own possibly misguided preconceptions (2).

[3] In his "Dechristendomization as an alternative to Secularization: Theology, History, and Sociology in Conversation", Timothy Larsen explains the Victorian alternative to 'secularization' by coining the term "Dechristendomization":

> In this context, Christendom is being used as a convenient way to gesture at any use of coercion or state sponsorship in an effort to bolster Christianity, as well as to the Christian veneer on a society as a whole that this can produce. Dechristendomization, conversely, is the removing of all such props, along with the predictable deflation of Christianity's observable place in society that thereby ensues" (330).

In the mid-nineteenth century, 'Dechristendomization' can be viewed as the apparatus which gave birth to Non-Anglican Dissent—the factions which aligned belief with person conversion rather than state institution.

CHAPTER TWO

"Gleams from a Brighter World, Too Soon Eclipsed": Charlotte Yonge's Anglo-Catholic Reserve in *The Heir of Redclyffe*

On one hand, *The Heir of Redclyffe* is a very familiar Victorian novel. It deals with the aristocratic class, marriage, and inheritance. It has two pairs of lovers that are contrasted by stark personality differences, and centers around a household with two adult daughters.

At the same time, *Redclyffe* contains elements that make it very *unlike* a Victorian novel. Guy Morville belongs to an age of chivalry, the crippled son Charley speaks with a bluntness unseen in any Victorian sibling, and Laura's secret engagement has none of the devilish excitement typically associated with this trope. The cause for these tensions comes from the fact that its author, Charlotte Mary Yonge, imbued her novel with the Anglo-Catholic religious sectarianism in which she was raised.

Charlotte Yonge's Tractarian Christianity is evident in her novel *The Heir of Redclyffe.* However, to understand this, we must first understand essential components of Tractarian thought, and how Yonge herself responded to these sectarian beliefs. *The Heir of Redclyffe* engages with Tractarian values through the emotional characterization of its four main protagonists, which is heavily influenced by Yonge's Tractarian thought: the respect for parental authority demonstrated by Guy and Amy (and abnegated by Philip and Laura), and the comparison of Guy to Sir Galahad, which intensifies throughout the novel, all come from Yonge's Anglo-Catholic ideal.

However, Yonge also directly reacts against orthodox Tractarianism in surprising ways. For the High-Church Anglican, Christianity is localized in the community of the National Church, represented by the local body (a view that is in direct contradiction to the dissenting 'universal church' made up of individual believers who have undergone private, internal transformation). Yet, in the novel, the Church as an institution is hardly mentioned at all. The only reference is during Guy's funeral—a ceremony which takes place, not in England, but Italy. In the novel, the place of spiritual renewal is the well-established home—both the Edmonstone's and Guy and Amy's. As a Tractarian, Yonge believes the Church to be the place in which salvation is achieved; in the novel, Guy achieves his own personal salvation through the care of the Edmonstone's, and his love for Amy. These tensions are mediated by the fact that Yonge makes Sir Guy into a sacrificial, Messianic figure. Throughout the novel, Guy is made into an Anglo-Catholic icon who achieves a type of sainthood in his death.

Before turning to the novel itself, it would be beneficial to set the work within its proper historical context. In addition, it would also be helpful to know a bit about the novel's author; this is true, not only because Charlotte Yonge is at a significant remove from the canon, but because so much of her life, and indeed her writing, was influenced to a great degree by John Keble, one of the founding figures of the Tractarian movement.

On July 11th, 1833, John Henry Newman, the vicar of St. Mary the Virgin, returned to Oxford from travels in France. Three days later, he heard John Keble preach an assize sermon that has since been given the title "National Apostasy". For some years before, Newman, along with certain other divinities at Oxford, had frequently discussed their grave concerns regarding the state of the Established Church, attacked now on the

one hand by newly emancipated Roman Catholics, and on the other by an ever-growing number of dissenters. After hearing Keble's sermon, Newman decided that something had to be done.[1]

After an unsuccessful round of debates at Hadleigh in Suffolk, four of these divinities, John Henry Newman, John Keble, William Palmer and Hurrell Froude, met once again in Oxford to discuss the basic tenants of their new-found movement:

> First, they will proclaim the doctrine of apostolic succession. Second, it is sinful voluntarily to allow persons or bodies not members of the church to interfere in matters spiritual. Third, it is desirable to make the church more popular … Fourth, they will protest against all attempts to separate church from state, while they will steadily contemplate the possibility of disestablishment and begin to prepare for it.[2]

But they needed a way to disseminate their cause and doctrine to the public. Debates and sermons did not seem to be enough. Finally, in September of that year Newman and Keble decided to "circulate books and tracts to inculcate the doctrine of apostolic succession, to revive more frequent communion and daily common prayer, to resist all attempts by government to alter the Book of Common Prayer, and to instruct the people in the misunderstood points of Anglican discipline and worship".[3]

Four years later, the same which saw the ascension of a young Queen to the throne of England, Newman's ideas had generated a movement. Those who followed it were known as 'Puseyites'; however, the more respectful members of the public (according to historian Owen Chadwick), used the term 'Tractarians'. In fact, Chadwick tells us that in 1841, "just when the Tracts disappeared in smoke, Tractarian conquered and remained incongruously with posterity".[4]

The Tractarian Movement, like the Evangelical Movement, was not a separate sect. Rather, it was a corrective within Anglicanism that sought to re-establish the

importance of sacrament and ritual to the Church of England at a time when both were being discarded by Anglican ministers who tended either towards 'Low' or 'Broad' Church ideology.[5] That being said, Edward Pusey, a newer, but intensely stalwart member of the Movement, once outlined the tenants which define 'Tractarian':

(1) High thoughts of the two Sacraments
(2) High estimate of Episcopacy as God's ordinance.
(3) High estimate of the visible Church as the Body wherein we are made and continue to be members of Christ.
(4) Regard for ordinances, as directing our devotions and disciplining us, such as daily public prayers, fasts and feasts, etc.
(5) Regard for the visible part of devotion, such as the decoration of the house of God, which acts insensibly on the mind.
(6) Reverence for and deference to the ancient Church, of which our own Church is looked upon as the representative to us, and by whose views and doctrines we interpret our own Church when her meaning is questioned or doubtful; in a word, reference to the ancient Church, instead of the Reformers, as the ultimate expounder of the meaning of our Church.[6]

It is interesting to note the repeated words used in the credo: 'high estimate' and 'regard' make it clear that, as was stated earlier, this movement formed not a separate sect *from* the Church, but a separate tone *within*. These tenants form not so much a doctrinal line in the sand, as a reaffirmation of what the Anglican Church always held to be true. For example, this statement does not ask us to believe that the sacrament is transubstantiated or 'necessary for salvation', but that it be regarded as set apart and special as the means by which a believer incorporates him or herself into the Church body. As we can see, the most important distinction throughout is the belief in incorporation into the Church-Body as the means of salvation, rather than the individual 'heart change' preached by Wesley and his followers. Orthodox Anglicanism places the body of the Church in a high position, and the Tractarians were highest of the high.

Historians, theologians, and literary critics all seems to share a strange fascination with the Oxford Movement, even if they are not particularly religious or ascribe to any orthodox system of belief. The reason for this seems to be not so much that the movement added important threads to the tapestry of sectarianism in nineteenth-century England, but that it produced two of the most interesting personalities of the century: John Henry Newman, and John Keble.

I will deal with Keble directly, as he is the divine that had such direct influence on Charlotte Yonge. Keble, a man of short stature and a quiet nature, perfectly embodied the doctrine of 'reserve' he would come to promote throughout his lifetime[7]. As Chadwick tells us, "Keble's name was beautiful among high churchmen, but beautiful with the sound of poetry, of simple ministration in a country parish, of a character quaint and pure and naïve".[8] Certainly no man could have formed a more striking contrast to Newman, the passionate firebrand who ultimately turned to Rome.

Keble embodies (as does Yonge's hero, Guy Morville) both senses of the word 'Reserve'. His quiet nature, and the fact that he never strayed far from home his entire life (after leaving Oxford he became a clergyman at Hursley, a village close to the home in which he was born), mark him as the breed of clerical gentleman who had all but disappeared during the later Victorian Period[9]. And of course, one cannot discuss Keble without giving some time to *The Christian Year*, the book of devotional poetry that won Keble national fame among Anglican and Catholic alike.

Owen Chadwick had suggested that the strength in the Oxford Movement lies not in its firm re-establishment of orthodox Anglican values, but in its relation to the romanticism of its day, in particular to the popular Romantic poets of the era.[10] Like the

culture at large, the divines of the movement were sickened by the cold distance that Enlightenment rationalism had seemingly infected everything with, including religion. *The Christian Year* was a response to this as well as a sign-post for the value of Tractarian liturgical practice. We can sense how personal a project this must have been for Keble, as he had, at least initially, divided thoughts about publishing: "By 1825 [Keble had] completed a series of poems on all the Sundays of the prayer book and wondered whether to publish them … Keble's father wanted them published and for Keble this was a final command … In June 1827 Keble published the poems anonymously under the title *The Christian Year*".[11]

Keble hoped that the poetry would be a source of encouragement for perhaps a few friends and the circle at Oxford, but it appears Chadwick was right about the age's desire for a renewed romanticism: "The Christian Year sold 108,000 copies by January 1854, 265,000 by April 1868. The devout among the Anglican middle classes came to value it as dissenters valued Pilgrim's Progress. Though the book was supposed to be still anonymous, Keble was elected (1831) professor of poetry at Oxford".[12] Again, Chadwick gives us an idea of the centrality of the poetic mode to the Tractarians:

> The inheritance of Keble's *Christian Year* was nearer to the heart of the Movement even than the inheritance of Bull, or Hammond, or Hooker … With the sermons of Newman, or Pusey, or Isaac Williams, we are often in a realm of prose according to the print, but in a realm of poetry in spirit and expressions.[13]

Keble's devotional poetry, though it could never be compared to the masters of his age such as Wordsworth and Keats, spoke to something deep within the heart of the Tractarian Movement.[14] Even more importantly, *The Christian Year* proved to be the gentlest way of directing an increasingly dissent-minded middle-class back toward orthodox liturgical practices. Keble was winning the hearts of the people with the honey

of poetry, while Newman stirred controversy with the vinegar of his tracts. In a certain sense, it could be said that Keble's *Christian Year* was the most effective 'tract' ever produced by the group which bore this name.

Though not married until his early forties, Keble was, in every respect, a 'family man'. In fact, even as an adult, he still considered his father his first authority.[15] Yet, this view of Keble must not be understood in terms of his biological family, but his clerical one. To the Anglicans of his day, Keble was the ideal model of the 'pastoral care' expected from the local cleric.[16] For our purposes, this view of Keble is intensely important, as it is in his role as 'father of the flock' at Hursley where he first meets Charlotte Yonge[17].

In 1836, John Keble was granted the living at Hursley. There, he met a thirteen-year old Charlotte Yonge. As Ellen Jordan, Charlotte Mitchell and Helen Schinske state in their chapter from *John Keble in Context:*

> The arrival of John Keble at Hursley in 1836 was probably the most significant event in Charlotte Yonge's life. He prepared her for confirmation, and she took on board his principles and religious orientation wholeheartedly and held to them unquestioningly for the rest of her life. Furthermore, friendship with Keble incorporated the whole Yonge family into an intellectual and clerical social network they would not have encountered otherwise, though they were obviously capable of taking their place in it (117).

Like Keble himself, the two most important influences in Charlotte Yonge's life were the most direct male authorities – her father and her pastor.

Charlotte's personality as a young woman seems difficult to describe with precision. She is described as being both at once a social and a charismatic girl,[18] and one who was almost crippled by shyness.[19] Whatever her psychology, Yonge was well above her age when it came to the intense rigor of her education: "She remembered her period

of ‘young ladyhood’ as marked by an intensification of the studies of history, botany and languages that had been going on since childhood, and by discussions of serious issues, mostly about morality and principles which they used literature and history to illustrate, with other young women of her own age” (177). This studious discipline seemed to carry itself well into her adulthood, as “for the rest of her adult life, she called on … academic and clerical acquaintances to lend her the books she needed for her historical research, and to check her work for historical and theological accuracies” (177). That Yonge sought the editorial assistance of the scholars and divines of her community is most important for us in the examination of her powers as a novelist, as it was in this capacity that Keble had his greatest influence on the young woman. As Jordan states:

> There seems to have been an almost seamless transition from the studies of her late adolescent years to her career as a professional writer. Just as she had shared her literary and historical enthusiasm with the local High-Church circle, so, when she began writing her first novel, or rather ‘tale’, her whole circle were kept up to date with the progress of her ideas and contributed suggestions for the plot, and she received considerable encouragement if also stringent criticism from her father, the Kebles [and others] (179).

That Yonge had her work reviewed by older, more knowledgeable men and women may not seem unusual. However, what is different for Yonge is that because one of these men was John Keble, her novels were utilized as a means of communicating Tractarian thought.[20]

Indeed, if one were to ask Yonge, she would most likely be inclined to say that her primary work was her service in the local parish, and that novel-writing was simply what she did to occupy her weekday hours. Yet even in this, her role as a servant to the Church was her primary motivation. As Ilana M. Blumberg states in her book *Victorian Sacrifice,* “In 1853, Charlotte Mary Yonge published what was at least the twelfth of the

two hundred or so books she would publish before her death in 1901, all, as she said, for the Church of God: *Pro Ecclesia Dei*" (32). This was literally the case, as almost any money made from her books went to support the Church at Otterbourne in its missional efforts.[21] The amount she published during her lifetime is staggering, and is doubly so when we recall that this was only one of a handful of vocations which she participated in, most of these also *Pro Ecclesia Dei*:

> In the first place there were her responsibilities to the parish, informed by Keble's ideas of pastoral care. Quite apart from her involvements with wider Church activities organized by the Winchester diocese, such as the Mother's Union and Girls' Friendly Society (GFS), she seems to have acted as unpaid education officer for the village … Secondly, there was her educational and other non-fictional writing. The bibliography prepared by Marghanita Laski in the 1960s lists 207 separate items of which only about 90 are fiction … The third of her professional careers was as educator and mentor to a group of young women, many of whom later joined the High-Church propaganda machine of which she was a leading figure (Jordan, 181, 182, 184).

This final career, as an educational mentor to a group of young women "who were in need of more mental stimulation than the life of a Victorian daughter at home afforded them"[22] is most interesting; a society in which young women produced essays on a variety of subjects. In fact, one of the members of this group was Mary Arnold, later Mrs. Humphrey Ward, author of *Robert Elsmere*, one of the most well-known novels about Victorian-Era skepticism.

For this quiet, solitary life of a woman of the Church, it was Yonge's confirmation that marked her 'coming out' into adulthood.[23] It marked the end of her school studies and the beginning of her work as a novelist. From Battiscombe: "The year 1839 marks another important mile-stone in Charlotte's life. As far as it is possible to discover from undated letters the publication of her first book took place early that spring, some six months or so after her confirmation" (57). A published author at the age

of sixteen, Yonge's confirmation is the most appropriate marker for this crossing from child to adulthood; it is a perfect marker of her personality: quiet, personal, and all in accordance with Orthodox Church doctrine. In fact, Battiscombe as much as admits this directly: "For [Charlotte] religion was to be the one essential, and religion, as she came to understand it, she first learnt sitting at the feet of John Keble. Her Confirmation was the turning-point in her life, and from then to the day of her death she remained the same character" (54).

To be a published author of realist fiction at the age of seventeen or eighteen is something in our day radically unthinkable. But this was Charlotte's life from the time of her catechizing until her death. Such a life led to an unimaginable level of output, as the bibliography prepared by Laski shows. Yet, we must keep in mind the fact that the standards for authorship seem to be quite a bit different during the nineteenth century, and the fact that only four or five novels out of the over 100 seem to ever be discussed, with only one, *The Heir of Redclyffe*, attaining both popular and critical success. Compare this to Jane Austen's six or Charles Dickens's fifteen – pitiful, but each oeuvre attaining literary immortality. It is difficult for the artist of any medium to know whether breadth or depth is the preferred mode, but Charlotte's output accords perfectly with the way she seems to have lived the rest of her life – no fantastic bursts of energy as we see from Dickens, Hardy or even (I would argue) someone like Eliot – just a calm, measured pulse that began at sixteen and did not stop for the next sixty-two years.[24]

In speaking of Charlotte Yonge as a novelist, her career is typically divided into three eras: Before *Redclyffe*, *Redclyffe*, and After *Redclyffe.* As Jane Austen and Charlotte Bronte would discover, for young women of the time who did not have a great voice in

the public sphere, work would trump name. For the next several years after the success of the novel, any contributions Yonge gave to public anthologies or periodicals bore the legend "By the Author of *The Heir of Redclyffe*". However, it could be beneficial to look at the tenor of a few of these early works.

The first work, *Le Chateu de Melville*, seems to be the product of French Schoolroom lessons, "interspersed with many fairy tales and fables" (Battiscombe, 57). Yonge's following several works all take the pattern of the domestic novel that ruled the day, a few actually being chronicles featuring the same families that would become well-known by Yonge's readers: The Mohuns, Mays, and Underwoods. The most interesting comment about Yonge's earliest works is that "there lingers a curious flavor of Jane Austen" (58). For all her identification with the age, Yonge is essentially a Regency author, and a true Victorianism does not come until *Redclyffe*.[25]

In Coleridge's biography, the novels published before *Redclyffe* are described almost as personal exercises, done for the pleasure of her family and friends rather than for any serious purpose:

> The time of their conception and invention was much more important to her than that of their publication; they filled nearly all her thoughts and her leisure except what were devoted to the school-children in whom she delighted … They were all excellent in their way and successful, but they were presented, so far as she was concerned, to her own circle; she was still to herself a girl seeking the approval of her older friends, and with the publication of *The Heir of Redclyffe* she became a famous person and one of the authors of her time (Coleridge, 145).

It is almost as if Yonge did not exist as an author before *Redclyffe*. The lack of popular and critical attention given to the works before *Redclyffe* could certainly be an indication of their literary quality, but it is as if Ms. Yonge matured as her writing did[26]. This may point, metaphorically, to one of the most repeated critical comments about *Redclyffe*: its

uncanny ability to weave together the Romantic with the Real. For Charlotte, who was in her later twenties when *Redclyffe* was published, between adolescent and adult, this may suggest a personal, psychological transition in which the fables of girlhood began to give way to the realist relationships typified in mature narratives.

The genesis of *Redclyffe* is a fascinating one, and Battiscombe tells it better than I could:

> In May 1850 Charlotte went to stay at Dogmersfield, and in the course of the visit Marianne Dyson[27] showed her the notes of an unsuccessful story. The story itself might be a failure but the central theme was a good one and, for what it was worth, she handed it over to Charlotte. "She told me that here were two characters she wanted to see brought out in a story, namely, the essentially contrite and the self-satisfied. Good men, we agreed, were in most of the books of the day subdued by the memory of some involuntary disaster … whereas the 'penitence of the saints' was unattempted. The self-satisfied hero was to rate the humble one at still lower than his own estimate, to persecute him, and never be undeceived until he had caused his death" (71).

This is the core narrative of *The Heir of Redclyffe*: two good men who stand in line to inherit the family estate. Yet for one, moral pride has led to an unexamined spiritual complacency. For the other, a tendency toward an explosive temperament forces him to constantly monitor his own motives and passions, creating a habit of contrition that leads to a truer spiritual and moral maturity than the other.

Past criticism on *Redclyffe* has typically fallen into three categories of argument: Parable, Romance, and Gender.

The reading of *Redclyffe* as parable has no better representative than Susan E. Colon. In her *Victorian Parables*, Colon argues that this central contention in the narrative is based on Christ's parable of the Pharisee and Publican (42). In this parable, Christ presents the portrait of two men. One, the Pharisee, stands in the temple with his face to heaven, thanking God he is not a sinful man like the publican, who is also in the

temple. At the same time, the publican abases himself, "beats his breast", and cries out for God to have mercy on his sins. After the narrative, Christ gives us the moral: "I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted" (*NASB*, Luke 18:14). Colon's primary contention regarding Christ's parables is that they reorient the moral assumptions of the audience, forcing them to accept a new, purer metric for moral behavior. For the Jewish audience of Christ's day, the Pharisee would undoubtedly be the one to receive blessing and justification, as he is the one of the two men who scrupulously follows the dictates of the law.[28]

But it is at this point that Colon makes her most profound critical move. The ending of *Redclyffe*, even to contemporary readers, seems exceptionally disappointing. Most critics explain the ending by saying that since Guy is a romantic hero, his only possible end is a romantic death; unfortunately, by doing this Yonge forces herself into a corner, and she is simply not good enough of a writer to carry on the narrative with Philip in any satisfactory way. Colon's reading of the novel as a parable, however, offers an explanation of the ending which is as poignant as it is critically astute. She first reminds us that the purpose of parable is to radically re-orient the moral assumptions of the audience. She then explains that, for the Victorians, pharisaism is an acknowledged, recognizable moral failing. Its emergence in Philip's character is perhaps an interesting development, but no surprise. To rock the Victorian reader's moral foundation, then, Yonge must enact a reversal of the reversal:

> But Yonge's parable is not merely exemplary, any more than Jesus's is. It is also, in its way, subversive of the conventional morality even as it extravagantly subverts expectations about realism. This subversion occurs in the novel's ending:

> if the reversal of the *parable* is that even a publican who repents can be justified, the reversal of the *novel* is that even a Pharisee who repents can be justified (30).

From critically astute, Colon moves to morally convicting:

> Crucially, however, the novel exposes not only the Pharisaism of Philip, but also that of the reader who is eager to condemn Philip. … the text confronts the reader with his or her own Pharisaism much like the Lukan parable does … Yonge knows that her biblically informed readers will expect the contrite man, however sinful, to be the hero, and the Pharasaical man, however upright, to be the villain. This favoring of the publican over the Pharisee was, for the Victorian public, a platitude … [but] the unexpected double reversal restores the parable's subversive effect with the conversion of the Pharisee (51).

Colon's reading is brilliant in its uniqueness, but she admits to a disappointment that no other critic seems to understand Yonge's intention in the final portion of the novel. However, she does find *one* corroboration in a letter to Miss Dyson from Charlotte's mother; and based on who gives it, it may be the only one she needs: "Mr. Keble thinks it was Philip's character to over-do repentance, not that his author had overdone him. Mr. Keble says everybody is like Philip …" (Coleridge, 189).

Colon's reading of the novel stands alone. The second category, that of reading *Redclyffe* as a Romance, is far more popular. Nearly all other readings of *Redclyffe* argue that its uniqueness comes from the seamless incorporation of Romantic and Realist elements. Battiscombe's biography acknowledges the prevailing notion of the moral Victorian that "Romanticism, in short, was bad", associated as it was with "the vicious Byron, the atheistical Shelley, and novelists such as poor Caroline Lamb". But in Yonge's novel, the hero Guy Morville is "very good, very respectable, and very romantic". The result is that "The public, who were all for sober virtue whilst cherishing at the same time a passion for romance, leapt at this reconciliation of apparent opposites" (73). In short, Yonge (like Keble) *Christianized* Romanticism.

This sentiment is echoed in *A Chaplet for Charlotte Yonge*, a collection of papers and other miscellaneous texts about the author. Elizabrth Jenkins states that the novel's originality "lies in the in the fact that it translates the struggles and adventures of chivalric romance into a moral sphere and domestic décor". By combining Romantic passion with Victorian middle-class morality, Yonge succeeded in doing something very special. According to Jenkins, "It was said at the time that part of the book's tremendous appeal was that it made goodness exciting" (6). Jenkins goes on to argue, as others have done, that these differences are embodied in the two pairs of lovers: "It is a matter of opinion whether Guy and Amy, the radiant young couple of *The Heir of Redclyffe*, exist in the reader's mind as real people or merely the hero and heroine of a highly successful novel, but no one will deny the reality of the other pair, Guy's cousin Philip … and Amy's sister, the beautiful, harassed Laura" (5). I make a similar argument about the two couples, but point to these distinctions as a decided function of Yonge's Tractarian ethos, rather than as the result of a maturation in the author's own understanding of the craft.

In *The Novel and the Oxford Movement*, Joseph Ellis Baker also ties the tone of *Redclyffe* to the nostalgia for romanticism of the age which produced it. He argues that Yonge "produced, in *The Heir of Redclyffe,* the best example of Victorian life Medievalized". Baker's evidence for this claim is quite convincing:

> Sir Guy is of high birth, he is pure, chivalric, Catholic. He is on the quest of religious excellence, yet, next to the Church, his lady love has all his heart. He is the monarch, the young prince, of Redclyffe, surrounded by feudal loyalty. He might almost be a petty ruler of an independent principality, rather than a citizen of a united Parliamentary nation (104-105).

As with Jenkins, I echo much of what Baker has said here, but explain these tensions not as a function of Yonge's Medieval fancy, but her decided desire to link the 'domestic

plot' novel (a product of the Reformation era) with the ideals of Anglo-Catholicism (a product of the Medieval).

Finally, we come to readings of the novel that deal with gender. In *Victorian Sacrifices,* Ilana M. Blumberg reads Yonge's novel through the themes of self-sacrifice; and in her analysis, themes of sacrifice take on a gendered dimension. Ultimately, however, Blumberg argues that though Victorian society at large seems to have a question about the proper "relation between gender and sacrifice", Yonge does not (51). Blumberg states that while in Yonge's novels "we can find a systematic repression of ambitious female characters, a reduction of such ambition to mere cleverness, and a tacit acceptance of narrow definitions of femininity … these features in Yonge's writing have made it more difficult to see that in *The Heir of Redclyffe,* the moral standards she teaches are often uniform with respect to gender" (52). To Yonge, humanity is not divided along lines of man and woman, but along that of human and divine—actions such as self-sacrifice helping a person to move from the one to the other.[29]

Gender, and specifically the relationship between gender and faith, is discussed more directly in the essay collection *Masculinity and Spirituality in Victorian Culture.* In her contributing chapter, "Angry Yonge Men: Anger and Masculinity in the Novels of Charlotte M. Yonge", Catherine Wells-Cole re-orients the readers assumptions about men that may seem feminized to most readers: "They are not milksops, despite her religious priorities and her own protested inability to do manly men … They are not models of perfection but seekers after improvement: if we look in vain for strongly asserted masculine force in Yonge, we nevertheless do find masculine anxiety and masculine failing" (71). To Wells-Cole, gender is intrinsically linked to the tension in the novel

itself between Romanticism and Realism: "The chivalric note in early Victorian constructions of masculinity is most thrillingly present in the early and influential hero Guy Morville … The tension between the backward-looking identification of Guy as a medieval knight and mere contemporary associations is suggested by the novel's contrasting settings" (72). These being the two discussed earlier.

The tension within Guy's own gendered identity operates as a function of his anger: "Guy's anger gives him a masculine dimension by posing a threat to the feminine sphere of home and by suggesting a male force of emotion in him … it is possible to see Guy's anger as a major part of the 'crossover' appeal of *The Heir*, providing a model for male readers as well as wish-fulfillment for female readers longing for an emotional and expressive freedom not granted to them" (74). Importantly, Wells-Cole uses this reading of the novel's gendered tensions as a way of explaining the difficult ending. As she states, Guy, who is Sir Galahad in Victorian clothing, "does not have the problem of returning to the mundane after experiencing the sublime (76)".

Guy is associated with the virginal knight in his more romantic effeminacy. As such, his virginal purity must lead to a death that is more like an ascension. Like Galahad, Guy seems to simply rise into heaven after having conquered his anger, particularly its existence where Philip is concerned.

As stated throughout the review of criticism given above, the primary distinction between these arguments and my own is that I see the moves Yonge makes in the novel as originating from her Tractarian ideology. In this system, one of the most important concepts was that of Reserve. I feel that we must give a little time to the understanding of this doctrine before seeing how it functions in the novel.

Most scholars will agree that the tract which Yonge mentions by Isaac Williams, *Tract 80*, is the first official instance and definition of the doctrine of Reserve. (Chadwick, *The Victorian Church* 198). These tracts were, of course, the primary way in which the Oxford Movement communicated their doctrines to the masses. In fact, in *Imagined Spiritual Communities in an Age of Print*, Joshua King makes a fascinating connection between Reserve and the print culture of the era:

> Before publishing *The Christian Year,* therefore, Keble had developed strong suspicions that the rapid transmission of printed works was spreading incredulity toward ancient church authority, worship of knowledge as a value in itself, and confidence in one's own judgement as a reader at the expense of mediating ecclesiastical disciplines … for Keble, and for those Tractarians he inspired, anxiety about print culture always centered first and foremost on the threat it posed to a nation's religious self-conception (134).

In other words, Keble and his counterparts feared that the mass availability of religious print material would further inculcate the nation to the 'Bibliolatry' practiced by dissenting protestants who more and more sought to interpret Scripture themselves apart from Church tradition, or even apart from those who had theological training. King goes on to connect this anxiety to Reserve:

> In this light, the well-known Tractarian code of "reserve," which stresses that believers should only gradually be let into the mysteries of Christianity through a process of moral preparation in liturgical worship and pastoral discipleship, seems as much a strategy for resisting perceived excesses of nineteenth-century print culture as an effort to recover patristic tradition. Tractarian reserve is probably a codified outgrowth of attitudes toward print culture that Keble had already firmly established when deciding to arrange *The Christian Year* for publication (134-135).

In *Theology and the Victorian Novel*, J. Russell Perkin connects Reserve to the place of importance art and literature occupy in the Edmonstone household. Rather than encoding truth in the novel, Perkin seems to argue that truth is encoded in the novels within the novel. Perkin states that "One of the consequences of Keble's theory [of

Reserve] is that the poets themselves may not be aware of the full significance of what they write" (86). In this statement, Perkin is arguing for the idea that even classical pagan works can in some measure speak to Christian truth. In *Redclyffe*, this idea is embodied in a discussion between two characters, Guy and Luara, about Robert Southey's *Thalaba.* Guy, who has a true understanding of Reserve, sees "deep meanings" in the poem, while Laura states that these were unintentional (87). For Perkin, part of the use of Reserve is to transform poetics or Romanticism itself: "Like Keble, Yonge seeks to transform the legacy of Romanticism in *The Heir of Redclyffe* and to put its Wordsworthian aspect to the service of Tractarian Anglicanism, while rejecting the Byronic side of the Romantic movement" (89). Byron, who is dismissed by Philip as a dangerous writer which may possibly fuel Guy's temper, is rejected for Wordsworthian Anglican belief and pure love of the natural world

Perkin's argument demonstrates what is difficult about attempting to locate the origin of Reserve in Yonge's novels. Reserve is present in *Redclyffe*, but I would argue that we do not have to look for it in representations of poetics the novel discusses, but in the narrative and thematic structure of the novel itself. For it is clear that Yonge inculcated Tractarian thought into her narratives. In *Castle-Builders*, for example, a novel which actually came out after *Redclyffe*, specific Tractarian doctrinal concerns actually drive the plot.

As Robert Lee Wolff explains in *Gains and Losses*, this novel (*Castle-Builders*) concerns two teenaged sisters, Emmeline and Kate, who are being catechized at a church in London while their parents are in India. The parents return just before the girls' Confirmation, taking them to live in the countryside, and putting an abrupt halt to their

process of Confirmation. For the rest of the novel, the two young women experience a string of personal defeats. Finally, a brother-in-law who is also a practicing Tractarian clergyman returns from abroad, and convinces the sisters that personal success will only come upon their completion of Confirmation and taking of the Sacrament: "Under her brother-in-law's tutelage she recognizes her own faults and comes to believe that … confirmation and communion are essential. Properly prepared, the girls are finally confirmed and receive the Sacrament" (125-126). The communication of Tractarian truth is undoubtedly Yonge's goal.

Reserve is present in *Redclyffe*, but I would argue that we do not have to look for it in representations of poetics the novel discusses, but in the narrative and thematic structure of the novel itself. That is, in the values and behaviors of the characters which create and move the action of the story.

Properly understood, Reserve is not just a positive doctrine, but one that illustrates Christian grace and mercy in a powerful way. In the days before the Oxford Movement, a fiery evangelical zeal had been the rule of the day, proclaiming the gospel without taking into account time or attitude. Yonge does not necessarily see this as a bad thing, but notes that to judge a Christian's maturity purely on the basis of his or her success as an evangelical witness does not take into account more retiring personalities. This is particularly true of, to use Yonge's phrase 'The deep mind, whose volumes of thought and feeling, even when they required expression, retired from the curious gaze'. I am essentially taking Yonge's argument to expand my own definition of Reserve. In my reading of *Redclyffe,* Reserve is not only a doctrinal tenant, but a moral standard by which to judge emotional character. Yonge dislikes the forceful temperament affected by

so many Evangelicals; in her characters, then, those whose temperament is mediated, who are not ruled by an emotional reactionism, are closest to her Tractarian ideal. The change of Reserve from a strict doctrine to both a doctrinal and behavioral concern relates to what I said regarding Yonge in the review of criticism earlier; this move is guided by her efforts to produce a work that builds a bridge between the Protestant underpinning of the domestic plot novel and her own tradition of Anglo-Catholicism.

In *Redclyffe*, Yonge makes use of both ‘categories’ of this doctrine: its parabolic function in narrative, and its use as a prescription for moral behavior.

In this first use of the doctrine, we can see something quite fascinating. Nearly all authors will ‘encode’ their message through symbol and narrative—this is, in fact, why fiction-writers write fiction and not (or not just) pamphlets and editorials. But Yonge, much less than other authors during her time, does very little ‘editorializing’. She may paint a character’s psychological or emotional state for the reader, but rarely does she address the reader directly. As a Tractarian, she not only encodes her works, but encodes them without giving the reader any direct clues. In other words, she not only practices Reserve, but a reserved form of Reserve. Compare this style of writing to George Eliot (who comes from an Evangelical tradition) or Charles Dickens (who has a Broad-Church / Dissenting view of the Church), and the differences become stark—both authors editorialize in their fiction to a great degree, at times taking up entire chapters to do so—the connection seems to be a genuine one.

In the second use, Reserve manifests itself in the novel through the emotional psychology and behavior of its four primary characters: Guy, Amy, Philip, and Laura.

It could be argued that Guy Morville's emotional and behavioral transformation is the primary action of the novel. It is what *The Heir of Redclyffe* is 'about'. Through the progress of the novel, Guy becomes Yonge's Tractarian ideal. This can be seen in the transformation of Guy's emotional character from one of reaction to reserve, as well as in his deference to the authority figures placed over him.

In the first chapter of *Redclyffe*, we are introduced to Guy through the rumors concerning his family's passionate temper. Mrs. Edmonstone relates that "the Morvilles were always a fiery, violent race ... Even I can remember when the Morvilles of Redclyffe used to be spoken of in our family like a sort of ogres" (6). Philip, the Edmonstone's nephew, who grew up with Guy, relates a story about the young boy descending a cliff-face to rescue two baby hawks, which he made the effort to train in falconry: "'At last,'" Philip closes, "'a servant left some door open, and they escaped. I shall never forget Guy's passion; I am sure I don't exaggerate when I say he was perfectly beside himself with anger'" (9).

When the reader first meets Guy, he seems to be more high-spirited than ill-tempered; but his dreadful temper is soon shown to be something very real. After Philip accompanies Guy on a walk one evening for the purpose of moral correction, Guy returns in a state of white-hot anger: "…the door opened and in came the two Morvilles. Guy, without even stopping to take off his great coat, ran at once up-stairs, and the next moment the door of his room was shut with a bang that shook the house, and made them all start and look at Philip for explanation" (34).

The Tractarian notion of Reserve in its emotional sense does not serve as a corrective to anger, but as a guide to emotional behavior in totality—setting up a man or

woman who has learned to moderate all passions, both positive and negative (or even neutral) rather than allowing them to loose themselves through reactive behavior. Guy experiences not only deeply-felt anger, but also struggles with bouts of intense depression. The novel tells us of Guy's reaction to his grandfather's death: "Grief for the only parent he had ever known, and the sensation of being completely alone in the world, were joined to a vague impression of horror at the suddenness of the stroke, and it was long before the influence of Hollywell, or the intensity of his own youthfulness, could rouse him from his depression" (57). Not many pages later, Guy absents himself suddenly from a neighborhood ball; the reader is meant to understand that Guy is attempting to constrain not only his temper, but his ecstasies—a ball would be 'too much fun'.

Thankfully, Guy does eventually conquer both his anger and his depression, and the novel gives us two striking scenes describing both victories. In both instances, the victory over personal passion is accomplished using Anglican creed or form.

In chapter 16, Guy receives a letter from his ward, Mr. Edmonstone, that throws him into a violent passion. Edmonstone, on the advice of Philip, refuses to grant Guy his daughter Amy's hand in marriage, though the two are very much in love. After uttering a promise to bring Philip immediately to account, Guy pauses at the top of a hill. The novel gives us the description of his internal struggle:

> The sun was setting opposite to him, in a flood of gold—a ruddy ball, surrounded with its pomp of clouds, on the dazzling sweep of horizon … the good angel so close to him for the twenty years of his life, had been driven aloof but for a moment, and now, either that, or a still higher and holier power, made the setting sun bring to his mind, almost to his ear, the words—
>
> Let not the sun go down upon your wrath,
> Neither give place to the devil

> Guy had what some would call a vivid imagination, others a lively faith. He shuddered, then, his elbows on his knees, and his hands clasped over his brow, he sat, bending forward, with his eyes closed, wrought up in a fearful struggle; while it was to him as if he saw the hereditary demon of the Morvilles watching by his side, to take full possession of him as a rightful prey, unless the battle was fought and won before the red orb had passed out of sight (161).

Guy's desire for his anger to subside as the sun sets could be interpreted as an unnecessarily strict adherence to the forms of the Church—Scripture included. Like a true Churchmen, Guy interprets the verse in strict literality.

Guy's victory in this moment of intense struggle comes also by aid of High-Church Creed. In the preceding scene, Guy quotes Scripture. However, to conquer his passion, he employs a verse of Scripture that has creedal significance for the Anglican:

> "'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.' Coldly and hardly were they spoken at first; again he pronounced them, again, again,—each time the tone was softer, each time they came more from the heart. At last the remembrance of greater wrongs, and worse revilings came upon him, his eyes filled with tears, the most subdoing and healing of all thoughts—that of the great Example—became present to him; the foe was driven back" (162).

In this moment, Guy is petitioning heaven—essentially speaking a prayer for Philip's forgiveness on his behalf. As a Tractarian, Guy is following the prescribed Anglican method for prayer—creedal recitation rather than 'extempore' rhetoric. It is also worth noting that it is not just the speaking, but the *repeating* of this form which grants Guy spiritual victory. The repetition of the creed (Forgive our debts as we forgive those who trespass against us … Forgive us our debts as we forgive those who trespass against us … Forgive…) marks Guy not only as Anglican, but 'High-Church' Anglo-*Catholic*, as a repetition of such creedal forms comes from this branch of the sect.

Guy's victory over his other passion—depression—also comes with the aid of Anglican practice. In the middle of the narrative, Guy spends a lonely season at

Redclyffe, not knowing if Edmonstone will ever give consent for his daughter to marry. In this state, Guy reflects on his own loneliness:

> Far better for him to bear all alone than to bring on Amy grief and horror, such as had fallen on his own mother, but it was much to bear that loneliness and desolation for a lifetime … Guy was not yielding, he was telling himself—telling the tempter, who would have made him give up the struggle—that it was only for a life, and that it was shame and ingratitude to be faint-hearted, on the very night when he ought to be rejoicing that One had come to ruin the power of the foe, and set him free. But where was his rejoicing? … Was not the lone, blank despondency that had settled on him more heavily than ever, a token that he was shut out from all that was good … Had his best days of happiness been, then, nothing but hollowness and self-deception?
>
> At that moment, the sound of a Christmas carol came faintly on his ear … (210).

The local village choir comes to Redclyffe to carol at Guy's door; a welcome to his newly inherited property. Guy is awakened from his depressed state by the carol, and Yonge tells us that "He sighed heavily, but the anguish of feeling, the sense of being in the power of evil, had insensibly left him, and though sad and oppressed, the unchangeable joy and hope of Christmas were shedding a beam on him" (211).

It is no accident of design that Guy's most intense battle with depression—caused by the possibility of growing old in an empty estate without the woman he loves—falls on the night most special to the Anglican imagination. For the Dissenter, Christmas is a marker in the calendar year for something that cannot be captured materially. But for the Anglican, the pattern of the liturgical year holds profound significance. Guy's depression and subsequent spiritual victory, occurring on Christmas Eve, mirrors the spiritual significance of the season—the birth of Christ bringing the ultimate spiritual victory over darkness. It is clear that Yonge is making a Tractarian connection here rather than simply a Christian one—the narrator states that it is "the joy and hope of *Christmas*", not Christ,

that brings Guy spiritual relief—it is the season, coming through the ordered regularity of the liturgy, that provides Guy with a renewed hope.

Yonge encodes Tractarian ideals through Guy's behavior, not just in his victory of Reserve over reaction, but in his deference to authority. In Pusey's delineation of Tractarian ideology, he lists "High estimation of Episcopacy as God's ordinance". That is, deference to the hierarchical authority structure of the earthly church. As stated earlier, one way in which Yonge moves her Tractarian religious creed to the form of the novel is by transferring the role of the Church to that of the home. Guy and Amy's deference to the authority of their parents and care-takers is, then, one of the most important results of this transference. In Tractarian thought, deference to one authority usually suggested deference to the other; rebellion against one suggesting rebellion against the other.

Early in the novel, Philip's account of Guy's capturing of the baby hawks also brings in this aspect of his character. After flying into a rage at the loss of the birds, Philip relates that "'Nothing had any effect on him till his grandfather came out, and, at the sight of him, he was tamed in an instant, came up to his grandfather and said—'I am very sorry,'" (9). Not many pages later, Guy is speaks to Mrs. Edmonstone about the sudden loss of his grandfather (the event which begins the action of the novel); he laments "'If I had but known!' said Guy; 'but there was I, hasty, reckless, disregarding his comfort, rebelling against—O, what I would not give to have those restraints restored!" (19). Reserve and Respect are linked—Guy's youthful temper is countermanded by his respect for his grandfather. In a certain sense, Sir Morville's death is the beginning of Guy's transformation.

As if to make sure her readers see the connection between these two Tractarian ideals, Yonge has Guy immediately place himself under a new authority once the old one is lost. In this same conversation, Guy asks Mrs. Edmonstone to take up a very important charge:

> "'I want to ask something—a great favour—but you make me venture. You see how I am left alone—you know how little I can trust myself. Will you take me in hand—let me talk to you—and tell me if I am wrong, as freely as if I were [your own son]? I know it is asking a great deal, but you knew my grandfather, and it is in his name … You will let me trust you to tell me when I get too vehement? Above all when you see my temper failing? Thank you; you don't know what a relief it is!'" (20).

Reserve and Respect for authority are both integral to Guy's transformation and latter character; both attributes chosen by Yonge as a way of encoding Tractarian ideals into narrative through character psychology and behavior.

Respect for authority is also important to Amy's character. When Guy confesses his love to her, her first action is to go immediately to her parents:

> Amy flew off, like a bird to its nest, and never stopped till, breathless and crimson, she darted into the dressing room, threw herself on her knees, and with her face hidden in her mother's lap, exclaimed in panting, half-smothered, whispers, which needed all Mrs. Edmonstone's intuition to make them intelligible,—
>
> 'O mamma, mamma, he says—he says he loves me!' (135).

Even after this confession, when Mr. Edmonstone forbids Guy marrying Amy because he suspects his character, Amy continues to defer to their authority. When the Edmonstone's receive a letter from Guy, Amy's brother Charles holds it towards his sister to read:

> She knew the writing. "Wait one moment, Charlie, dear;" and she ran out of the room, found her mother fortunately alone, and said, averting her face,—"Mamma, dear, do you think I ought to let Charlie show me that letter?" (227)

So deferential is Amy to the authority placed above her that she seeks her mother's blessing even in the most personal matters of the heart.

When thinking about Reserve in connection with Amy, the idea becomes a bit more complex. Amy is reserved, in the most traditional sense, from the beginning of the novel. Yet, Guy encourages her towards a greater, more mature emotional depth and display. When confronted with her behavior towards Guy, Amy withdraws into herself even further:

> Every word, no matter what, increased the burning of poor Amy's cheeks. A broad accusation of flirting would have been less distressing to many girls than this mild and delicate warning was to one of such shrinking modesty and maidenly feeling … Poor little Amy! … There would be an end of much that was pleasant … but if it was not quite the thing—if mamma did not approve, so it must be (127).

Notice again Amy's deference to authority in despite of her own natural feelings. Mrs. Edmonstone criticizes Amy for being too forward with Guy, but given Amy's natural tendency towards an already great reserve, her emotional blossoming in Guy's presence is depicted only as good.

Such being the case, our definition of Reserve might need to be modified. Reserve is not simply the repression of great emotional extreme, but the sign of a greater emotional maturity, such that emotions are displayed in ways that are appropriate to the occasion or event which originates them. A deeper expression of love towards Guy is an appropriate use of Reserve for Amy, as she does feel a genuine love for him.

There are two instances in the novel in which Amy's Reserve, an appropriate agreement between feeling and action, are demonstrated. The first instance is when Amy confronts Philip during her and Guy's honeymoon in Italy. When Philip once more insults Guy's character, Amy turns on him: "I think you forget to whom you are speaking" (291). What follows is a long rebuke at Philip's obstinate refusal to recognize Guy's good character. Though Philip continues to be deluded in his opinion of Guy, he is

pleased to see Amy become more commanding as Lady Morville: “She left the room, and Philip held her in higher esteem. He saw there was spirit and substance beneath that soft girlish exterior” (291). Amy’s rebuke to Philip in this moment is charged with passion, but the origination of that passion (Philip’s blind jealousy of Guy), makes this rebuke appropriate; the reader grows in sympathy towards Amy, and becomes further unsympathetic towards Philip.

The second scene in which this new view of Reserve is demonstrated is during and just after Guy’s funeral. Yonge makes it a point to relate to the reader Amy’s odd stoicism as she walks in the funeral procession behind her husband’s body: “But Amabel, who used to cry so easily for a trifle, had now not a tear. Her grief was as yet too deep, or perhaps more truly sorrow and mourning had not begun while the influence of her husband’s spirit was about her still” (339). Whatever the reason, her unusual emotional restraint puzzles all members of the family—including herself: “Gentle and serene she looked; but would she never weep? Would those quiet blue eyes be always sleepless and tearless?” (341). The answer to these questions come in the next chapter.

When Amy first puts on her widow’s garments, though she had “previously prepared herself”, she is caught by surprise when her sister Charlotte brings in a tie of flowers that were a particular favorite with Guy:

> It was too much … The thought swept over her, carrying away every other, and she burst into tears.
>
> The tears would have their course; she could not restrain them when once they began, and her struggles to check them brought an increase of them. Her sobs grew so violent that Laura, much alarmed, made a sign to Charlotte to fetch her mother; and Mrs. Edmonstone, coming in haste, found it was indeed the beginning of a frightful hysterical attack (353).”

Amy's hysteria is the product of an emotional suppression practiced since childhood; here, it is not only Amy, but the reader who is relieved to find this explosive bout of uncontrollable feeling coming from one so retiring. Again, this giving away to intense emotion is not a lack of Reserve on Amy's part, but the appropriate practice of it—it is her *lack* of emotion during Guy's funeral that impacts not only her emotional character, but endangers her physical health when they are finally given vent to.

Philip's Reserve can also be described as a disconnect between feeling and action. Both Guy and Philip harbor similar feelings—frustration, jealousy, anger; but each responds to them in different ways. They are almost exact opposites—while Guy rages at his supposed wrongs, Philip seethes. That is, neither character practices the proper Tractarian concept of Reserve; Philip, just as Guy, allows himself to be overcome by unreasonable extremes in emotion; the only difference is that Philip's outward behavior and reputation masks these extremes more readily, making them less socially destructive.

When Guy hears of Philip's past early in the novel, he tells Mrs. Edmonstone that she must be of great comfort to him. Mrs. Edmonstone's response is fascinating:

> Philip? Oh no. He was always reserved; open to no one but Margaret, not even to his father, and since her marriage he has shut himself up within himself more than ever. It has, at least I think it is this that has given him a severity, an unwillingness to trust, which I believe is often the consequence of a great disappointment either in love or in friendship (41).

For Philip, intense reserve is decidedly a negative. He suppresses all negative feelings, using his Christian belief as excuse. The result is that he never confronts Guy with the jealousy or suspicions that plague him throughout the novel. Once these suspicions are proven to be unfounded, his emotional breakdown precipitates a dangerous illness.

Philip's reserve is most dangerous to Laura, to whom he becomes secretly engaged. In a certain sense, Laura is the novel's greatest victim. She must keep secret the engagement between Philip and herself for three years, and in the process she loses more and more of her vitality. The description Yonge gives of Laura at Amy and Guy's wedding is particularly tragic:

> All the time, Laura was active and useful,—feeling as if she was acting a play, sustaining the character of Miss Edmonstone, the bridesmaid at her sister's happy marriage; while the true Laura, Philip's Laura, was lonely, dejected, wretched; half fearing for her sister, half jealous of her happiness, forced into pageantry with an aching heart—with only one wish, that it was over, and that she might be again alone with her burden (276).

As with both Amy and Philip, Laura's emotional reserve / suppression culminates in a breakdown. When Mrs. Edmonstone remonstrates with her daughter regarding her reaction to Philip's illness, he pent-up sorrow bursts forth:

> Laura's over-wrought feelings could bear no more, and in a tone which, though too vehement to be addressed to a parent, had in it an agony which almost excused it … 'Unbecoming! Who has a right to grieve for him but me?—his own, his chosen—the only one who can love him, or understand him … she sank on the sofa, weeping violently. It was the reaction of a long restraint she had been exercising on herself, and the silence she had been maintaining (316, 317).

In Laura's case, the psychological punishment she undergoes is a result of her transgressing a very strict Tractarian code: obedience to authority. As stated earlier, in *Redclyffe,* the Episcopal authority of the Church is transferred to the home, making Laura's parents her spiritual leaders and advisors. Thus, Laura's grief is, in one sense, read by Yonge as just punishment for her refusal to confront Philip regarding the secret nature of their engagement. Even at this moment of Laura's breakdown, Yonge criticizes her action as selfish: "She was not feeling the humiliation, her own acknowledgment of

disobedience, but of the horror of being forced to reveal the secret he had left in her charge" (317).

Yonge's Tractarianism is both ever-present and ever-absent in the pages of *Redclyffe*. This is because she encodes her Tractarian ideals into the text through character behavior and symbol. In the emotional character of the two pairs of lovers, we see proper working of the Tractarian doctrine of Reserve, and how this concept may be corrupted. The emotional character of these four is tied to the position in which they hold authority. Through this, Yonge is demonstrating the Tractarian concept of the high regard for Episcopacy.

In the same way, Yonge inculcates Tractarian dogma such as a focus on creed, sacrament and liturgy, also through character behavior and symbol. The scene mentioned earlier, in which Guy's victory over his depression takes place at Christmas, is one of these instances.

In fact, Guy is the most prevalent representation for the Tractarian creedal and ceremonial system throughout the novel. This system makes its appearance through one of the novel's most constant metaphors: the comparison of Guy to Sir Galahad. As J. Russell Perkin states in *Theology and the Victorian Novel,* "Guy is a Victorian version of Sir Galahad, a knight who quests for his own sanctification through mastery of himself" (91). In making the comparison between Guy and Sir Galahad, Yonge inscribes a modern day story of salvation that is achieved in the Tractarian way—through sacrament and asceticism.

One evening with the Edmonstone's, Guy enjoys a game in which each member of the family lists their favorite hero from fiction or history. Guy's list stumps the family:

> ’Heather—Truth—King Charles—Sir Galahad—the present time.’
> ‘Sir how much?’ exclaimed Charles
> ‘Don’t you know him?’ said Guy. ‘Sir Galahad—the knight of the Siege Perilous—who won the Saint Greal.’
> ‘What language is that?’ said Charles.

Guy is exasperated by the fact that no one in the family is familiar with the Arthurian legend. One edition of the text addresses the family’s consternation by explaining that during the Victorian Era, Malory’s *Le Morte D’Arthur* had faded into obscurity; those in the latter half of the century only becoming familiar with the Arthurian legend through the publication of Tennyson’s *Idylls*.

But what is important in this scene is not the family’s confusion, but Guy’s vision of Sir Galahad as the Christian ideal. This marks Guy as thoroughly Tractarian—the practice of asceticism is mirrored in Guy’s victory over his own passions (as Galahad, the virginal knight, experienced victory over his)—but even more important than this is the recognition that Guy’s first mention of Sir Galahad is in connection with the fact that he “won the Saint Greal”.

In Tractarian thought, salvation is achieved through the sacrament of the Eucharist—this is really what makes the Holy Grail important. In the Arthurian legend, the grail is not just a relic used by Christ, but a means of connecting with the spiritual world. In Malory, when a priest holding the grail conducts the Eucharist, a vision of The Trinity appears. Sir Galahad dies clutching the grail, and the reader is meant to understand that through the Eucharist (gained by his purity) Galahad achieves immediate salvation, and will be ushered directly into the presence of Christ. Making Guy a modern day Galahad infuses the narrative with these Tractarian, sacramental themes.

The connection between Guy and Sir Galahad occurs at two more places in the novel; each carrying with them very significant implications. In the first, Guy and Amy meet a Mr. Shene, an English painter who approaches them on their honeymoon in Italy. The painter asks Guy if he would agree to sit for him. Later, the story is related to Philip:

> 'Yes. He had been very much struck with Guy's face: it was exactly what he wanted for a picture he was about, and wished of all things just to be allowed to make a sketch.'
> …
> 'And in what character did he make you appear?'
> 'That is the strange part of it,' said Amabel. 'Don't you remember how Guy once puzzled us by choosing Sir Galahad for his favorite hero? It is that very Sir Galahad, when he kneels to adore the Saint Greal.' (288).

We are given no reason in particular why Mr. Shene believes Guy would be a fit subject for Sir Galahad other than "it struck him that it was just what he wanted" (288). In other words, the connection between these two figures is not mere fancy on Yonge's part, but a decided connection. In his face, Guy expresses the movement towards the divine that characterizes his personal reformation. In the painting is also the Saint Greal, a symbol of the sacramental and creedal faith, which Guy follows to achieve that divine perfection won by both men.

But to complete the comparison between Sir Guy and Sir Galahad, Guy must make a similar end to the hero of the Grail. In Arthurian legend, Galahad is, essentially, resurrected bodily while adoring the Saint Greal. His death has no tragic or violent pain, and it is as if he is simply translated to the spiritual realm. Lying on a bed of fever in Italy, Guy experiences a similar end:

> At that moment the sun was rising, and the light streamed in at the open window, and over the bed; but it was 'another dawn than ours' that he beheld as his most beautiful of all smiles beamed over his face, and he said 'Glory in the Highest!—peace—goodwill'—A struggle for breath gave an instant's look of pain, then he whispered so that she could but hear—'The last prayer.' She read the

> Commendatory Prayer. She knew not the exact moment, but even as she said 'Amen' she perceived it was over. The soul was with Him with whom dwell the spirits of just men made perfect; and there lay the earthly part with a smile on the face (334).

The key phrase in this passage is that of "just men made perfect". By the novel's end, it is necessary that Guy die. To go on living would, in Yonge's Tractarian mindset, be an indication that he had not gained victory over his sinful passions. Sir Galahad's translation at the end of his narrative is an indication that he has achieved a perfect purity. The same is true of Guy—his death marks the apotheosis of his spiritual transformation. Guy cannot live on bodily (in his "earthly part"), as he has fully and finally left behind all that makes him carnal, or 'fleshly'.

Yonge both adheres to and reacts against the system of Tractarianism provides the foundation to her most memorable novel. The high regard for clerical episcopacy, disguising divine truth through Reserve, salvation attained through creed, sacrament and observation of the liturgy—all of this is here in *Redclyffe's* pages. Yet, they are veiled through character behavior and personality. By doing this, Yonge creates the perfect Tractarian novel—a modern-day romantic parable.

Notes

[1] Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, 70.

[2] Ibid. 71.

[3] Ibid. 72.

[4] Ibid. 168.

[5] One biography of Charlotte Yonge describes Tractarianism in much the same way: "Nothing could have been more alien from the minds of the 'Tractarians' then the idea that they invented doctrines, or imposed them from abroad upon the Church of England. Their aim was to bring out what was already there, to develop what had been neglected or forgotten" (Coleridge, 131).

[6] Owen Chadwick, The Spirit of the Oxford Movement, 41-42.

[7] The concept of Reserve is an extremely complex on in Tractarian thought. Thankfully, we have a discussion of Reserve in its proper understanding from what is, for our purposes, the best source possible. In her *Musings over the Christian Year*, Charlotte Yonge gives us this personal statement on Reserve as foundational to Tractarian thought:

Reserve, reverent reserve, was ever a characteristic of the teaching of the school of divines of which the 'Christian Year' was the first utterance. Those who had gone before them, in their burning zeal to proclaim the central truth of the Gospel, had obtruded it with little regard to the season of speaking or the frame of mind of the hearer; and moreover, there was a habit of testing the sincerity of personal religion by requiring that its growth should be confidently proclaimed and discussed with great fullness of detail.

The deep mind, whose volumes of thought and feeling, even when they required expression, retired from the curios gaze, could not but shrink from all irreverent display and analysis of either holy things or private feelings; and 'the Rose-bud' as this poem is called, is his veiled protest, which found a longer echo and commentary in the Tract for the Times 'On Reserve in Communicating Sacred Knowledge', where Isaac Williams shewed how in mercy for the hardened Jew, the full brightness of the Lord's teaching was withheld from the unbelieving ear, and reserved for the faithful few (90).

[8] Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, 198.

[9] In her biography on Yonge, Georgina Battiscombe, after calling Keble's poems the Oxford Movement's "Bible", says of the man himself that "There was about him both saintliness and certainty; human-kindness appeared in every line of his strong, ugly face, in the huge, firmly moulded mouth and the wide-apart eyes shining out from under heavy brows … In his own lifetime … Keble's radiance outshone all others" (48).

[10] "An older nostalgic Newman thought that the characteristic attitudes of the Oxford divines were encouraged by the romantic in contemporary literature. He selected the poetry of Wordsworth and the novels of Walter Scott. Historians followed Newman in declaring the romantics to be part-cause of the Oxford Movement. Like the link of Renaissance with Reformation, this link is easier to feel than define. Theology like literature moved from reason to feeling. But theology did not move because literature moved. They marched in hand because the human spirit longed for new depth. A world of common sense yielded to a world which saw common sense as shallow and reached after beauty and truth beyond the easy fetters of prose. Religious men wanted poetry of heart in their hymns, sacramental sensibility in their worship, recovery of symbolism in art and architecture. But Keble and Newman and Hurrell Froude were not divines of the Protestant right wing because they were romantics. They expressed their divinity with the aid of romantic images and attitudes common to their day" (Ibid, 174).

[11] Ibid. 67.

[12] Ibid. 68. O'Connell, in his *The Oxford Conspirators: A History of the Oxford Movement*, states plainly that "No one was more surprised than Keble at the fantastic success of *The Christian Year*. The book went through ninety-two editions in its author's lifetime and became a devotional staple to several generations" (93). Finally, Knight and Mason's *Nineteenth-century Religion and Literature, an Introduction,* tells us that "Keble's *The Christian Year* … annually [sold] over 10,000 volumes for at least fifty years after its publication in 1827" (88).

[13] Owen Chadwick, The Spirit of the Oxford Movement, 52.

[14] However, the connection between Tractarian poetry and the popular poetry of the time may be stronger than this statement seems to suggest. As Pereiro states in his *'Ethos' and the Oxford Movement: At the Heart of Tractarianism*, "That poets might have been the heralds of the new spirit was no surprise to either Keble or Newman. The former, in his lectures on poetry, conceived it as having a prophetical role in history and human sentiment. Poetry could reach and bring to the surface those deeply felt ideas and feelings which could not as yet find expression in argument or logic; it gave form to what until then had been obscure and unnamed, opened new views and moulded minds according to a particular pattern. Keble went even further; he claimed that history showed how religious revivals tended to be preceded by a change of tome in the immediately preceding poets. They had led the way, preparing men to accept a more serious and holier creed. By way of example, he mentioned the poetical revival of the late Elizabethan period. It had produced poets like Spenser and Shakespeare, whose tone and temper had unconsciously prepared the religious revival in the reign of Charles I. Keble, along with Newman and Froude, thought that something similar had happened in Great Britain with the appearance of Scott, Coleridge, Wordsworth and others. Their poetry (their personal shortcomings notwithstanding) had heralded the arrival of a new religious revival, and directed the minds of contemporaries to something higher than had been on offer before. They had reflected in their poetry the glory of God in his creation, the numinous element of religion" (78-79). We also have the following from C. Brad Faught in his *The Oxford Movement*: *A Thematic History of the Tractarians and Their Times*: "The romantic inheritance of the Tractarians is well known, especially that bequeathed by the poets William Wordsworth and Robert Southey. In *The Christian Year* Keble made overt this inheritance and among his coreligionists reinforced the idea that their religious practice need not emulate the remote and frigid ways of many of the old High Churchmen. Keble's poetry provided an avenue of restrained emotional freedom along which the Tractarians could travel in an attempt to establish their own rubric of spirituality" (50).

Finally, it is also important to remember that Keble's purpose for *The Christian Year* was primarily the dissemination of Tractarian doctrine rather than the achievement of sublime, aesthetic beauty. As Rodney Stenning Edgecombe states in his *Two Poets of the Oxford Movement*, "—the textural and structural aspects of *The Christian Year* remain incidental to the doctrinal content of the poetry, upon which [Keble] expiates with much greater eagerness" (18). Edgecombe also suggests that Keble's ability as a poet was a great deal more respected during his own time: "Almost all of the books and articles that have hitherto addressed the poetry of the Oxford Movement have tended to follow a theological line. This bias—a perfectly proper one—has been conditioned by the writers' sense of the interest and importance of Tractarianism as a historical force and by misgivings about the poetic ability of its protagonists. When Charlotte Yonge wrote her *Musings Over "The Christian Year" and "Lyra Innocentium,"* Keble's verse commanded a respect far exceeding that accorded to his religious leadership, whereas in our century these priorities have been reversed" (15).

[15] For example, O'Connell tells us that "It had never crossed Keble's mind to follow any other profession than that of his father" (92). And in his *The Oxford Movement: A Revision,* John R. Griffin states that "Anglican scholars view Keble as the 'saint of Anglicanism', a man of studied modesty whose greatest boast was that he taught only and always what he had learned from his father" (5).

[16] Again from Griffin: "So far as Keble had any greater importance than the example he provided in his own life and to Anglicans who might be wavering in faith, Keble reflected the 'pastoral' and 'moral' elements of the Oxford Movement" (5). And just a few pages later, "In less than a year Keble gave up some of his ideas, and by 1835 he had more or less abandoned all of the radical notions of *National Apostasy*. Owen Chadwick and other scholars have suggested that when Keble married and took a living at Hursley the principles of the Movement began their slow dissemination into the countryside. According to this

version Keble represented the 'pastoral' side of the Oxford Movement, versus the erudition of Pusey and the genius of Newman … He was also silent on the grave question of matrimony, and I believe it could be argued that the idea of clerical celibacy belonged originally to Keble" (14).

[17] Scholars have noted how odd it is that Yonge never explicitly describes her first meeting with Keble, the man who was to have so great an influence on her work and life. However, Georgina Battiscombe, in her biography of the novelist, gives this description of a possible meeting: "Perhaps the new incumbent stayed at Hursley Park with the Heathcotes while the parsonage was made ready, and Sir William asked the Yonges to meet him, being the most influential of his future parishioners. Perhaps one cold January day, soon after his induction, Fanny Yonge took Charlotte, well wrapped up in her best pelisse, to pay a duty call at the Vicarage. In anticipation of callers there would be wedding-cake and wine set out on the table, for the Kebles were but newly married" (47).

[18] Jordan: "She … described herself as 'a great chatterbox', getting excited by games, screaming with laughter, and making outrageous jokes. A good deal of teasing went on among the cousins, all of which she seems to have taken in good part, and there are several approving examples in her fiction of teasing, joking adolescent boys" (176).

[19] Ibid. 177.

[20] "…in the Keble circle it was assumed that talents should be harnessed to the service of the Church, and even before her first book was published, Charlotte Yonge was co-opted into the propaganda machine that can be seen as an outcome of Tractarian emphasis on the pastoral aspects of the religious obligation" (Ibid. 179).

[21] Ibid. 180.

[22] Ibid. 184.

[23] From Battiscombe: "Again and again at the most important crises of Charlotte's life we are brought up against the blank wall of her reserve. Many years later … she wrote a brief and impersonal account of her preparation for Confirmation … Charlotte and John Keble sat together in his favorite corner … With prayer-book open before him, and Palmer's *Origines Liturgicae* ready for reference on the bamboo table at his side, Keble went through the Church of England Liturgy … Tractarian teaching never fell on more fruitful soil … So Charlotte fell headlong in love with religion" (53).

[24] S. A. Skinner, author of *Tractarians and the 'Condition of England'*, gives this brief but incredible sketch: "Charlotte Mary Yonge (1823-1901), an early disciple of Keble's at Hursley, wrote some 160 books. Her tales, monitored by Keble, began to appear anonymously in 1844 with *The Abbey Church; or Self Control and Self Conceit,* though *The Heir of Redclyffe* (1853) was the first to enjoy popular success, its proceeds dedicated to the purchase of a schooner for the Melanasian mission. A Literary avalanche ensued … For almost half a century between 1851 and 1898 she edited *The Monthly Packet*, aimed at Anglican children. Later works included bible studies, didactic books for children, popular history … and biography" (66).

[25] The whole section is worth quoting: "About this ingenuous story, as about *Scenes and Characters,* best known of Charlotte's early tales, there lingers a curious flavor of Jane Austen. Maybe it is but the period atmosphere. The young Queen had been on the throne barely half a dozen years and the tide of Victorianism does not set full in until the publication of *The Heir of Redclyffe.* In *Chantrey House*, written forty years later but based on memories of her youth. Charlotte was never clever enough to recapture the same atmosphere, still faintly reminiscent of the Regency. There are echoes of Jane Austen even about the title of this first serious work, *Abbeychurch, or Self-control and Self-conceit*, and the heroine, Elisabeth, has a little of the astringent wit and quick intelligence of her namesake, Elizabeth Bennet" (58).

[26] Yonge as much as admits this truth herself. In *A Chaplet for Charlotte Yonge*, we are given an excerpt from her own autobiography: "I have told the history elsewhere of my dear friend Miss Dyson, suggesting the main character of Guy; and with the *Heir of Redclyffe*, when I was about thirty years old, authorship ceased, in a manner, to be a simple amusement, and became a vocation, though never less of a delight, and I hope I may say of a conscience" (184).

[27] Coleridge's biography gives this brief sketch of Dyson: "When [Charlotte] was about twenty … she became acquainted with Miss Marianne Dyson, the sister of Mr. Charles Dyson, the Vicar of Dogmersfield, a college friend of Sir John Coleridge and Mr. Keble … a life-long friendship was at once formed, and an almost daily correspondence begun.

Miss Dyson was twenty years older than Charlotte and something of an invalid; she was lame and suffered from headaches, but she must have been a woman of much force and cultivation, with a great enthusiasm for education" (147).

[28] The moral metric of orthodox Judaism, with its attendant system of justification and judgment, is given by Moses in Deuteronomy 11: ""See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I am commanding you today; and the curse, if you do not listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I am commanding you today, by following other gods which you have not known" (*NASB* Duet. 11: 26-28).

[29] Blumberg ends her chapter by giving a fuller explanation of Yonge's conception of humanity: "Yet it is meaningful to note that in a world where what sex a person was born made all the difference … Yonge could envision a world divided by humanity and divinity, organized by humanity's effort to imitate the divine … The crowning self-sacrifice of a Christ ambiguously gendered offered Yonge an image impossible to hold firmly in the mind, but as promising and sacred as the image of a yet-unknown creature in the mind of its pregnant mother" (61).

CHAPTER THREE

"A Crucified God":
Charles Kingsley's Broad-Church Embodiment in *Hypatia*

Charles Kingsley is an enigma. Mid-Victorian Anglican minister, Chartist social reformer, and novelist of Industrial Realist and Fantasy fiction, Kingsley defies categorization. Even among the various sub-cultures he brought together to direct his individual passions, he never quite found a place to belong[1]. As an Anglican he made enemies with the more liberal Christian Chartists sects, as a Christian socialist and Broad-churchman he made enemies with High-Church Tractarians, and as a novelist he made enemies of both. Kingsley's own religious life, like his religious and social views, is a complex mesh of competing ideas and passions. As an Anglican minister, Kingsley believed in the creeds and doctrines of the Established Church. However, as a Broad-Church Christian Socialist, Kingsley desired to create a picture of Christendom very different from the Neo-Platonic ideals of Medieval Catholicism.

A professed enemy to the ideals of monasticism and asceticism practiced and encouraged in High-Church Tractarianism, Kingsley created a vision of the Church that celebrated the bodily in individual and communal ways—active participation in social and national affairs, and enjoyment of the God-given gifts of food, athleticism, and marital sexuality. Though not actually responsible for the term, many associate Kingsley with the birth of "Muscular Christianity", an ideological and theological movement that attempted to redeem the 'effeminizing effect' of High-Church asceticism and moralistic

acerbity. All of these views are present and active in Kingsley's most complex and adventurous novel, *Hypatia.*

In *Hypatia,* Kingsley is demonstrating, through the actions of the primary characters, how his own unique religious ideology might be lived out. One might wonder why Kingsley, an active Anglican clergyman, would go through the effort of writing a historical novel to exemplify his ideals rather than just giving them in a sermon. The answer to this question goes to the heart of much of what *Hypatia* does ideologically, and how it is connected to Kingsley's particularly unique brand of theology. To begin with the most obvious answer, Kingsley's novel would receive a wider readership, and certainly a larger 'audience' than his provincial sermons would. While this is obvious, the contrast between sermon and novel can be seen as a metaphor for the distinction between the Broad-Church and the High-Church Anglican sect Kingsley spoke out against. Through the actions of its characters, as well as through the use of the historical novel genre, *Hypatia* stands as a metaphorical representation of Kingley's Broad-Church views, not only in its social mission to bridge the gap between classes, but also in its doctrine of a faith that celebrates the bodily.

In addition to a sermon being something that occurs in a specific place at a specific time, it is also an isolated act that, though it may engage the mind and spirit, does not engage the body. In a very real sense, the novel 'embodies' the philosophy (or the theology) of the author by having it played out in the behavior of its characters. For Kingsley, whose most passionate criticism of the High-Church Tractarians was that they *denied* the bodily through a Catholic focus on asceticism, a work that represented an 'embodiment' of theology rather than a sermon that simply highlights points of doctrinal

truth makes most sense. As the novel's ability to cross class divides serves as a corrective to High-Church monastic isolationism, its embodiment of faith through character action serves as a corrective to High-Church practices of asceticism and reserve.

I argue that Kingsley's Broad-Church Philosophy as applied to *Hypatia* helps us see Kingsley's view about what makes Protestant Christianity unique (and therefore true) when compared to both pagan and Catholic systems; the emphasis on the bodily, inscribed within marital sexuality and athleticism, and demonstrated in the resurrection, provides a stark contrast to both the ephemeral philosophy of Hypatia's paganism and the 'in-human' aesthetic practices of early Catholic Christianity. As a result, Charles Kingsley's Broad-church Christian Socialism is written into the pages of his historical novel. However, to see these connections clearly, readers must first understand the basic ideologies of the Broad-Church Movement. Even more importantly, readers must understand how Kingsley embodied Broad-Church sectarian principles through his engagement with Christian Socialism. Once these points are understood, the Broad-Church ideologies foundational to the novel can be clearly seen in the novel's allegorical setting, its depiction of male and female sexuality, its celebration of the bodily, and its demonization of the Anglo-Catholic ideals of monasticism and asceticism. At the same time, it must be understood that Kingsley reacts against this system through his own personal view of Scripture, articulated by no less a figure than Saint Augustine himself.

Charles Kingsley's Broad-Church sectarian leanings come to him through the influence of controversial theologian Frederick Denison Maurice. However, before speaking more specifically to the impact Maurice had on Kingsley as an individual, it would be beneficial to ask 'what exactly is the Broad-Church'? Unfortunately, attempting

to establish a definition for the Broad-Church, is extremely difficult. Like 'Low-Church' Evangelicalism and even the 'High-Church' Tractarianism that Kingsley spoke out against, the 'Broad-Church' is part of Anglicanism and therefore has no separate institution. There is no chapel, no society, for liberal believers of the Broad-Church stripe; for *unlike* the Evangelicals, the Broad-Church has so few 'official members' that their presence in English society is negligible. As a result, this sect does not exactly have a creed—it never really established a *form* of worship itself, even as an alternative to Anglicanism (as did creeds such as Unitarianism, which have even a farther remove from orthodoxy than other varieties of dissent). The reason for this most likely comes from the fact that the Broad-Church is not a response to an existing form of worship or doctrine, but a result of theological thought divested from any specific form (which is why its history must be traced through the core of men who gave it its essential values). In attempting his own definition, Chadwick echoes this reality: "The term [Broad-Church] is vague. The group was not a group but scattered individuals working towards similar ends" (545). The primary thinkers from which this brand of theology originated are Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Thomas Arnold, Matthew Arnold, and Maurice himself.

Maurice sought to draw back the forms of the modern age, and return the Church to its essential Catholic origins—Catholic here being used in the sense of 'universal' rather than the specific form of the medieval establishment. That is, a Church divested of the divisions which come through antagonisms of creed and doctrine. To Maurice, such a Church would rest on three primary truths:

(1) Christ is the universal head of humanity;
(2) Christ is the revelation of the personality of God
(3) God has, through Christ, forgiven humanity (Jones, 156).

Bringing Christian belief back to its essential foundations, Maurice and others desired the Church to be more inclusive—to cross not only boundaries of class, but of nation and race. A similar foundation of thought can be found in the 'seeker-friendly' church movement of today. As Jones admits, "Many of the ideas propagated by Broad Churchmen, if not actually representative of modern Anglican liberalism, anticipate it" (4). *Hypatia* certainly acknowledges the inclusivity associated with the Broad-Church movement, as its pages boast a great diversity in its converts, including a wealthy Jew (Raphael), the daughter of a Cyrenian prefect (Victoria), an Alexandrian monk (Philammon), and a Pagan Greek (Hypatia); and almost, a Saxon Goth (Wulf).

Moving from the definition of Broad-Church ideology, I want to give just a little time to explaining the more practical movement to which it gave rise: Christian Socialism. Owen Chadwick, an expert on the Church on the Victorian era, offers readers a definition of the Christian Socialist movement:

> The church must be taken out of the sanctuary and into the world. Christianity becomes chilly when cramped within the walls of its churches and chapels. It must go out to assert the rule of God over every act of common life and embody its gospel in forms of social organization … Christian socialism was a message and a programme of action. Its message told the worker that the eternal king would have them sound in all their being and by his power their sickness might be healed; and that these sicknesses included sweated labour and commercial fraud as much as the diseases of the body and the soul. (356).

It was a message that came at the most opportune time. For decades, England had been in the grips of fear regarding interclass unrest. The Reign of Terror half a century before and the bloody Napoleonic Era that followed still weighed heavily on the English national consciousness. These fears became even more realized in the era of Chartism that began as Victoria ascended the throne, and reached a fever-pitch during the revolutions that swept across Europe in 1848. When, in April of this same year, a Chartist demonstration

was planned for the 10th of the month, in which Chartist leaders would march on Parliament with a petition two-million signatures strong, all of London went into hiding[2].

The next day, Kingsley wrote in a letter to his wife describing the day: "All is quiet as a mouse yet" (155). Apparently, the revolutionary violence that thousands feared simply did not occur. However, this did not stop Kingsley from taking action. That night, Kingsley, along with London barrister Malcolm Ludlow[3] and F. D. Maurice met to discuss what a proper Christian response to the "Chartist Crisis" should be (Brown 165).

While "[a]ll three [men] had opposed the Chartist demonstration" (Brown 165), and while Kingsley in particular "deplored violent protest", the three agreed that "members of the Church of England must seek dialogue with Chartist and working-class radicals" (Brown 166). This meeting formed the basis of what would be called the Christian Socialist movement.

The most practical results of this meeting would be the cementing of Kingsley and Maurice's partnership, their roles as leaders of the Christian Socialist Movement, and the birth of the periodical *Politics for the People*[4]. The first letter Charles Kingsley wrote in his guise of 'Parson Lot', makes his and the periodicals stance clear:

> If I give you credit for being sincere, you must give me credit for being so too. I am a radical reformer. I am not one of those who laugh at your petition of the 10th of April; I have no patience with those who do. Suppose there were but 250,000 honest names on that sheet.[5] Suppose the Charter itself were all stuff, yet you have still a right to fair play, a patient hearing, an honorable and courteous answer, whichever way it may be … my only quarrel with the Charter is, *that it does not go far enough in reform* (Kingsley 162-163).

Though the periodical ran for only seventeen issues, it marked Kingsley forever after as a one of the leading voices in the movement to 'Christianize' socialism.

Unfortunately, Kingsley's passionate defense of the movement to which he belonged made him a number of enemies, mostly among other Anglican ministers. For instance, Chadwick describes a sermon preached by Kingsley in London in June of 1851. The sermon series was given for the benefit of visitors to London brought in by the Great Exhibition. Chadwick describes the reaction to Kingsley's sermon by an Anglican vicar named Drew: "Drew the vicar thought that Kingsley equated Christianity with socialism. He waited until Kingsley gave the blessing from the pulpit. Then he stood at his surplice at the reading-desk and told the congregation that he must perform the most painful duty" (359). Drew then gave out a public discrediting of Kingsley's sermon and asked the congregants that the subject preached on be utterly forgotten:

> There were cries of *No no* from a section of the congregation. Kingsley stood in the pulpit with folded arms and then came down without a word. His friends thought that he had only to speak a word of retort for the poor in the church to break into riot … Outside the church knots of people stood and argued. The national press seized the drama and heightened it (359).

If the both *Politics for the People* and the 1851 sermon can be seen as failures, then perhaps Kingsley's greatest contribution to the Christian Socialist movement is his novel *Alton Locke.* In it, he gives voice to all the social evils of his day. Regarding the novel, Chadwick has this to say:

> Every chapter is a denunciation. Kingsley released his pulpit reproof against Calvinists and Tractarians, cathedral dignitaries, bishops who leave fortunes out of their preferment, Tory parsons, aristocrats, undergraduates, ill-behaved choir boys, the fellows of Dulwich College and the fellows of all Cambridge colleges, Chartists of violence, purveyors of obscene and blasphemous literature; and behind everything the contemporary society which allowed the brutality and squalor and poverty of the slum (358).

Like Kingsley's view of Christianity offered in *Hypatia*, the ideals of Christian Socialism participate in the bodily. Unlike the Tractarians of the Oxford Movement, whose view of

the Christian ideal is personal holiness brought about by monastic solitude and *withdrawal* from the world, Kingsley argues that the greatest embodiment of Christian belief is to be directly involved *in* the world.[6]

Yet, if Christian Socialism and Broad-Church dogma was dangerous for Kingsley, it was doubly so for his mentor[7].

Maurice was not just a partner in theology and ideology to Kingsley, but a close personal friend. He once referred to Maurice in a poem as 'the oak of the mountain', coming to him for support after experiencing a complete nervous collapse in the year after that April meeting (Chitty 118). Yet, Kingsley's friendship with Maurice brought with it its own dangers, in his relation to both the Christian Socialist movement and Broad Church doctrine. In terms of Christian Socialism's ideology, the Victorian-era divisiveness is a bit different than the modern-day divisions between socialism and capitalism. The Anglicans of Kingsley's day were traditional conservatives in the Medieval English sense of the term (aristocratic monarchists). As such, they had intrinsic anxieties regarding dissatisfaction among the working classes, along with a fear that movements for social reform would only intensify such feelings. The result was that Kingsley, with Maurice by his side, was many times caught in the crosshairs of attacks that labeled these movements as seditious or treasonous. As Dr. Jelf, principal of King's College, once stated, "'Mr Maurice is identified with Mr Kingsley, and Mr Kingsley is identified with Mr Holyoake and Mr Holyoake is identified with Tom Pain. Thus there are only three links between [Maurice] and the author of *The Rights of Man*'" (Chitty 155). Yet, this was not Kingsley's most dangerous association with Maurice.

In 1852, Maurice was suspended from his position as professor of Divinity at King's College: "Dr Jelf, principal of King's College, had set up a committee of enquiry to discover whether Maurice's *Theological Essays* were unorthodox. The committee had decided that his denial of the eternity of hell fire was indeed heretical and suspended him" (Chitty 155). Maurice's *Theological Essays* were an example of Maurice's at times complex theological views; Kingsley himself many times felt he had to 'translate' these views to the common parishioner before they could even be adequately understood. From Hennessey, "Having originally imbibed his theology from Maurice's *Kingdom of Christ,* Charles Kingsley would tolerate no criticism of his idol, though even he had to admit that Maurice's teaching occasionally needed interpretation to the outer world" (72). Maurice's ideas and their influence on Kingsley become especially important when discussing the Broad Church as a sect.

To make matters even more difficult, Maurice's *Essays* tend to obfuscate his doctrinal stances rather than enlighten them. That being said, we could perhaps gain some understanding of the sorts of doctrines that would encompass a Broad-Church view by looking at the foundational ideas in Maurice's own theological writings. One passage from *Theological Essays* in particular on orthodoxy is enough to give us the tone of the work:

> Let no Unitarian suppose that these words are pointed at *him* ... I was thinking much more of the orthodox. I was considering how many causes hinder *us* from confessing with our hearts as well as our lips, that Christ has come in the flesh. The conceit of our orthodoxy is one cause. Whatever sets us in any wise above our fellow-men, is an obstacle to a hearty belief in *the* Man; it must be taken from us before we shall really bow our knees to Him. I know not that if He were now walking visibly among us, He might now say that many a Unitarian was far nearer the kingdom of heaven than many of us; less choked with prejudice, less self-confident, more capable of recognizing the great helper of the wounded man who

> has fallen among thieves, than we priests or Levites are, because more ready to go and do likewise (115-116).

We can see how Maurice would be rejected by many orthodox Anglicans, and would be more welcomed by those with Broad-Church ideology, both of these goals accomplished by promoting a more inclusive view of Christian Community. The effort to subvert typical views of belief seems to be a major theme of the work. It could be that the most accurate description of what the Broad Church is, is 'neither High-Church nor Low-Church', but an ideology that sees both as obsessively focused on the condemnation of sinful man rather than on the grace of God.

In order to understand how *Hypatia* engages with the sectarian divisions active during Kingsley's time, we must know something about the religious life of the author who wrote it, as well as the movement with which he is most commonly associated. What makes Kingsley unique, particularly in an era that saw an incredible growth in dissenting sects, is that he attempted to change the Anglican Church from within. It is important, therefore, to see *Hypatia* not just as a novel by an Anglican (of which the nineteenth century has many strong examples), but a novel by a man whose own ideology, though labeled as Anglican, was very different from the orthodox churchmen of his own time. The growth of his own belief system, as a minister, was formed in a large part by his own personal life experience and his relationship with family and his own mentor.

Kingsley's personality, character, and system of values were formed by the influence of three specific individuals: His father (also named Charles), his wife Francis 'Fanny' nee Grenfell, and his close friend and mentor, Frederick Denison Maurice. From his father, Kingsley developed his love for sport and athleticism, which in later years would associate him with the ideals of "Muscular Christianity"; In *Hypatia*, such

athleticism comes from the roaming Goths who represent the future hope of English Christianity. From his wife, Kingsley developed his religious ideology concerning marital sexuality, which he believed to be the highest expression of the divine in human experience; In *Hypatia*, this expression is manifested in the relationship between Raphael and Victoria, who look like nothing so much as nineteenth century English heroes. From Maurice, Kingsley developed the Christian Socialism that became so central to the Broad-Church movement as a whole; In *Hypatia*, this ideology is played out most strikingly in the distinction between Philammon, who enacts his faith by going into the world, and Hypatia, whose commitment to pagan intellectualism draws her further and further from it. In the following analysis, I will connect each of these influences to Kingsley's own ideological and religious views, and then demonstrate how each is 'embodied' in *Hypatia*.

Charles Kingsley senior, nomadic curate, was the son of a gentleman who lost the family living. Kingsley senior had a love of sport, mainly shooting and fox-hunting, loves he would pass on to his son, Charles (Chitty 24). In fact, biographer Colloms gives us this description of the father and the son: "As soon as his eldest son was steady enough to sit on horseback without falling off, the rector allowed Charles to accompany the sportsman on shooting days. The boy would sit in front of the keeper and share in the excitement of bringing back the bag. He was never to lose this pleasure and satisfaction in hard physical activity in the open air" (25). Such training would stay with the young man well into his adult life, and helped him to believe that no division exists between a life of the spirit and of the body.

The parishes where Kingsley sat as rector, first at Holne, then at Barnack and finally Clovelly, have the reputation of remarkably beautiful countryside. Biographer Susan Chitty tells us that "The rectory at Holne … must be one of the most beautiful places in the west of England" (25). The surrounding landscape was to leave an indelible impression on the mind of the young Charles. "Kingsley always called himself a Devon man and claimed that to think of the West Country made him weep" (25). The country landscape of these parishes fed Charles' love of Nature and Sport, a love that laid the foundation for the 'Muscular Christianity' with which he would become associated. It is this love of nature as well as sport that Kingsley inherited from his father. While it is true that the two men, especially when Charles was young, were never particularly close, the love of the natural world provided the two with a great degree of shared interest:

> It was in the field of natural science that father and son came closest. Like many sportsmen, Charles Kingsley Senior was keenly interested in the habits of the creatures he hunted, and at Barnack he was able to pursue his interests both as a sportsman and a naturalist to the full … the Fens, that paradise of the wildflower, lay only a few miles to the east. As soon as he was old enough Kingsley was set before the keeper on his horse to accompany his father on shooting expeditions (Chitty 32).

Unfortunately, the ultimate relation between the two men was not a positive one. Before Kingsley left for his undergraduate degree at Cambridge, Kingsley Senior accepted his last living at St. Luke's, Chelsea. According to Chitty, this decision was "the biggest blunder of his lifetime" (47). Though the living was substantial, "Mr Kingsley now numbered his parishioners not in the hundreds but in the thousands" (48), parochial duties effectively putting an end to any sort of intimacy Charles Senior might have shared with his son.

Yet, Charles certainly could be said to have carried his father's influence with him when he left for Cambridge, as many of the idle activities Charles engaged in were those his father loved so well. In his second year in particular, Kingsley engaged in a great deal of 'animal exercise': "He plunged into an exhausting programme of boating, hunting, driving, fishing and duck-shooting. He was later to look back with disgust upon what he described as that 'year of dissipation' but at the time there were moments that must have been deemed pleasant enough" (Chitty 56). In fact, it is in these habits that we catch a glimpse of Synesius, the Squire-Bishop of Cyrene that jumps from the pages of *Hypatia* as the laughing, drinking, feasting, gaming cleric that encourages Raphael's romantic love for Victoria.

In Synesius' initial description, Kingsley seems to be painting a self-portrait of that reckless undergraduate, mingled with the churchman he would later become:

> He lived, as Raphael had told Orestes, in a whirlwind of good deeds, meddling and toiling for the mere pleasure of action; and as soon as there was nothing to be done … paid the penalty for past excitement in fits of melancholy. A man of magniloquent and flowery style, not without a vein of self-conceit; yet withal of overflowing kindness, racy humor, and unflinching courage, both physical and moral … [though] his detractors hinted, not without a show of reason, that he was far more of an adept in soldiering and dog-breaking than in the mysteries of the unseen world (Kingsley 321).

Yet Synesius' importance comes primarily, not as a picture of the young curate, but as an embodiment of the type of Christian life that Kingsley saw as most holy—a life that participated in the bodily. A life that glorified God in body as well as spirit by giving over both to their proper uses. To Kingsley, participating in the bodily in ways that were not immoral was an act of holy worship just as powerful and necessary as prayer, devotion and meditation. It was his father that first inspired this part of his personality, which Kingsley as an adult fitted to his own personal theology.

The focus on the body as semi-divine can be seen in Kingsley's depiction of Philammon. When first described, the young monk is given the appearance of a classical Greek hero or demi-god:

> His long black locks, unshorn from childhood, waved and glistened in the sun; a rich dark down on his cheek and chin showed the spring of healthful manhood; his hard hands and sinewy limbs told of labor and endurance; his flashing eyes and beetling brow, of daring fancy, passion, thought, which had no sphere of action in any such place. What did this glorious young humanity alone among the tombs? (17-18).

Philammon's resemblance to the ancient gods is so complete that near the end of the novel, when Hypatia is drugged by Miriam in order to 'commune with the gods', and Philimmon is revealed to her, she immediately believes him to be a reincarnation of Phoebus (416). As with Synesius, Philammon's masculine strength and physical appearance are part of the positive aspects of his character.

But it is in the character of the Goths that Kingsley's love of sport and physical prowess finds its fullest expression. Of the many groups that Philammon encounters throughout the novel, the Goths are the first, and most enjoyable to read. Philammon's first introduction to them is given in the context of their athleticism:

> At last, a sudden turn of the bank brought him in sight of a gaudily-painted barge, on board of which armed men, in uncouth and foreign dresses, were chasing with barbaric shouts some large object in the water. In the bows stood a man of gigantic stature, brandishing a harpoon in his right hand, and in his left holding the line of a second, the head of which was fixed in the huge purple sides of a hippopotamus, who foamed and wallowed a few yards down the stream (50).

The Goths themselves refer to this as sport, since they do not intend to use the hippo for meat; such a contest can be viewed as a sort of Nordic shooting-party; a sport of the kind that the race of Anglo-Saxons that came from these men might engage in in Kingsley's own time.

The Goths are important to Kingsley's theology, not just because they engage in athleticism, but because their athleticism speaks to a proper concept of masculinity. Unlike the Alexandrian Christians, whose strength makes itself known only through the violent murder of Hypatia near the novel's end, the Goths channel their masculine strength into sport and battle. The Goth's battle-ethic is always fair, assisting the weak against the strong. When Philammon charges the stadium in which his sister Pelagia is made to dance seductively before an admiring crowd, it is the Goths and their leader Wulf that give him his only support:

> "You did right. You are a brave boy. If you had died, no man need have been ashamed to die your death"
>
> "You were there, then?" sobbed Philammon.
>
> "And what is more," said Smid, as the poor boy writhed at the admission, "we were mightily minded, some of us, to have leapt down to you and cut you a passage out. One man, at least, whom I now of, felt his old blood as hot for the minute as a four-year-old's. The foul curs! And to hoot her, after all! Oh, that I may have one good hour's hewing at them before I die!"
>
> "And you shall!" said Wulf (387).

The Goths stand as an example for what proper use of masculine energies look like. By contrast, the Alexandrian Monks' murder of Hypatia could be read as the most emphatic condemnation by Kingsley of the negative effects of Tractarian / Catholic asceticism. Through this murder, Kingsley is making the argument that since the monks continually suppress their masculine energies through fasting, celibacy and enforced pacifism, the natural result is that they unleash them through abusiveness and violence.

But Kingsley's focus on masculine strength had practical as well as theological applications, and it is in this side of his personality that we understand another aspect of the human condition that he channeled into spiritual dogma—sexuality. For this aspect of

his personality, we turn to the second of Kingsley's influences, his wife Frances 'Fanny' Eliza Kingsley, née Grenfell.

The marital life of Mr. and Mrs. Kingsley has been called, by one scholar, one of the greatest comings-together of minds and bodies in history. Charles, on first meeting this daughter of wealthy gentry that was nearly seven years his senior, fell into a passionate, distracted love. As their correspondence indicates, Fanny soon followed suit. Charles's love for Fanny was of an intensely physical kind, something his biographers and his own correspondence do not appear to shy away from in the slightest. Colloms gives us the account of their initial meeting:

> Suddenly life exhibited a new dimension when she met Charles Kingsley … They discussed every subject imaginable. Fanny saw him as a doubting Thomas whom it was her delectable task to lead back to the paths of righteousness. This, and not a celibate sisterhood, could be her religious duty. Charles, for his part, saw her as a beautiful damozel to be rescued before she was immured behind convent walls, where her lovely spirit would be perverted by unnatural spinsterhood. And beneath it all, although neither would have admitted it, was a strong sexual attraction (48).

Kingsley as a knight rescuing Fanny from spinsterhood would translate into his Broad Church view of the goodness of marriage, evident in so much of his writing.

There might be an argument made that Fanny was simply the first willing party to Charles's pent-up sexual energies. Kingsley himself only too well understood the power of sexual desire, and the misery it could cause if not checked. In fact, this check was the 'practical' reason for his taking up sport:

> But to Kingsley there was a sinister element in these boisterous goings-on, for he knew that they were only attempts to escape from something in himself that frightened him—his own sexuality. The romantic friendship with Mansfield could not satisfy his animal cravings and indeed it was with Mansfield, judging from the letters they later exchanged, that he had his first physical encounter with a member of the opposite sex … she was probably a prostitute at Barnwell or Castle End … The experience filled him with shame and self-loathing. He felt so dirtied

> by it that three years later he offered to release his fiancée from her marriage obligations because of it (Chitty 57).

Kingsley's anxieties and guilt regarding his own sexuality stayed with him almost to the very day of his marriage: "Now began one of the strangest outpourings in the history of love. For the last three months of the year 1843, Charles unloosed the floodgates of his most private fantasies onto paper. Such was the make-up of his mind that his feelings of guilt about his body and its functions could only be allayed by sanctifying both" (Chitty 79-80). Kingsley even suggested in one correspondence that he and Fanny stay celibate for the first month of their marriage. "Kingsley assured his bride that by postponing their bliss in this way they would purify and prolong it" (Chitty 81). Added to this intense focus on the female body in his personal life is the focus he gives to the female body in his fiction writing.

Kingsley is characteristically 'un-Victorian' in his descriptions of the female body in most of his writing, including *Hypatia*. So much so, that the book first caused something of a scandal on its initial release when its nineteenth-century audience read of the gruesome death of Hypatia, who is stripped naked and torn to pieces by a mob of Alexandrian monks in front of a statue of Christ:

> She shook herself free from her tormentors, and springing back, rose for one moment to her full height naked, snow-white against the dusky mass around—shame and indignation in those wide clear eyes, but not a strain of fear. With one hand she clasped her golden locks around her; the other long white arm was stretched upward toward the great still Christ… (Kingsley 457).

It is this depiction that caused a scandal in Kingsley's own time. In fact, the book's reputation as scandalous may have cost Kingsley an honorary doctorate from Oxford; one of the men hearing of Kingsley's nomination being Dr. Pusey. As Colloms tells us, "Pusey had attacked Kingsley ever since *Hypatia* appeared, saying it was an immoral

book, and he now put it around that he would create a scandal if Kingsley's name stood. Scandal was the last thing that Kingsley ever invited, so with hurt dignity he wrote to the authorities at Oxford and requested his name be withdrawn" (194).

Depictions of the beauty of the female body are constant throughout *Hypatia.* These depictions, some verging on the level of fetish[8], lead one scholar to refer to Charles Kingsley as "the perverted clergyman Charles Kingsley, whose novel *Hypatia* is full of sadistic eroticism" (Rist 215). Yet, these depictions are not based on a mind obsessed with female sexuality, but based on a doctrine that seeks to reclaim the importance of the bodily and bodily experience in Christianity. The depictions of Pelagia and Hypatia are, therefore, the feminine corollary to the characterization of Synesius and Philammon. While it is true that Kingsley's depiction of Synesius and Philammon focuses on masculine strength while his depiction of Hypatia and Pelagia focuses on physical beauty, it proves only that though Kingsley is a counter-cultural figure in his own time, his view of the sexes remains stereotypically Victorian:

> Her features, arms and hands were of the severest and grandest type of old Greek beauty, at once showing everywhere the high development of the bones, and covering them with that firm, round, ripe outline, and waxy morbidezza of the skin … the glorious grace and beauty of every line of face and figure would have excused, even hidden those defects, and we should have only recognized the marked resemblance to the ideal portraits of Athene which adorned every panel of the walls (Kingsley 31-32).

Like Philammon, Hypatia's beauty is as that of the gods. The description of Pelagia is also intensely physical. In fact, some readers may agree with the claims regarding fetishism. However, we can see the bodily focus even in the milder sentences depicting her beauty:

> A woman of some two-and-twenty summers, formed in the most voluptuous mould of Grecian beauty, whose complexion showed every violet vein through its

> veil of luscious brown … Her dark hair lay carefully spread out upon the pillow in a thousand ringlets, entwined with gold and jewels; her languishing eyes blazed like diamonds from a cavern under eyelids darkened and deepened with antimony; her lips pouted of themselves, by habit or by nature into a perpetual kiss (Kingsley 53).

While Kingsley certainly praises the beauty of the female body as something that is very good, he does not condone sexual promiscuity. When Philimmon is brought before Hypatia, and while he is in Miriam's house, he condemns the purely sexual view of the female body as something wasteful and less than what defines authentic Christian love. We must also remember that while Philammon is captivated by Hypatia's beauty, he flees when she falls into his arms.

Yet, in spite of all these anxieties regarding sexuality, Charles's and Fanny's marriage was the greatest embodiment of Kingsley's most consistent doctrine—the goodness and holiness of marital sexuality. One of the constant mantra's he would share with Fanny, 'matter is holy', is lived out in this belief. Kingsley believed that marriage was eternal, and that all expressions of romantic love would continue even after death. The divine nature of marital sexuality stems from what Kingsley believed to be the divine in female beauty. We see this part of his theology clearly near the end of the novel, when Philammon reflects on his passionate attraction to Hypatia:

> He who has worshipped a woman, even against his will and conscience, knows well how storm may follow storm, and earthquake earthquake, before his idol be utterly overthrown. And so Philammon found that evening … his old feelings toward Hypatia began … to revive within him. Not only pure love of her great loveliness, the righteous instinct which bids us welcome and honor beauty, whether in man or woman, as something of real worth—divine, heavenly, ay, though we know not how, in a most deep sense eternal … and that though beauty without discretion be the jewel of gold in the swine's snout, yet the jewel of gold it is still, the sacrament of an inward beauty, which ought to be, perhaps hereafter may be, fulfilled in spirit and in truth (Kingsley 409).

In Kingsley's Christian vision, beauty, female beauty in particular, is something that speaks to the pure, divine and eternal nature of God. If this is true, then the marital sexuality between man and wife which originates in that beauty is equally important, if not more so, for the most fully realized Christian life. But Kingsley speaks to the supremacy of love between man and woman, even that love divested of its sexual component, when Philammon first becomes Hypatia's pupil:

> For during those four peaceful and busy months of study there had sprung up between Hypatia and the beautiful boy one of those pure and yet passionate friendships—call them rather, with St. Augistine, by the sacred name of love—which, fair and holy as they are when they link youth to youth, or girl to girl, reach their full perfection only between man and woman. The unselfish adoration with which a maiden may bow down before some strong and holy priest, or with which an enthusiastic boy may cling to the wise and tender matron … earth knows no fairer bonds than these, save wedded love itself (217-218).

A very important point must be made here—is Kingsley a perverted priest? Are the descriptions and perhaps even glorifications of the female body given in his writings a way for him to simply work out his own frustrated desires? The passage above seems to suggest this is not so. Kingsley's near-idolization of female beauty and marital sexuality in his writings is not the result of unmet personal desires (as, for example, many scholars have claimed to be the case in Thomas Hardy's novels), but an emphatic statement of an important tenant in his Broad-Church theology.

Kingsley's Broad-Church view on marital sexuality finds most importance as a theological foil to High-Church Anglicans. Of all the disagreements Kingsley had with High-Church Tractarianism, the culture of enforced celibacy and the belief that it was a holier state of living than marriage was his most intense. This belief is played out vividly in Kingsley's fiction.

For example, Kingsley's first work of fiction, *The Saint's Tragedy,* is a long verse-epic about the life of Saint Elizabeth. In the epic, Elizabeth, the daughter of the King of Hungary, is betrothed from birth to Lewis Landgrave. As was often the case with the daughters of royalty in the Medieval Era, Elizabeth is sent to a nunnery until she is of age. As a result of the Catholic ideology in which she is raised, Elizabeth comes to view sexual intercourse—marital or not, as shameful and godless. When the promise of her marriage is fulfilled, Elizabeth keeps herself for as long as she can from the marriage bed. Eventually, Elizabeth concedes that this is simply not practical, and does eventually bear Lewis three children by way of performance of wifely duties, not allowing herself to experience any personal pleasure. In addition, Elizabeth invites Conrad, a priest from the monastery she grew up in, to guide her through several acts of penance for her 'mortal sins'. These include foregoing food, and giving away all the wealth of Landgrave's castle to the poor of the town below them. In addition, she is directed to give her own newborn infant to the Church. Lewis dies on crusade, and his heirs force Elizabeth from the castle, blaming her for their penury. Seeking shelter with an uncle, Conrad continues her program of penance that becomes more and more severe. In the end, Elizabeth dies of malnutrition while Conrad praises God for allowing to him "to make at least one saint in his lifetime" (Pope-Hennessy 57).

The anti-Tractarian motive of the verse-tragedy is obvious, and it is no surprise that Kingsley saw the book as a statement about his own marriage. Before she was allowed to correspond with the odd, stammering curate, Fanny's sisters had agreed to form their own Pusey-like convent of celibate sisterhood. The entrance of Charles put a decided halt to these plans on Fanny's part, and it was quite a while before the sister was

granted leave to see the young man. A similar statement is made, in a way that is a bit subtler, in *Hypatia*.

On fleeing to the desert after the sack of Alexandria, the character Raphael, a wealthy Jew, comes into contact with Victoria, the daughter of a general who has been sent to fight against Orestes. The two young people fall in love. Yet, as the three sail to Carthage the night after the battle, Raphael learns that the general desires to show his devotion to God by placing Victoria in a nunnery. Raphael's response to this news puts words to Kingsley's most sacred doctrine:

> "Pardon me!" said Raphael; "but I am too dull to comprehend what benefit or pleasure your Deity will derive from the celibacy of your daughter … it is Paul of Tarsus, then, who gives you the advice? I thank you for informing me of the fact: for it will save me the trouble of any future study of his works … many thanks from me to that daughter of yours, by whose perpetual imprisonment you intend to give pleasure to your Deity … [I will] reserve my nascent faith for some Deity who takes no delight in seeing his creatures stultify the primary laws of their being. Farewell!" (Kingsley 261-263).

To Kingsley, the enforced asceticism of the Tractarians is a twisting of the natural, God-given desires placed within every person; and it is in Kingsley's relationship with Fanny that this ideal is embodied.

However, Kingsley is very careful not to encourage sexuality for its own sake. The point that Kingsley wishes to make is that the extreme monasticism and celibacy practiced by the Alexandrian Christians is not in accordance with the original conception of the Christian life. And Kingsley does this in a striking way—Raphael and Victoria do eventually marry, and the minister who officiates their wedding is none other than Saint Augustine himself! Speaking to Hypatia after he returns to Alexandria, Raphael is very careful to draw a distinction between celibacy as a high-calling, only accomplishable by some, and the realistic good of marriage for the rest:

> "I assure you, no. He informed me, and her also, openly and uncivilly enough, that he thought us very much to be pitied for so great a fall …. But as we neither of us seemed to have any call for the higher life of celibacy, he could not press it on us …. We should have trouble in the flesh. But if we married we had not sinned. To which I answered that my humility was quite content to sit in the very lowest ranks, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (429).

Kingsley does not debase celibacy. He acknowledges it as a holy station. At the same time, however, he celebrates marital sexuality as something not only good, but as part of God's divine ordering of the world. Kingsley does this through Raphael's joke comparing himself to the greatest of the Old Testament Patriarchs.

The third and final character that made a formative impact on Kingsley's life and views was the Anglican theologian Frederick Denison Maurice. In her biography of Kingsley, Una Pope-Hennessey gives us a brief sketch of this enigmatic figure:

> Fourteen years older than Charles Kingsley, Frederick Maurice had, when at Cambridge … founded the Apostle's Society to which Tennyson and Mockton Milnes later were to belong … He was a Unitarian by upbringing and only baptized into the Church of England in 1831, the year he decided to read for Orders … [He] held a professorship of English Literature at King's College since 1840 … On Dr. Jelf's special recommendation he was also made theological lecturer at King's College" (64).

The fact that Maurice came to the Anglican Church through Unitarianism is particularly interesting, as many of his own ideas proposed after 1840 were considered unorthodox, if not heretical.

Kingsley first became acquainted with Maurice when his then fiancé Fanny sent him a copy of Maurice's *Kingdom of Christ*. The book itself was to become a manifesto of sorts for the Broad-Church and Christian Socialism, and the impact it had on Kingsley was life-altering. "Maurice's views on Church unity and the holiness of matter echoed Kingsley's own" (Chitty 70). Years later, Kingsley, now the curate at Eversley, finally met Maurice on a visit to St. Luke's rectory at Chelsea. There "was an instant liking on

both sides" (101), and both men believed fervently in the idea that the English Church must divest itself of if not transcend the party schisms that had plagued it for the last century.

Like Kingsley himself, *Hypatia* defies categorizing. What makes Kingsley such an interesting novelist is the way he was able to cross between genres so completely. Kingsley is most well-known for four major novels, including *Hypatia.* These others are *Alton Locke, Westward Ho!* and *The Water-Babies*. *Alton Locke* is squarely a 'Condition of England' novel; set alongside such works as *Hard-Times, North and South* and *Shirley*, *Locke* is reportedly Dickensian in nature. *Westward Ho!* is an early pulp-adventure novel, most comparable to works such as Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*. Finally, *The Water-Babies* is early Victorian Fantasy, most often compared to the writing of George MacDonald. Yet, like Kingsley, *Hypatia* seems to occupy a genre by itself. It is a Realist novel that tells of actual people, places and events. Yet, the characters are largely types and the events are allegory. But the novel is not allegory in the strictest sense either, as we include characters such as St. Augustine, Peter the Reader, Cyril the Patriarch, Theon, and Hypatia herself. In addition, we are describing real events and setting the novel in a specific historic moment.

The novel is certainly an outworking of Kingsley's own religious views, and yet it is not this in the strictest sense either. At least, not at all in the same way that Kingsley's most famous rival, John Henry Newman, worked out his own religious views in *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*. The novel can stand as a creed for Broad-Church Socialism, as many of the characters speak words that Kingsley himself could very well have uttered from the pulpit. Yet, the novel is not a tract or set of doctrines that sets out Kingsley's theological

ideas. At least, not in the same way that F. D. Maurice, Kingsley's friend and mentor, set out his own complex doctrinal views in *Theological Essays* or *The Kingdom of Christ.* Mid-Victorian Realist Novel, Historical Allegory, Religious and Theological Commentary, Doctrinal statement of Broad-Church Socialism, *Hypatia* is all of these and none, a perfect representation of the elusive nature of Kingsley and the Broad-Church itself.

Criticism on the novel, which is not especially numerous, falls into typically one of two categories. Each camp focuses either on Kingsley's satire of the Catholic Church as an allegory of the Anglo-Catholicism of his own day, or on the Goths as a representation of a more 'muscular' brand of Christian belief that Kingsley champions as the most authentic expression of that faith. I extend these arguments by essentially putting them together. Kingsley's Broad-Church ideology crafts a novel in which Anglo-Catholic practices are shown to be effeminizing and dangerous, while the corrective for such practices takes the form of the bodily, 'masculine' forth-rightness of the roving goths[9].

Interestingly, each of these camps has their own defector[10]. However, the primary reason that Kingsley chose fifth-century Alexandria for the setting of his allegory is because the mixing of sub-cultures in the ancient world most closely resembles the various schismatic voices within the nineteenth-century religious community. "*Hypatia, Or New Foes with Old Faces,"* says biographer Chitty, "…resulted from his visit to the Roman ruins in Germany. For two years he had been contemplating a book about Alexandria after the sack of Rome, depicting the clashes between Christians, Jews, Greeks, and barbarians in that dissension-rent city" (152).

With so many different threads that needed weaving together into some sort of thematic whole, Kingsley had a monumental task to fulfill. Not surprisingly, though many critics of Kingsley's own time considered the book his most sophisticated to date, it faced its fair share of negative press[11].

Kingsley succeeded in not only weaving together disparate factions and cultures, but Pagan and Christian ideals. The central figure in this 'mixing' is Raphael, the Alexandrian Jewish Neoplatonist who becomes a Christian through the love of a Cyrenian Nun. The move that Kingsley makes with Raphael is nothing short of brilliant. Raphael, being a wealthy Alexandrian, is Hypatia's best student. Being a Jew, he is well-versed in the Rabbinical Laws of ancient Israel. Living in fifth century Alexandria, he is familiar with all the teachings of the Early Church Fathers. Raphael then, is a master of Platonic, Jewish and Christian thought—a microcosm of the world that inhabits the novel. And like that world, all of Raphael's knowledge does not create one ounce of genuine faith. Cyril, Miriam, and Hypatia, the characters that represent the Christian, Jewish, and Greek systems, respectively, are found to be cold, calculating, and uncompassionate, if not directly cruel. While growing the mind and spirit, each of these ideologues have denied the heart and the body, and it is in the heart and body, according to Kingsley, where true Christianity lies.

I turn now to those specific moments in the novel where we see Kingsley's Broad-Church ideology coming through most clearly. This first moment I will examine is that of the learned Jew Raphael's conversion; in this scene, Kingsley shouts to the reader the distinction between mind and body mentioned earlier. Raphael's conversion is precipitated not by intellectual argument (any of which Raphael could easily unravel), but

by a bodily manifestation of selfless love. This love he observes in his dog Bran's willingness to die in the desert rather than leave the puppies she has just littered, and in Victoria's willingness to put herself in harm's way to search for the body of her father among the slain on the desert battlefield. By viewing this selfless love, Raphael *falls* in love with Victoria, and in this experience turns his heart to Christ. Like Kingsley, Raphael finds that the most genuine expression of true Christian faith is the selflessness embodied in romantic love between man and woman.

After becoming a Christian, Raphael seeks to convert Hypatia. On first hearing the impetus for Raphael's conversion, Hypatia is mortified: "Wedded love? … Wedded love? Is that, then, the paltry bait by which Raphael Aben-Ezra has been tempted to desert philosophy?" (427). Raphael concedes this, but his attempt to convert Hypatia returns to the idea that Christianity is the fulfillment of classical Platonic thought. Raphael's apologetic dialogue with Hypatia takes roughly seven pages of the novel. But the crux of the dialogue begins with Raphael's opening argument:

> Does Hypatia recollect Galucon's definition of the perfectly righteous man? … How, without being guilty of one unrighteous act, he must labor his life long under the imputation of being utterly unrighteous, in order that his disinterestedness may be thoroughly tested, and by proceeding in such a course, arrive inevitably, as Glaucan says, not only in Athens of old, or in Judea of old, but, as you yourself will agree, in Christian Alexandria at this moment, at—do you remember Hypatia?—bonds, and the scourge, and lastly, at the cross itself …. If Plato's idea of the righteous man be a crucified one, why may not mine also? (432).

This is the heart of Kingsley's view of Christianity. Kingsley places his faith in the context of the bodily, not because he is 'that perverted priest Kingsley', but because only Christianity offers a crucified god. It is the bodily that makes Christianity distinct from

the pagan system of Greece, in which divinity is stripped of the bodily; and it is this distinctness that makes Christianity true.

Hypatia seems to follow Raphael's argument, and actually agrees that Christianity gives an answer to the Platonic ideal. Yet, her most emphatic note of skepticism comes when once again Kingsley's most controversial doctrine arises—that Christianity involves the body as well as the mind.

When Philammon first tells Hypatia that he has been converted, he says that "I went forth to seek a man … And I have found a man" (430). The idea of the Incarnation, of God taking on a body, is repugnant to the Platonic ideals that Hypatia worships. "Hypatia waved her beautiful hand. 'I know whom you would say … that crucified one. Be it so. I want not a man, but a god'" (430). If the idea of the Incarnation does not turn Hypatia away from Christianity, then the crucifixion surely will. If it is difficult to believe that a god could have a body of flesh, then it is impossible to think that that body should be as weak and subject to harm as any ordinary mortal.

It is this argument that Raphael continues to pursue with Hypatia: "—bonds, and the scourge, and lastly, at the cross itself … If Plato's idea of the righteous man be a crucified one, why may not mine also?" (432). In Hypatia's response, Kingsley seems to be giving a voice to the Tractarians of his day whom he believes to be Neoplatonists in disguise: "A crucified man … Yes. But a crucified God, Raphael! I shudder at the blasphemy … What words are these, Raphael? Material scourges and crosses for an eternal and spiritual idea?'" (432, 433). But it is at this moment in the conversation that Raphael uses Platonic philosophy to illustrate Christian truth. Hypatia consents that if

Plato's idea of the archetypal reality is true, then there must be an archetypal man. He then makes the following argument:

> Be it so if you will. But—must we not say that the archetype—the very man—that if he is the archetype, he too will be, or must have been, once at least, temporarily enchanted into an animal body? … I will not press you … Only ask you to consider at your leisure whether Plato may not justify somewhat from the charge of absurdity the fisherman of Galilee, where he said that He in whose image man is made was made flesh, and dwelt with him bodily there by the lake-side at Tiberias, and that he beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father (434).

By using Platonic ideas, Raphael moves to a Christianity that is first and foremost a faith that is manifested bodily.

In *Hypatia*, Kingsley did not just present his own ideas, but those which he imbibed from his mentor, Maurice. One of the most powerful of these is Maurice's focus on God's forgiveness of sin as opposed to His condemnation of it. Kingsley's critique of this doctrinal focus can be seen in one of the most poignant scenes in the novel. Once Philammon discovers that Pelagia is his sister, he makes it his goal to bring her back to the Laura so that her soul can be purged of sin. When he learns that she was baptized as a child, and therefore responsible for all her subsequent actions as courtesan and mistress to the Amal, Phillammon despairs:

> When the Lord forgave the blessed Magdalene freely, and told her that her faith had saved her--did she live on in sin, or even in the pleasures of this world? No! … She fled forth into the desert … fasting and praying till her dying day, never seeing the face of man … And if she, she who never fell again, needed that long penance to work out her salvation--O Pelagia, what will not God require of you, who have broken your baptismal vows, and defiled the white robes, which the tears of penance only can wash clean once more (384).

After Pelagia beweeps the reality of her state, she begs the Jewish matron, Miriam, to confirm what Phillammon had just told her:

> Cruel, cruel parents, to bring me to it! And God! Oh, why did He forgive me so soon? And to go into the deserts! … I should go mad with fear and loneliness! O brother, brother, is this the Gospel of the Christians? … How do I know that I shall make myself miserable enough? How do I know that He will forgive me after all? Is this true, Miriam? Tell me, or I shall go mad!
>
> "Yes," said Miriam, with a quiet sneer, "This is the gospel and good news of salvation, according to the doctrine of the Nazarenes" (384-385)

As contemporary readers aware of Kingsley's allegorical purpose, we are to take Miriam's sneer as Kingsley's own. If this *is* truly the Gospel, the version of it given to us by Catholics (or Tractarians), then who would ever call it good news?

Kingsley does not only draw from his Broad-Church faith in writing *Hypatia*, but also from the 'Christian Socialist' movement it gave birth to. This movement also participates in the bodily, as it encourages physical acts of Christian charity rather than spiritual teaching alone. Before speaking to this aspect of Christian Socialist thought, however, it should be first mentioned that *Hypatia* speaks to the purely economic character in Kingsley's view of the Church as well. As Philammon first becomes acquainted with the culture of Alexandria, he is introduced to a strange sight before the city church:

> As he spoke … [they saw] an object new to Philammon—a sedan chair—the poles of which were inlaid with ivory and silver, and upper part inclosed in rose-colored silk curtains … forth stepped a figure, at which Philammon's eyes opened wider than they had done even at the sight of Pelagia … The [woman's] gown of white silk was bedizened, from waist to ankle, with certain mysterious red and green figures … Round her neck hung, by one of the half-dozen necklaces, a manuscript of the Gospels, gilt-edged and clasped with jewels; the lofty diadem of pearls on the head carried in front a large cross; while above and around it, her hair, stiffened with pomatum, was frizzled out half a foot from a wilderness of plaits and curls, which must have cost some helpless slave girl an hour's work, and perhaps more than one scolding, that very morning (122).

Keeping in mind the fact that *Hypatia* is first and foremost a historical allegory, the ostentatious display of the wealthy proselyte would have been easily recognizable to any

reader of Kingsley's era. As has been stated elsewhere in this study, every aspect of cultural life in the Victorian era, including religion, was shot through with an intense class-consciousness. In Kingsley's allegory, the Alexandrian Christians represent the High-Church Anglo-Catholics of his own day; to many of the Broad-Church mindset, as well as evangelical Anglicans and Dissenters, the upper-echelon of the Established Church existed in an uneasy alliance with the titled nobility. A sort of spoils system seemed to be in place, in which the Established Church itself was accused of bowing to the aristocracy in matters of church governance and doctrine rather than following Christian tradition or Scripture. Sights such as this woman, perhaps a mistress of an estate who certainly would claim the attention of the local clergy, would be familiar to any Victorian parishioner.

In contrast, consider Kingsley's initial description of Hypatia:

> [She was] dressed … in a simple old snow-white Ionic robe, falling to the feet and reaching to the throat … Her dress was entirely without ornament, except the two narrow purple stripes down the front, which marked her rank as a Roman citizen, the gold-embroidered shoes upon her feet, and the gold net, which looped back, from her forehead to her neck, hair the color and gloss of which were hardly distinguishable from the metal itself, such as Athene herself might have envied for tint, and mass, and ripple (31).

While Hypatia's dress is certainly not *poor*, its beauty lies in its simplicity. Any beauty comes from Hypatia herself, whose hair and skin exude it naturally. The argument Kingsley is making through this contrast is easily understood—Hypatia, whose integrity and simplicity of character, as shown through her dress, marks her as closer to true Christian faith than the proselyte who adorns herself with sacred images only to be seen and admired.

Now I will address that aspect of Christian Socialism that speaks to participation in the bodily. In a chapter titled "The Laura Again", the bishops Pambo and Arsenius, father-figures to the monk Philammon, debate the merits of their life of asceticism and solitude. As they debate, Pambo shocks Arsenius by the following admission:

> Well, friend!—and what is thou art troubled at times by anxieties and schemes for this brother or for that? Better to be anxious for others than only for thyself. Better to have something to love—even something to weep over—than to become in some lonely cavern thine own world—perhaps as more than one whom I have known, thine own God … I say, that by fleeing into solitude a man cuts himself off from all which makes a Christian man; from Law, obedience, fellow-help, self-sacrifice—from the communion of saints itself (176-177).

Withdrawal from the world, or engagement in it, of course forms one of the primary ideas in the novel, as central in the narrative as the distinction between the purely intellectual versus the 'bodily' view of faith—represented, respectively, by the early Alexandrian Christians and pagans, and by Raphael, Synesius and the roaming band of Goths.

Philammon's desire to know more of the world comes near the beginning of the novel. As he enters a deserted pagan temple while gathering firewood for his monastic cell, he sees strange engravings on the walls:

> Round their knees and round their thrones were mystic characters engraven, symbol after symbol, line below line—the ancient wisdom of the Egyptians, wherein Moses the man of God was learned of old—why should not he know it too? What awful secrets might not be hidden there about the great world, past, present and future, of which he knew only so small a speck? (19).

Philammon's initial desire to go into the world seems to come more from the curiosity for the wide world that distracted the prodigal son than from any true missionary zeal. And though Philammon announces that his desire is to "convert the world" (27), the innocence with which Philammon is characterized leads readers to believe that his mission will not be successful.

Yet, despite Philammon's obvious naiveté, he cites the great Christian patriarchs from history as examples for his mission:

> Tertullian, Origen, Clement, Cyprian—all these moved in the world; all these and many more besides, whose names we honor, whose prayers we invoke, were learned in the wisdom of the heathen, and fought and labored, unspotted in the world; and why not I? Cyril the patriarch himself, was he not called from the caves of Nitria to sit on the throne of Alexandria? (26).

In looking to these heroes of the early Christianity, Kingsley is not only voicing his own opinions regarding the necessity for Christians to be in the world, but is subversively criticizing the Tractarians of his day that valued monastic isolation. Newman and others would have undoubtedly honored men like Tertullian, Origen and Clement, and Kingsley is making the point that these men who are so revered in the monastic tradition—were not themselves monastic.

However, when Philammon does reach Alexandria, all the warnings that the Tractarians would have given him seem to come to pass. The Anglo-Catholics of the Oxford Movement, Newman in particular, had a high disdain for what he and other Tractarians termed 'Bibliolatry'; that is, the *sola scriptura* focus in Protestant and Puritan sects which allows each individual to read and interpret scripture for themselves. The fear is, that if a layman, divorced from Church History or Teachings, is given authority to interpret scripture for themselves, then they will invariably misconstrue Biblical teachings and voice heretical doctrine that participates in Christian and Humanist ideas. Philammon, introduced for the first time to pagan thought, seems to fall into the same trap.

On first hearing Hypatia speak in the atrium, Philammon begins to confuse Christian and pagan thought:

> Had not she too spoken of the unseen world, of the hope of immortality, of the conquest of the spirit over the flesh, just as a Christian might have done? Was the gulf between them so infinite? If so, why had her aspirations awakened echoes in his own heart—echoes too, just such as the prayers and lessons of the Laura used to awaken? If the fruit was so like, must not the root be like also? (145).

It is also worth mentioning that Philammon's response to Hypatia is largely based on the fact he is so enthralled by her beauty. As much as Kingsley praises the virtues of female beauty, he also seems to agree with the monks in the Laura that a woman can be a 'seductress', leading the believer away from Christian thought and worship.

Another seeming inconsistency between Kingsley's own thought and the actions of the novel comes from the character Pelagia. As a courtesan and mistress to the Amal, she forms the exact antithesis to Hypatia's mystic, cerebral paganism. As someone who participates already in 'the bodily', does Kingsley see someone like Pelagia as closer to conversion than Hypatia? If so, then Pelagia's ultimate fate reads rather oddly:

> …some twenty years ago there had arrived in those mountains a woman more beautiful than had ever before been seen in that region, dressed in rich garments; who, after a short sojourn among their tribe, having distributed among them the jewels which she wore, had embraced the eremite life, and sojourned upon the highest peak of a neighboring mountain; till, her garments failing her, she became invisible to mankind (486).

Pelagia, who in Kingsley's view, may have been closest to his ideals of the Kingdom of God, becomes more solitary than the monks themselves after fleeing to the Laura with her brother, and ends her days in an isolation more complete than any other character in the novel experiences. However, it could be that through Pelagia's fate, Kingsley is once again illustrating what he would believe to be the absurdity of monastic practices.

Finally, it is also interesting to note that Hypatia's moment of conversion, or at least the moment that humbles her enough to be guided by Raphael into Christian belief,

also is a bodily moment. Miriam, after inducing Hypatia to take narcotics, is brought before Philammon, whom she believes, in her trance, to be the god Phoebus:

> …Hypatia herself [appeared], robed in pure white, glittering with diamonds and gold, her lips parted, her head thrown back, her arms stretched out in agony of expectation.
>
> In an instant, before he had time to stir, she had sprung through the blaze, and was kneeling at his feet.
>
> "Phoebus! Beautiful, glorious, ever young! Hear me! Only a moment! Only this once!"
>
> Her drapery had caught fire from the tripod, but she did not heed it. Philammon instinctively clasped her in his arms, and crushed it out, as she cried—
>
> "Have mercy on me! Tell me the secret! I will obey thee! I have no self—I am thy slave! Kill me if thou wilt: but speak!" (416).

Philammon, caught in the grips of temptation, looks up to see Miriam's Christian slave hold up a crucifix. Regaining his senses, Philammon throws Hypatia from him and runs from the house. Coming from her trance as Philammon flees, Hypatia collapses onto the floor in 'disappointment' and 'utter shame'. While it is true that had Philammon acted, the ensuing episode would be tantamount to a rape, Hypatia's realization that her misconduct while under the influence of narcotics would be a ruin to *her own* reputation strikes the reader as particularly Victorian.

The same can be said for Philammon, whose shame at seeing his sister dance in the amphitheater is completely Victorian in tone:

> Philammon's eyes were bursting from his head with shame and horror, and yet he could not hate her; not even despise her. He would have done so, had there been the faintest trace of human feeling in her countenance, to prove that some germ of moral sense lingered within; but even the faint blush and the downcast eye with which she had entered the theatre, were gone; and the only expression on her face was that intense enjoyment of her own activity and skill, and satisfied vanity (361).

The tone of the condemnation strikes readers with the full force of Victorian moralism, particularly interesting from the minister who so many times praises female beauty.

What we have here is not so much a clash of theological ideas, but a recognition that for as much as Kingsley promotes the bodily, he remains thoroughly Victorian in his view of public salaciousness. Even in his glorification of female sexuality, it is never given validity outside of the bonds of marriage. If nothing else, the apparent tensions here speak to the complex individual that Kingsley was.

These tensions are illustrated perhaps most perfectly in Raphael's own struggle with the concept of the embodied spirituality that is the hallmark of Broad-Church thought:

> What is He were—Augustine said He was—yearning after, enlightening, leading home to Himself, the souls of the poorest, the most brutal, the most sinful? What if he loved man as man and not merely one favored race or one favored class of minds? … And in the light of that hypothesis, that strange story of the Cross of Calvary seemed not so impossible after all … But then, celibacy and asceticism, utterly non-human as they were, what had they to do with the theory of a human God? (348).

In this theological struggle, Raphael communicates to the reader not only the fundamental tenants of Broad-Church belief, but the ideals of Christian Socialism and Kingsley's own theological views. That is, authentic Christianity is that which includes people previously of all creeds and classes—pagan as well as humanist—the poor in addition to the rich. That it participates in going out to bring new believers to itself. And finally, that it acknowledges that the God of Christianity is He who took on human flesh.

There is one section of *Hypatia* in which Kingsley reacts against the system of Broad-Church thought with which he is most commonly associated. One of the leading figures of the Broad-Church Movement, Benjamin Jowett, has this to say in his chapter from *Essays and Reviews:*

> Connected with the modes of thought or representation in Scripture, are the figures of speech in Scripture, about which these same questions may be asked:

> 'What division can we make between the figure and the reality?' … Language, and especially the language of Scripture, does not admit of any sharp distinction … But neither is there anything really essential in the form of these figures; nay, the literal application of many of them has been a great stumbling block to the reception of Christianity. A recent commentator on Scripture appears willing to peril religion on the literal truth of such an expression as 'We shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.' Would he be equally ready to stake Christianity on the literal meaning of the words, 'Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched?' (519).

A lengthy passage, but the essential idea Jowett explores, common to much Broad-Church thought, is the belief that images and sections of narrative in the Bible, traditionally read as literal truth, could be read as simply metaphorical.

Yet, Kingsley turns this view of Scripture on its head in one of the most fascinating passages in the novel. In the dessert, Raphael falls into the company of no less a figure than St. Augustine himself. Augustine gives a sermon on a Psalm which celebrates the victory of Israel against Ammalek; in doing so, he first draws on the medieval tradition of mystical interpretation. Raphael seethes:

> But yet, why were the Edomites, by an utterly mistaken pun on their name, to signify one sort of sin, and the Ammonites another, and the Amalekites another? What had that to do with the old psalm? What had it to do with the present auditory? Was not this the wildest and lowest form of that unreal, subtilizing, mystic pedantry, of which he had sickened long ago in Hypatia's lecture room, till he fled to Bran, the dog, for honest practical realities? (345).

But Augustine quickly changes from the mystical and figurative to the literal:

> Gradually, as Augustine's hints became more practical and pointed, Raphael saw that there was in his mind a most real and organic connection, true or false, in what seemed at first mere arbitrary allegory. Amalekites, personal sins, Ausurian robbers and ravishers, were to him only so many different forms of one and the same evil. He who helped any of them fought against the righteous God; he who fought against them fought for that God; but he must conquer the Amalekites within, if he expected to conquer the Amalekites without (345).

Augustine does not speak of Amalekites merely as a figure for sin, but expresses the connection between personal and national sin in the life of Israel during their sojourn in

the Wilderness. Augustine reads even the metaphors of the Bible as guides to literal, spiritual truths. Upon hearing this interpretation, Raphael reflects on the possibility of the gospel's truth. The moment, in fact, becomes salvific:

> What if Augustine were right in going even further than Philo and Hypatia? What if this same Jehovah, Wisdom, Logos, call Him what they might, were actually the God of the spirits as well as of the bodies of all flesh? … What if He loved man as man and not merely one favored race or one favored class of minds? … And in the light of that hypothesis, that strange story of the Cross of Calvary seemed not so impossible after all … (348).

Raphael ends his reflection by questioning, "But then, celibacy and asceticism, utterly non-human as they were, what had they to do with the theory of a human God?" (348).

Unlike the liberal dictates of the Broad-Church tradition of his day (as it came to Scripture), Kingsley's view of the Bible is imbued with that bodily 'Muscular Christianity' that forms the basis of all his theological thought. Like the true relationship between God and man, the Bible is a bodily thing—a real book telling real stories of real people, including that of the prophet who bodily died and rose again.

Notes

[1] In *The Victorian Christian Socialist*, Edward Norman acknowledges these disparate parts of his personality: "Kingsley's sermons and novels seem to disclose an extrovert, showing the prejudices of landed society, yet decently open to the obligation of attending to the welfare of the poor, a man of common sense and practicality, a 'muscular Christian' and an English nationalist, a Broad Churchman of liberal judgments. He was certainly all these things, but he was the opposite of most of them also … The sporting parson … was also given to regular nervous collapses and neurotic illnesses … The stalwart anti-Catholic propagandist was at the same time plainly fascinated and attracted by the Roman practices he so vehemently denounced" (37).

[2] In *Christian Socialism in England,* Arthur V. Woodworth delineates the reasons why the Chartist Movement gained such force in England: "Aside from the spirit of revolution which seemed to be in the air from 1830 to 1848, there were three main causes which gave direction to the movement in England. The first of these was the result of the Reform Bill of 1832 … [which] actually restricted the rights of free-men to vote … The second cause was the repeal of the Poor Law of Elizabeth. Under this old law, a person need only have the name entered on the parish role to be sure of relief. But with the repeal of the law in 1834 all outdoor relief stopped … But the underlying cause of all the distress was the readjustment of economic conditions consequent upon the substitution of machinery for the old hand trades. This meant the introduction of the factory system, and the herding of great masses in the towns. It was, in fact, the first step in the problem of the great cities" (2-3).

[3] As Ludlow did not have a direct impact on the life of Kingsley, he is the one man of the triumvirate that I do not really give attention to in this chapter. That being said, I would like to give some information about him here, as his life and character is as fascinating a study as the other two men of the group. From Raven: "[Ludlow's] mind was fertile and constructive, and, thanks to his wide interests and tireless energy, well-stored with knowledge. Not only was he expert in the study of law, politics and economics, but he had an extensive acquaintance both with men and books. His own writings cover a variety of subjects, and in the letters of Maurice and Kingsley there is abundant evidence that his opinion was asked and given on topics far removed from the usual regions of culture. He made an extensive and methodical collection of papers and reports bearing on social and economic subjects … Sir Norman Moore … has recorded that he knew more than a dozen languages; and there is proof in all his later work of his intimate and first-hand study of continental writers upon sociology and politics" (60).

[4] For all their talk of goodwill to the people, we must keep in mind that Maurice in particular was still very much a man of his time, raised with a very fixed notion of class identity. As John C. Cort tells us regarding Maurice's writing in the periodical, "He extolled liberty and fraternity, but that did not mean political enfranchisement according to Chartist demands. If we only felt our fraternity with the rich strongly enough, and they their fraternity with us, then all would be well. He did not put it quite that baldly, but this was the general intent. The lower classes were not ready for the vote. The lower classes were not ready for the vote. Organizations, political parties, trade unions, strikes—these implied a denial of 'the Divine Order.' It was all rather pathetic … [Thankfully,] Kingsley was better. He shared some of Maurice's aristocratic bias, but he felt more keenly the terrible injustice and oppression of the poor … Ludlow was even better. With his French background and French education, he leaned more decisively in the direction of democracy and he expressed his leanings in clearer and more logical language than either of the others" (143-144).

[5] i.e. the chartist petition of April 10th

[6] Though the official movement itself did not last more than seven years, the Christian Socialists accomplished quite a lot. Bernard Murchland outlines the accomplishments of the great triumvirate: "They formed study clubs, recruited new colleagues, conducted classes in the London slums, crusaded for sanitary reform, published at great length, formed a Society for Promoting Working Men's Associations … and eventually established a working men's college—all in the short space of seven years! … As Maurice was fond of saying, the aim of the movement was to Christianize the unchristian socialists and socialize the unsocial Christians" (5).

[7] As is the case today, most Christians that hold to a traditional view of Christianity would agree with Drew the Vicar and *disagree* with Kingsley. In his chapter from *The Rhetoric of Christianity*, Lyman Abbot articulates the distinction between Christianity and Social Reform: "…in social reform, we are to begin with the lowest factor in man and work up to the higher. First, it says, deal with the body, then with the intellect, then with the ethical nature, and finally … with the spiritual condition of things … But in Christ's order, spirit comes first, morality second, the intellect third, body last of all … When that spiritual nature has been kindled into life, it will develop an ethical life, it will demand an intellectual education, it will build up for itself the conditions of physical well being" (74-75).

[8] Take, for example, the initial description given to the Goth's courtesan, Pelagia: "Her little bare feet, as they dimpled the cusions, were more perfect than Aphrodite's, softer than a swan's bosom. Every swell of her bust and arms showed through the thin gauze robe, while her lower limbs were wrapped in a shaw of orange silk" (37).

[9] In fact, Susann Dorman believes that *Hypatia* is where Kingsley first expressed the views that he and Newman would eventually cross swords over. She sets it up as an analytical comparison to Newman's *Callista*. The battle of letters occurred in 1864, "This encounter was not, however," says Dorman, "the initial skirmish between the two. The battle lines for their 1864 conflict were drawn a decade earlier in their allegorical historical novels, *Hypatia* (1853) and *Callista* (1855), which embody the philosophical assumptions and practical consequences of two quite opposite Christian ideologies" (173).

Similarly, in "Childhood, Severed Heads, and the Uncanny: Freudian Precursors", Sally Shuttleworth finds a way to tie the philosophical foundations of *Hypatia* to Victorian sentiments regarding Catholic 'mysticism': "Although *Hypatia* was set in fifth-century Alexandria, its real subject of attack was the Victorian Roman Catholic church, which offended Kingsley's muscular Christianity. Kingsley announces in his preface that his work celebrates the Christian, scientific metaphysic that battles against 'that strange brood of theoretic monsters begotten by effete Greek philosophy upon Egyptian symbolism, Chaldee astrology, Parsee dualism, Brahminic spiritualism' (xiii); in other words, an indiscriminate mix of suspect Eastern practices" (94).

On the other hand, Stanwood S. Walker argues that *Hypatia* is a novel representing Kingsley's view that the English nation needs to return to the masculine ideals of its Germanic ancestors: "The idea that *Hypatia* represents an important step in the development of Kingsley's thinking about national redemption through the means of a rejuvenating manly Teutonic imperialism is not apparent on first glance … On closer examination, though, it becomes evident that Kingsley's first historical novel is in large measure structured by his search for a firmer historical basis for his imagined resolution to the social and political divisiveness of his own time (354-355).

On this theme of masculinity and Kingsley's well-known appellative 'Muscular Christianity', Henry R. Harrington analyzes *Hypatia* through the lens of Kingsley's athleticism and 'the sporting moment'. Harrington begins his analysis by looking at the passage in which Philammon first leaves The Laura, dreaming of the wide world before him. "These dreams," states Harrington, "are suddenly interrupted by 'a man of gigantic stature' harpooning a hippopotamus for sport in the Nile. In this scene the sport offers Philammon not so much escape (or punishment) as initiation into the world … Withdrawal from the sporting moment here would be equivalent to withdrawal from the world" (81).

[10] In relation to the reading of the novel in terms of gendered types, the only criticism which is interested in the depictions of the feminine as opposed to the masculine, comes from Norman Vance, who sees the depictions of Hypatia and Pelagia and mythical 'types' of divine womanhood: "While Hypatia's intellectualism recalls the cold virginity of Pallas Athene, Pelagia's name (Greek for 'of the sea') and her dramatic dancing of the rising of Aphrodite from the waves firmly associate her with Venus/Aphrodite. Kingsley makes the mythic explicit in a chapter entitled 'Pallas and Venus'. Both women are pagan, though opposite in all other ways, and yet Kingsley's sympathetic imagination sees the possibilities of goodness and an inchoate Christianity in them. The fusing of intellect with (respectable) sexuality, represented in semi-mythical terms in Hypatia and Pelagia, constitutes ideal Christian womanhood (181).

[11] "The book was considered off-color by Kingsley's clerical contemporaries," says John Debyshire, "not so much because of those quivering limbs—his account of Hypatia's death is quite restrained—but because, in his zeal for historical accuracy, Kingsley had Hypatia say just the kinds of

scornful things about Christianity that Hellenized pagan intellectuals of the fifthe century *did* say" (60). But though the clerical world was scandalized, the literary world seemed to admire it greatly: "Kingsley had the pleasure of receiving warm eulogies on the book from Sir Charles Wood … Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, and Dr. Keate. Elizabeth Sewell was made very unhappy by the unsociable picture of Christianity it disclosed, but at the same time thought it 'a marvel'" (Pope-Hennessy 121). If the novel received poor as well as positive reviews, Kingsley could at least be satisfied that these reports came from the halls of the great: "Tennyson after reading the novel with great attention objected to the use of the word 'naked'. He did not mind Pelagia being stripped, but he could not bear that the virtuous Hypatia should be subjected to a similar ignominy … The Queen read *Hypatia* with enjoyment and let it be known that she greatly preferred it to Mr. Kingsley's other works. Froude thought it infinitely better and more artistic than anything Kingsley had done" (Pope-Hennessey 123).

CHAPTER FOUR

Making Christ Real:
George Eliot's Evangelical Sympathy in *Adam Bede*

Evangelical characters are not treated well by most major Victorian novelists. Representing mostly lower-class or laboring peoples, Evangelicals—lay-persons and ministers alike—are often given stereotyped or parodic depictions. Uneducated, slaves to their appetites, their invectives filled with fire-and-brimstone condemnation, the Evangelical in the Victorian novel is a grotesque pastiche of social immoralities.

And yet, when we come to the writings of George Eliot we find something distinctly different. In *Scenes of Clerical Life* on, Eliot depicts her lower-class peoples, many of whom are Evangelical or Protestant Nonconformists, with that sympathy with which she has become so imminently associated. Most scholars, focusing the distinctions of class that these characterizations generally speak to, argue that such sympathy comes from her adulthood shift towards a humanistic belief system. However, in this chapter I will argue that such a view misses a very important aspect of Eliot's personal life: her own Evangelical heritage. By the time Eliot became the novelist we all know, she had certainly, to all external considerations, left the faith in which she was raised behind her. However, I argue that the Evangelical aesthetic found in the novel is influenced by Eliot's own background in Evangelicalism. In fact, I would like to suggest (though it cannot ever be concisely proven) that Eliot's Evangelical sympathies do not come completely and absolutely from her modern shift toward humanism, but that one

explanation for this aesthetic found in the novel might in some way emanate from the influence that Evangelical religious forms had on her early life.

George Eliot's evangelical heritage directly informs the pages of *Adam Bede*. However, in order to see the connection between the novel and Eliot's own Evangelical aesthetic, readers must first understand the primary tenants of 19th century Evangelicalism. Even more importantly, readers must also understand Eliot's own personal association with Evangelicalism, and how this movement influences her work as an author, even indirectly. Once understood, the Evangelicalism of *Adam Bede* becomes evident through the morally sympathetic portrayals of Methodism and Methodist Dissenters.

The most important attribute of the early Methodist Movement is that it occupied a middle ground between Anglicanism and Dissent. Owen Chadwick gives this description:

> The Methodists were not sure whether they were dissenters. Wesley bequeathed the puzzle of this attitude, that he wanted not to separate from the Church of England while his acts led towards separation. A Methodist of 1834 said that he was like an oarsman who faced the Church of England while he rowed steadily away (370).

Eventually, the Methodists did separate themselves from the Established Church. As Chadwick puts it, "…calamitous stress would still have troubled Methodists even if there were no state church to respect or repudiate. The constitution of the Connexion was ill suited to the facts of Methodist life" (371). What does Chadwick mean by this?

As with the Tractarians, sectarian division in Victorian England is never simply a matter of doctrine. As important, if not more so, are matters of class and topography. With all the doctrinal squabbles that precede a sectarian split, a more democratic and

individualized system of belief and church government is simply more accessible to the laboring men and women of England's rural villages, where Methodism flourished. Well into the nineteenth century, the face of England bore the scars of the forced expulsion generated by the enclosure movement; and those expelled would always remember that beside the manor house on the land which they used to call their own, sat the Anglican parish church.

This is not to say that the separation is without its doctrinal basis. Wesley spoke of an individual heart conversion and preached in the open air to those who had begun to view the Established Church as an unfeeling parent. The separation bred a movement that would consume all England: "Evangelicals owed their origins or revival to men who generated Methodism" (Chadwick 441). Chadwick outlines the basic tenants of this movement which may at times be difficult to classify:

> Evangelicals were as various as Tractarians. They held certain broad principles. They were men of the Reformation, who preached the cross, the depravity of man, and justification by faith alone. Some of them were Calvinists and more of them were not. Most of them had little use or time for doctrines of predestination and reprobation. But they loved the song of sovereign grace, and respected Calvinist dogmas where they did not share them … They pondered long and daily over the Bible, were decisive and orthodox Protestants, embraced a Pauline interpretation of the Gospel, and were friendly to orthodox and Protestant dissenters. Rome they feared with the fear of antichrist. Romanisers within the Church of England rallied them to the defence of truth (441).

Such was the passionate ideology in which George Eliot was raised.

Eliot's depiction of her Evangelical and in particular, lower-class Evangelical characters, is far more sympathetic than similar depictions given by other novelists in the period. But from where does this sympathy originate? In the opinion of most scholars, Eliot's moral sympathy is the result of her own personal ideological shift from

Evangelical religious belief to humanism. To understand this shift, it may be helpful to trace Eliot's own religious history.

The first phase of Evans's[1] life was next to idyllic. "The society into which Eliot was born," writes one biographer, "seemed to her as parallel to Eden, especially in her growing-up years when her father administered large properties and the family lived well indeed in rural terms" (Karl, 7). But far more important than the provincial surroundings in which she grew up, and which would inspire the world of her novels, was the presence of her family, her father most especially.

As a novelist, George Eliot would immortalize her father in two of the greatest compliments to a very traditional masculinity that exists in literature: Caleb Garth in *Middlemarch*, and Adam Bede. This relationship between father and daughter is important for two especial reasons. On the one hand, much of Eliot's adult life seems to have been pre-determined by the fact that marriage would not be part of her future. After the death of her mother, Evans became the mistress of the house, essentially her own father's caretaker now that both brother and sister had left.

More importantly, however, it was Robert Evans that would bear first and foremost the full impact of Mary Ann's crisis of faith. Robert was an extreme conservative—in her formative years, Mary Ann would begin to challenge this traditionalism first through a change in her religious passions.

It is essential that we see Mary Anne's gradual shift toward humanism as more than a natural outpouring of her own intellectual growth; rather, this shift is, in part, the

[1] Throughout the chapter, I refer to the author as both Marianne Evans and George Eliot. This is done to signify the two major periods in Eliot's life both religiously (Anglican / Evangelical to Humanist / Agnostic) and professionally (caretaker, journalist / novel writer). When referring to this early period of Eliot's life, it will always be as Evans and then Eliot for the latter.

result of her early marginalization. Any re-telling of her early childhood should be done with this in mind. At the age of nine, Mary Ann was sent to Mrs. Wallington's boarding school in Nuneaton-Milby. An incredibly precocious child, Mary Ann had already read almost all of Scott's *Waverly* novels before the age of ten. At Mrs. Wallington's school, the head teacher Maria Lewis soon discovered her student's facility with the written word, and took special care to guide her education personally. The two shared as strong a bond as could be developed between student and teacher—Mary Ann was eager to learn, and Lewis eager to instruct. Yet, it was not in classical education that the teacher had the greatest impact on her pupil, but in the bestowal of her Evangelical fervor[1]. For Mary Ann, whose personality had already a natural bent toward introspection to a degree far beyond her years, the new Evangelicalism was a perfect fit.

The school provided exactly the intellectual and emotional stimulation Mary Anne so desperately craved, and her teacher Maria Lewis became a close friend as well as mentor. The young girl took to every ideal of her mentor with a passionate intensity[2]. Sadly, this new religious zeal would cause a severe break in her home life. According to Karl, "Robert Evans would have been horrified if he had recognized what an influence Maria Lewis was having on his youngest child" (23). Of course, the great blow would come when Mary Anne refused to attend any religious services all together.

For those familiar with Eliot only through her novels, particularly those such as *Middlemarch* or *Daniel Deronda*, in which her "Religion of Humanity" reaches its zenith, the leap from Evangelical to Humanist would seem jarring, if not completely incongruous. This leap makes more sense, however, if we view Eliot's Evangelical zeal simply as one more step in her intellectual growth. Evangelicalism, with its focus on

domestic missions, gave Mary Anne something to engage her intellect. With this in mind, Eliot's final ideological / religious shift is not as sudden as might originally be believed. She simply did not fit into the traditional, religious community she was born into. Her mind was of a much more active kind than nearly all the women around her. Most importantly, as she grew older it became clear that marriage did not seem to be a valid option. Caught between the traditional home-life of her provincial childhood, and the traditional domestic role of a possible future, Eliot sought to free herself from the ideology that seemingly gave rise to both.

As with her conversion to Evangelicalism, Marian's final turn to Humanism and Skepticism was the result of years of intellectual preparation. It began with Eliot's own view of the world as an indifferent place void of compassion; a view in complete opposition to that of orthodox Christianity, which posits a loving, sovereign God with a particular plan for each life.[3] However, though Eliot saw the universe as indifferent, she was not content to use the absence of God as an excuse for moral relativism, or to deny the existence of a *something* beyond the immanent world. Rather, Eliot sought to craft a new religious ideology that would in some way be a middle ground between orthodoxy and complete atheistic nihilism[4]

Eliot attempted to retain what she felt was the positive in the Christian message. Ultimately, she ended by giving the orthodox Christian 'spirit' a humanist 'body'[5]. Stripping Christ of the deity he is attributed by orthodox believers, Eliot focuses on his works of compassion towards others. This approach to Christian thought is very similar to what we will see in both Kingsley and Dickens—a 'social gospel' focused on the works of Christ rather than his person. The primary difference of course being that both

Dickens and Kingsley never rejected Christ's divine nature. As a corollary of sorts to this rejection, Eliot also believes that compassion between man and man is just as redemptive and salvific as that which orthodox believers claim to be possible only by the power of God through Christ. If Eliot's Church is centered on Man, then Sympathy is this Church's central creed and confession.

While there is certainly much evidence for connecting Eliot's sympathy to the humanistic views that she adopts later in life, this analysis strikes me as incomplete. In *Middlemarch*, Eliot describes a human being as "a very wonderful whole, the slow creation of long interchanging influences" (381); this phrase describes Eliot's own psychological development perfectly. Eliot's evangelical faith was such an important part of her adolescence, that though she did, at least outwardly, turn to humanism and claim it as her express worldview as a novelist, those 'slow … interchanging influences' that were so deeply rooted in her psyche at such a young age remained with her throughout her life. With this in mind, Eliot's 'break' with Evangelicalism, I argue, was certainly not a clean one. The continued influence of an evangelical aesthetic on the writer might be suggested by the personal correspondence from the early part of her life which we have access to.

In a collection of letters compiled and edited by her husband John Cross, a young George Eliot, barely nineteen, reveals to readers the personality which was crafted by her early Evangelical ideals. Letters compiled during this period are almost exclusively between Eliot and her early evangelical mentor, Miss Lewis. If we are looking for themes of moral sympathy in the young Eliot, however, we may at first be disappointed. In a letter dated August 18th of 1838, Eliot writes to Lewis:

> For my part, when I hear of the marrying and giving in marriage that is constantly being transacted, I can only sigh for those who are multiplying earthly ties which, though powerful enough to detach their hearts and thoughts from heaven, are so brittle as to be liable to be snapped asunder at every breeze … Still, I must believe that those are happiest who are not fermenting themselves by engaging in projects for earthly bliss, who are considering this life merely a pilgrimage, a scene calling for diligence and watchfulness, not for repose and amusement. I do not deny that there may be many who can partake with a high degree of zest of all the lawful enjoyments the world can offer, and yet live in near communion with their God—who can warmly love the creature, and yet be careful that the Creator maintains his supremacy in their hearts; but I confess that, in my short experience and narrow sphere of action, I have never been able to attain to this. I find, as Dr. Johnson said respecting his wine, total abstinence much easier than moderation (Eliot, 30).

Eliot's early evangelical ideals seem to lead to an almost ascetic renunciation of communion with others, viewing relationships with others as not only inferior to, but a distraction from her relationship with God. Eliot's own phrase comparing her decision to isolate herself from earthly ties to abstaining from alcohol strikes the reader as unusual, if not cynical or even jaded to a degree.

Yet, we also know that Eliot's early life felt very isolated to in many ways, in particular after the marriage of her brother, Isaac. On the approach of this marriage, she has the following to say in a letter to Miss Lewis: "I will only hint that there seems a probability of my being an unoccupied damsel, of my being severed from all the ties that have hitherto given my existence the semblance of a usefulness beyond that of making up the requisite quantum of animal matter in the universe" (Eliot, 49). If Eliot feels that her relationship with her brother, and her 'usefulness' to him is that which gives her life its greatest meaning, then she seems to contradict the ideas expressed in the first letter. Clearly, a compassionate sympathy for and with others is something that Eliot holds to be extremely important.

In fact, in moving to Coventry, on the heels of her brother Isaac's wedding, Eliot seems to feel the want of companionship poignantly:

> I have of late felt a depression that has disordered the vision of my mind's eye and made me alive to what is certainly a fact (though my imagination when I am in health is an adept at concealing it), that I am alone in the world. I do not mean to be so sinful as to say that I have not friends most undeservedly kind and tender, and disposed to form a far too favorable estimate of me, but I mean that I have no one who enters into my pleasures or my griefs, no one with whom I can pour out my soul, no one with the same yearnings, the same temptations, the same delights as myself (Eliot, 64).

What is interesting is that Eliot's isolation and her shift towards a humanist mindset occurred almost concurrently. And though my job is that of literary critic rather than psychologist, these two ideas seem strongly connected. I have no doubt that Eliot's new-found humanism provided the intellectual and emotional balm the young woman needed after her profound isolation.

We also find, early in life, Eliot siding with dissenters. As an Evangelical, Eliot had a natural sympathy for Non-Conformists. We see this in another letter to Lewis:

> On no subject do I veer to all points of the compass more frequently than on the nature of the visible Church … I have been skimming the "Portrait of an English Churchman," by the Rev. W. Gresley: this contains an outline of the system of those who exclaim of the Anglican Church as the Jews did of their sacred building … "the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord" is exclusively theirs; while the authors of the Oxford Tracts go a step further, and evince by their compliments to Rome, as a dear though erring sister, and their attempts to give a Romish color to our ordinance, with a very confused and unscriptural statement of the great doctrine of justification, a disposition rather to fraternize with the members of a Church carrying on her brow the prophetical epithets applied by St. John to the scarlet beast, the mystery of iniquity, than with pious Nonconformists. It is true they disclaim all this, and that their opinions are seconded by the extensive learning, the laborious zeal, and the deep devotion of those who propagate them; but a reference to facts will convince us that such has generally been the character of heretical teachers. Satan is too crafty to commit his cause into the hands of those who have nothing to recommend them to approbation. According to their dogmas, the Scotch Church and the foreign Protestant Churches, as well as the non-Episcopalians of our own

> land, are wanting in the essentials of existence as part of the Church (Eliot, 40-41).

For one, it is fascinating to see a figure, who in later years would be so identified with the agnosticism in which she made her character as novelist, speaking with such erudition on the major sectarian divisions of the Church in her day. But it is also important to see Eliot's sympathy with Evangelical Nonconformity—a sympathy that is evident in *Adam Bede*. In thinking of sympathy, the most important idea in this letter is her criticism of Oxford Movement Tractarians who have "a disposition to fraternize" with the Roman Church rather than give any hearing to "pious Nonconformists". This statement is the seed for that long passage in *Adam Bede,* quoted later, in which Eliot asks readers to reconsider our assumptions concerning Methodists and other Nonconformists. Eliot is faulting the Tractarians for basing their preference on historicity and "extensive learning" rather than on evidence of a life lived in piety, which many local Nonconformists give the example of. As she does in *Adam Bede*, Eliot is in this letter desirous of seeing a change in her culture's assumptions regarding sectarian leanings and divisions.

What I believe we ultimately have in Eliot is the blending of two types of faith, and that her sympathy for the religiously marginalized never disappeared. There is one last letter from Eliot I wish to examine, written to her friend and tutor Mrs. Pears after her reading of Higher Criticism and subsequent change in belief. We can see Eliot attempt to exist in both of these worlds, though she has also clearly rejected the faith in which she was raised. The letter itself, and the penultimate sentence in particular, is of great interest to any question regarding the personal faith of the author of *Adam Bede*:

> We have not, perhaps, been so systematic as a regular tutor and pupil would have been, but we crave indulgence for some laxity … To *fear* the examination of any proposition appears to me an intellectual and a moral palsy that will ever hinder

> the firm grasping of any substance whatever. For my part, I wish to be among the ranks of that glorious crusade that is seeking to set Truth's Holy Sepulchre free from a usurped domination. We shall then see her resurrection! Meanwhile, although I cannot rank among my principles of action a fear of vengeance eternal, gratitude for predestined salvation, or a revelation of future glories as a reward, I fully participate in the belief that the only heaven here, or hereafter, is to be found in conformity with the will of the Supreme; a continual aiming at the attainment of the perfect ideal, the true *logos* that dwells in the bosom of the one Father. **I hardly know whether I am ranting after the fashion of one of the Primitive Methodist prophetesses, with a cart for her rostrum**, I am writing so fast. Good-bye, and blessings on you, as they will infallibly be on the children of peace and virtue (Eliot, 76-77; emphasis added).

Before speaking to the most obvious connection, it is interesting to see how Eliot blends her old and new philosophies together. Skeptic though she has become, she is not willing to give up the idea of faith which was laid so strongly early on. It is also interesting to note that she still maintains a sympathy here with people of orthodox faith, and even respects their desire to seek for the Divine.

In fact, much of Eliot's language, even here, borrows from the storehouse of the religious vocabulary that she still has access to. She wishes to count herself as "among the ranks of that glorious crusade that is seeking to set Truth's Holy Sepulchre free from a usurped domination", a reference to the banishment of Islamic rule over Jerusalem by Medieval Christian crusaders. She also calls the ideal "the true *logos* that dwells within the bosom of one Father", a reference to the beginning of the gospel of John.

Of course, an orthodox believer would respond to this letter by stating that Eliot's appropriation of language from Scripture and referents to events in Christian history does not, in fact, give her humanist views the force of truth. But that is not the point. Yes, Eliot is by this time an apostate, but the very fact that she appropriates Biblical, Protestant phrases and images means that she still finds in them a modicum of security. It is

something that she returns to in an almost natural way—a language that has buried itself within her psyche.

Finally, it is impossible for a work of criticism on *Adam Bede* to pass over a reference to a female Methodist ranter in Eliot's own personal correspondence without comment. To begin with, this reference suggests it was perhaps more than the story told by her aunt which provided inspiration for the character of Dinah Morris. And while Eliot's reference to the ranter is meant to be taken in a semi-comical vein, the tone is not entirely negative. In an earlier letter, we see the emergence of Eliot's proto-feminism. In a letter dated April 28th of 1841, Eliot expresses her frustration with the idea that an intellectual woman must seem to disguise her own intellect, presumably to keep herself from intruding into the male sphere: "One of the penalties women must pay for modern deference to their intellect is, I suppose, that they must give reasons for their conduct, after the fashion of men. The days are past for pleading a woman's reason" (Eliot, 63-64).

This is why the figure of the female ranter is important to Eliot, and remained important even after her shift towards humanism. She saw that Primitive circuit Methodism provided a platform (both figuratively and literally) for the woman who had no access to public education to speak in the public sphere. I would also argue that Eliot's sympathy with the rural classes and their beliefs cannot be separated from her sympathy with the Intellectual Woman, marginalized in her own time.

Finally, as with the appropriation of Scriptural language used in the earlier part of the letter, Eliot's reference to the female ranter speaks once again to the importance of these images within Eliot's own psychological make-up. Ultimately, even if Eliot denies the form of faith, she cannot deny its power, both socially and culturally.

The best way for us to recognize the profound distinction between Eliot's treatment of Evangelicals and the way they are typically portrayed by other nineteenth-century authors is to first look at a few of the most popular examples from her contemporaries in the period.

Author Anthony Trollope, himself a committed Anglican, gave readers one of the most grotesque portrayals of an Evangelical minister in his depiction of the Reverend Obadiah Slope from *Barchester Towers*. As many authors will do, Rev. Slope's grotesqueries begin first with his physical appearance. Though Trollope tells us that "on the whole his figure is good", "His countenance … is not specially prepossessing." Thereupon follows this description:

> His hair is lank, and of a dull pale-reddish hue. It is always formed into three straight, lumpy masses, each brushed with admirable precision, and cemented with much grease; two of them adhere closely to the sides of his face, and the other lies at right angles above them … His face is nearly of the same colour as his hair, though perhaps a little redder: it is not unlike beef – beef, however, one would say, of a bad quality. His forehead is capacious and high, but square and heavy, and unpleasantly shining. His mouth is large, though his lips are thin and bloodless. His nose … is pronounced straight and well-formed; though I myself should have liked it better did it not possess a somewhat spongy, porous appearance, as though it had been cleverly formed out of a red-coloured cork (24).

Slope's body is well-formed, but his countenance is oily and rough. This is particularly important in the Victorian era—the era of death masks and phrenology—as countenance was believed to convey not only mental and emotional capacities, but moral qualities. His 'oiliness' suggests a character prone to the manipulation of others, as well as a distinct lack of genuine human sympathy. Anyone with a face like Slope's would be assumed to be bereft of any true religious sentiment. In other words, a hypocrite. In addition, Slope's red-cork face that has the appearance of 'bad beef' would suggest unpent masculine

sexual urges. To the careful reader, Slope's appearance would suggest the character of a religious hypocrite and a lech—both of which turn out to be the case.

Evangelicals were held in disdain, not only for their 'common' appearance or level of intelligence, but also for their 'ill-bred' manners and mode of conduct. Of particularly severe depiction are female proselytes, typically widows and spinsters, to whom Evangelicalism, with its focus on witness and missions, gave purpose outside of the home. The most typical response to these proselytes and their oblivious, driven manner ranges from slight annoyance to severe vexation. Ultimately, the end of such evangelical fervor serves only to further increase the widespread social disdain for Evangelicals. Such a character is presented to us in Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone*. Miss Clack serves as Collins's whipping-post, an evangelical 'busy-body' on whom he can vent his sectarian anger. Miss Clack stands as a representative of the whole evangelical sect, who Collins despised for their condemnation of his living with a woman to whom he was not married.

Miss Clack is a spinster with an intense martyr complex. She trundles about London with a handbag full of book-length tracts which he flings (sometimes literally) towards friends, family, and everyone else. When a young servant answers the door for her, Clack offers her a tract, which she politely refuses. Undaunted, Miss Clack tells us what follows, "We must sow the good seed somehow. I waited till the door was shut on me, and slipped the tract into the letterbox. When I had dropped another tract through the area railings, I felt relieved, in some small degree, of a heavy responsibility towards others" (203). It is abundantly clear that Clack's evangelizing only separates her further from others, rather than bringing them closer to her (or to Christ).

Clack's behavior, born from her Evangelical zeal, ranges from passively-aggressive to … actively-aggressive:

> I drove home, selected and marked my first series of readings, and drove back to Montagu Square, with a dozen works in a carpet-bag, the like of which, I firmly believe, are not to be found in the literature of any other country in Europe. I paid the cabman exactly his fare. He received it with an oath; upon which I instantly gave him a tract. If I had presented a pistol at his head, this abandoned wretch could hardly have exhibited greater consternation He jumped up on his box, and, with profane exclamations of dismay, drove off furiously. Quite useless, I am happy to say! I sowed the good seed, in spite of him, by throwing a second tract in at the window of his cab (224).

The more aggressive Clack is with her mission, the more she is refused. The more she is refused, the more aggressive she becomes. From aggressive, Clack ends finally by becoming ridiculous:

> Here was a golden opportunity! I seized it on the spot. In other words, I instantly opened my bag, and took out the top publication. It proved to be an early edition—only the twenty-fifth—of the famous anonymous work (believed to be by precious Miss Bellows), entitled *The Serpent at Home.* The design of the book—with which the worldly reader may not be acquainted—is to show how the Evil One lies in wait for us in all the most apparently innocent actions of our daily lives. The chapters best adapted to female perusal are 'Satan in the Hair Brush'; 'Satan behind the looking Glass'; 'Satan Under the Tea Table'; 'Satan out of the Window'—and many others … With those words, I handed it to her open, at a marked passage—one continuous burst of burning eloquence! Subject: Satan among the Sofa Cushions (231-232).

Of course, Collins, like his close friend Charles Dickens, was first and foremost a writer of comic, sensationalist fiction. But even considering this, any casual reader of *The Moonstone* would find Miss Clack's character oddly out of place. She is clearly a pastiche of the Victorian Era's attitudes and stereotyped depictions of Evangelicals; a consideration made even clearer by the fact that her role in moving the narrative forward is minimal at best.

If Trollope's sense of Evangelicals is grotesque, and Collins's is ridiculous, then Dickens's is both. The description of the Reverend Chadband given in *Bleak House* is one of the most grotesque of any similar portrait of low-churchmen in the Victorian novel:

> Mr Chadband is a large yellow man, with a fat smile, and a general appearance of having a good deal of train oil in his system … [he] moves softly and cumbrously, not unlike a bear who has been taught to walk upright. He is very much embarrassed about the arms, as if they were inconvenient to him, and he wanted to grovel; is very much in perspiration about the head; and never speaks without first putting up his great hand, as delivering a token to his hearers that he is going to edify them (305).

Chadband's size is an indication that he is a man totally given to his own 'fleshly' appetites. As Slope is almost entirely controlled by his lust, Chadband is similarly directed by his 'gormandizing'. Chadband's oily appearance and continual perspiration is, like Slope's greasy hair and face, indicative of a lack of authentic Christian sympathy. He cares more for the welfare of his own stomach than for the poor, starving Jo who is brought to the house where he is residing. As will be mentioned in my last chapter, Chadband's habit of holding up his hand before speaking adds to the idea that he exhibits no true compassionate sympathy—pushing away Jo, who most needs the care and aid of others. Finally, the depiction of Chadband as a 'bear who has been taught to walk upright' speaks to Dickens's opinion concerning the level of intelligence he believes most low-churchmen to have. In fact, Chadband's manner, taken together with his appetite and the way he uses language (a stringing together of useless repeated phrases and circular logic), suggests that Chadband is more animal than human, a creature driven purely by his own conditioned instincts, incapable of original thought.

However, when we come to George Eliot's depiction of Evangelical characters in a novel like *Adam Bede*, we find something entirely different than what we are used to seeing. In her description of Methodism, Eliot is certainly aware of the typical depiction evangelicals and other low-churchmen are given in the novel, and seems to be speaking to this depiction, along with the general feeling held by the middle-classes toward low-church sects; particularly those from more rural areas:

> It is too possible that to some of my readers Methodism may mean nothing more than low-pitched gables up dingy streets, sleek grocers, sponging preachers, and hypo-critical jargon—elements which are regarded as an exhaustive analysis of Methodism in many fashionable quarters.
>
> That would be a pity; for I cannot pretend that Seth and Dinah were anything else than Methodists … of a very old-fashioned kind. They believed in present miracles, in instantaneous conversions, in revelations by dreams and visions; they drew lots, and sought for Divine guidance by opening the Bible at hazard; having a literal way of interpreting the Scriptures, which is not at all sanctioned by approved commentators … Still … it is possible—thank Heaven!—to have very erroneous theories and very sublime feelings …
>
> Considering these things, we can hardly think Dinah and Seth beneath our sympathy, accustomed as we may be to weep over the loftier sorrows of heroines in satin boots and crinoline, and of heroes riding fiery horses, themselves ridden by still more fiery passions (47-48).

In looking at this passage, we see a much more sympathetic depiction of low-church characters and ministers than is generally found in the Victorian novel. In fact, if we examine this very important passage a paragraph at a time, we can see the typical stereotypes concerning Evangelical character that Eliot seems to be writing against.

In the first paragraph, Eliot sets up what is surely a very popular, common view of Evangelicals as a sect. They live in "dingy-streets", and are traditionally represented by the lower and middle classes. As with all things in Victorian England, religious affiliation is riddled by the vicissitudes of a deeply stratified class-system. It is with no surprise which we learn that Eliot's father was both an Anglican and a passionate Tory. It is also

no surprise the Mr. Irwine, the local rector in the novel, seems blissfully unaware of the true troubles of the farming and laboring families that populate Hayslope. Finally, this uneasy alliance between religious affiliation and class status may have much to say about why Eliot herself, as she became recognized, and gained social status as a lionized author, sought to separate herself from her Evangelical roots. The same can be said of Dickens, who, by the time he owned Gad's Hill, styled himself 'Esquire'.

The second paragraph also hints at another major complaint regarding Evangelicals—their departure from prescribed forms of belief and worship. As is the case with anxieties regarding class, the popular conceptions of the Evangelical was that they were largely uneducated, particularly when it comes to Biblical and theological literacy. The reason a lack of adherence to prescribed forms of worship and Biblical interpretation is condemned by Anglicans and other High-Church sects so roundly is because it suggests that the Evangelicals have not been properly taught *how* to become good readers.

This, of course, is one of the most emphatic complaints about Wesley and his followers: that he would ordain ministers outside of the consent of the Anglican Church as a body; in other words, ordain those to preach who had not had the proper theological training. We see such visceral distaste for the unregulated forms of Evangelical worship and doctrine from the authors we have just examined: Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, and Anthony Trollope.

But it is this final paragraph which is most important. In spite of the many social, cultural and even theological disagreements writers such as Eliot had with Evangelicals, she does one thing that the other writers of her own time do not. She demands that they

be treated with sympathy. The source of this sympathy, as Eliot maintains, resides in the Methodists "sublime feelings" rather than their "erroneous theories", a reference to the un-intellectual, unorthodox exegetical practices of labor-class Evangelicals. Against these, Eliot places Dinah and Seth's "sublime feelings", or (as Eliot would have stated at this time) their genuine, uncorrupted desire to connect with the transcendent or divine. An Evangelical, putting Eliot's message into more orthodox language, might say that though Methodists like Dinah and Seth were not trained in precise, theological knowledge, their devotion to God was authentic, or, 'from the heart'. Eliot also contrasts the stereotypical depictions of the handsome Victorian hero and beautiful Victorian heroine with "fiery horses" and "fiery passions" of the laboring-class Methodists with which her novel deals. As is always the case in a nineteenth-century narrative, class is key. The connection between class and sectarian dissent is a profound one, and as has been mentioned in previous chapters, laboring-class peoples were drawn to evangelical sects in part because they felt ignored by the Anglican Church. The typical Victorian hero and heroine Eliot alludes to here would doubtless be of the nobility, and members of the Anglican Church as a matter of course. The distinction points primarily towards Eliot's project of Realism, which will be explored in greater depth with the character of Dinah Morris.

As is mentioned throughout, most canonical Victorian authors despised the typical cant associated with Evangelical religious rhetoric. As a result, many of these authors create portraits of Evangelical layman and ministers that are at best unpleasant and distasteful, and at worst simply grotesque. By contrast, Eliot's depiction of her Evangelical and dissenting characters is incredibly sympathetic, and free of the biases

that plague so many of the other authors from the period. Eliot's sympathetic portrayal of Dinah and Seth extends far beyond her narrator's direct admonition in this one passage. In what follows, I will examine the two primary Methodist characters in *Adam Bede*: The female circuit minister Dinah Morris and Adam's brother Seth Bede.

As a character, Dinah Morris is almost universally loved by mainstream readers and critics alike, almost as much as by the other characters in the novel itself. Perhaps the greatest compliment to her character comes from Orlo Williams, whose chapter on Adam Bede transforms Morris from Methodist preacher to saint:

> The character of Dinah Morris is a creation of extraordinary beauty. We know that it was founded upon the memory of a beloved relative, but the creation, nevertheless, remains George Eliot's achievement. Nothing is more remarkable than the manner in which the story reflects that inward illumination which such a nature as Dinah's inevitably sheds upon all its surroundings. When Dinah is there an ethereal light suffuses everything, and when she is absent it is as if a veil had passed over the sun …these are things that shine out of Adam Bede with a radiance which no change of fashion can dim (201-202).

But as Orlo goes on to articulate, Morris' value, ultimately, does not come from her creed as a Methodist:

> That Dinah was a Methodist is but an outward circumstance: her particular creed is intrinsically of no importance … In Dinah Morris, with an exquisite fidelity and sensibility, George Eliot has drawn one of those rare and chosen souls who, in the truest sense, are religious, and whose awareness of God changes the appearance of all mortal things (202).

But why does Orlo feel it necessary to erase Dinah's personal creed? To the middle or upper-class readers of the period, Dinah's Evangelical bent would preclude her from the type of sympathy she consistently embodies. The connection between Dinah's Evangelical Methodism and her sympathy is not necessarily intrinsic, or even intended by Eliot herself. Primarily, Eliot is attempting to break the stereotypical portrayals of Evangelicals and make them living, breathing human beings. Yet, if not distinctly

Evangelical, what is the framework of her religious creed? The scholarly consensus seems to be, that Dinah's religion is that of Eliot's—guided only by sympathy for the others around her. Jerome Thale states that, "George Eliot's emphasis is not on the good Dinah does, but on her 'self-renouncing sympathy' as proven by her beneficence … Her emphasis is not on doing good through self-denial, but on her self-denial itself" (52). But it is here that I respectfully disagree with nearly all the criticism that has attempted to make the connection between Dinah's sympathy and Eliot's own humanist view, cutting away Morris' sectarian creed. The character of Dinah is drawn with such a degree of compassionate sympathy that a reader may come to think that she holds a special place for Eliot. This may be true—we do not know. Yet, even if this is the case, it would be impossible to prove that Eliot's sympathetic portrayal of Dinah comes from any personal belief system or creed—whether humanist or Evangelical. Dina is certainly Evangelical, and certainly very sympathetic; the character is formed from a storehouse of ideas and images Eliot grew up with, but religious knowledge does not necessitate religious belief. However, this being the case, I would still argue that Morris' Evangelicalism, much like Eliot's own religious past, should be moved back to the foreground and placed as the foundation and center of any analysis of both this novel and the life of its author.

Dinah's Evangelicalism is not simply a covering her character wears; it is central to who she is, and to the type of Christian behavior she embodies. In other words, Dinah could not be a High-Church Anglican and still be Dinah. As will be discussed more in depth later, Dinah's Evangelical bent is embodied in one important way that distinguishes her from the Anglicans of the community (like Father Irwine): her personal acts of

charity, coupled with acts of self-denial. In *George Eliot's Feminism*, June Szirotny argues that the character of Morris is inseparable from these charitable acts:

> If it is impossible to think of Dinah without thinking of her dedication to doing good … it is equally impossible to think of her without thinking of her self-denying life. Comparing her to the self-sacrificing Virgin Mary … martyred St. Catherine of Alexandria, the famed ascetic Methodist preacher Mrs. Fletcher, and especially to Christ, George Eliot depicts her as practicing the ascetic virtues of poverty, celibacy, and obedience, a fact underscored by her habitually wearing only black and white, the colors of abnegation and purity, respectively (51).

Charity and Evangelism—going out into the world—was the acknowledged primary difference between the Anglican and the Evangelical. Morris' self-denial is the natural opposite of her self-giving. Her going out bodily to Lisbeth Bede, to Mr. Irwine, to Hetty, is what marks her as sympathetic, and this act is tied inextricably to her sectarian calling.

And Thale once again, puts this even more simply when he states that in the world of the novel, "Only Dinah is able to feel for others" (29). This should strike us as odd. Certainly Seth evinces a compassion for others—certainly Adam does, as does Mr. Irwine and even Arthur—why does Thale make this statement that is so obviously incorrect? It is because though there may be feeling present, the reader only realizes it as extant in Dinah, because only Dinah *goes out*. And Dinah goes out because only she is an Evangelical. True to her calling, Dinah's charitable behavior realizes (as in 'makes real') her sectarian bent.

But if Dinah's *evangelism* is her greatest strength, it could also be her greatest weakness. There is one important question to ask here: are Dinah's acts of charity motivated by a genuine compassion for others, or are they simply the result of a calling she feels compelled to enact? This is perhaps the question asked in *George Eliot and the Conflict of Interpretations*. In this book, author David Carroll even goes so far as to say

that “Dinah is living in a dream world, cut off by her selflessness from the reality around her” (79). This seems to be born out by the text in a striking way, as Dinah’s comings and goings are almost spectral, particularly her instant appearance by Lisbeth Bede’s side after the death of Lisbeth’s husband, and her appearance outside Hetty’s cell near the end of the novel. These, along with her sudden disappearance after the sermon in the second chapter, make her seem almost an Old-Testament angel, sent to earth at certain moments of crisis. Interestingly, Eliot herself might have wanted to suggest this connection, as Dinah is compared more than once to an image of the angel sitting on the stone rolled from Christ’s tomb in Lisbeth’s picture-Bible.

Carroll also states that Dinah “has no roots and will make no plans for the future … [and is simply] a channel for God’s spirit” (79). This is also born out in the text. When describing her ministerial vocation to Irwine, she admits that she had felt no specific call or moment that she made a definite decision to become an itinerant minister; rather, her preaching seems to have grown almost organically from being a Sunday-School teacher in her adolescence. Also, such a lack of rootedness goes far to explain her sudden change in not only marrying Adam Bede, but in giving up her itinerant vocation entirely. This, even though there is some suggestion at the end that Dinah could have joined another body of Evangelicals that would have allowed her to continue as a minister.

To Carroll, Morris is the proof that ‘self-love is not so vile a sin as self-neglecting’. Carroll goes on to explain that Dinah’s continual acts of charity and constant movement from one place to another keeps her as separate and isolated from the world as the being who does nothing but pursue their own pleasure. Ultimately, Carroll states that “Dinah embodies a suffering vision of the world, but without a life of her own she does

not suffer" (80). While it is true that Dinah seems an almost spectral presence in the novel, hopping from one person in need to another like a Spirit from *A Christmas Carol*, it is not at all true that she does not experience her own suffering. This is particularly noticeable early in the novel when her compassionate regard is rejected by Hetty.[6] In a certain sense, both Dinah and Hetty isolate themselves through self-focused desires. Dinah through too much action, and Hetty through too little. Yet, even given this reading, it is difficult to persuade people that Dinah is truly selfish in the same sense that someone like Hetty is, as her particular form of self-worth does not harm others, but help them.

At the end of the novel, Morris' *going out* is replaced by a *coming in*. Her good work abroad as a circuit evangelist is replaced by good work at home as a nineteenth-century wife and mother. Not surprisingly, this change in Morris' vocation has led to criticism of a type far more common in feminist approaches to the nineteenth century novel. That is, these approaches view Dinah's marriage to Adam as ultimately negative. According to Nancy Paxton, "…many critics have argued that Eliot simply reveals her conservative anti-feminism in forcing Dinah to abandon her revolutionary career as a preacher and submit to a conventional marriage and motherhood" (59). In *Making Up Society*, Fisher states that Dinah's marriage is a betrayal of sorts, abandoning her individual value to adhere to her own society's traditional conceptions of gender: "Dinah, who has the possibility of being an even more direct challenge to the social order, abandons, like Adam, her independence for the place available within the community—she marries" (54). In marrying, does Dinah lose the connection to God that she has had previously in the novel? Fisher certainly feels that Dinah's acts of charity are possible only as a single woman, since "To follow this life of charity, she decides she must not

marry" (55). Ultimately, Fisher sees the hope in this union as the foundation for a new type of society all together:

> From the younger generation only one marriage results, that of Adam and Dinah. This marriage is less a sign of renewal than of a concentration of the energies of the new society. They have renounced a break with Hayslope, but neither Adam nor Dinah has given up the habits of character that make that break, in the long run, inevitable. In their marriage lies the form of a patient new society that is content, at first, merely to administer the patterns of the old (65).

Even if we do not consider Dinah's actions as a denial or subversion of her own independence, there are still many readers that cannot help but feel disappointed. Williams argues that "If there is any flaw in the presentation of Dinah it can only be that, in the end, she is made to marry Adam … No one can deny that it is a descent from glory. We do not find it easy, having loved Dinah Morris, to imagine Dinah Bede" (204). These critiques are understandable, not only from a feminist perspective, but from an evangelical one. While married, Dinah's ability to demonstrate her empathy through service to others in the community is profoundly circumscribed. Yet, I would argue that this criticism once again misses the point. Dinah does not lose her empathy when she marries, but simply directs it toward a much smaller object—her husband and children. I would also argue that this profound shift in Morris' focus is not a renunciation of her evangelical worldview, but a continuation of it. In his letter to the church in Corinth, the Apostle Paul has similar words about this view of marriage:

> But I want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and his interests are divided. The woman who is unmarried, and the virgin, is concerned about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband. This I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is appropriate and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord (*New American Standard Bible,* I Corin. 7.32-35).

Paul acknowledges that there is no specific Christian law either to marry or remain single. And while he would agree with the critics that Morris' marriage circumscribes her ministry as a circuit rider to a great degree ('divided interests'), he also makes it clear that once married, the primary ministry of the wife or husband is to their spouse. For the traditional evangelical (particularly that of the rural-Victorian variety), the horse-cart is replaced by the home.[7]

But this is not to say that service loses its ministerial or even divine purpose. Again from Paul: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her" (*NASB,* Ephes. 5:25). To the Evangelical, marriage is a picture of the relationship between Christ and the Church, the foundation of a Christian society. Thus, a strong marriage is a picture to the community of the self-sacrificial love embodied in evangelical acts of personal charity. This picture of evangelical empathy within marriage is absolutely crucial to the narrative of *Adam Bede*, as it provides a stark contrast to the self-gratifying relational motives of both Hetty and Arthur.

I would like to move now from a more general discussion of Dinah's character to an analysis of the chapter in which she is introduced to the reader, the chapter in which she gives her sermon. Like her deeds of charity, Morris' sermon and *even her physical description* can be tied to her evangelical sympathy in fascinating ways. I start with a reading of Morris' physical description:

> …she seemed above the middle height of woman … an effect which was due to the slimness of her figure and the simple line of her black stuff dress. The stranger was struck … not so much at the feminine delicacy of her appearance, as at the total absence of self-consciousness … Dinah walked as simply as if she were going to market, and seemed as unconscious of her outward appearance as a little boy … She held no book in her ungloved hands, but let them hang down lightly crossed before her … There was no keenness in the eyes; they seemed rather to be

> shedding love than making observations … The hair was drawn straight back behind the ears, and covered, except for an inch or two above the brow, by a net Quaker cap (33).

There are a few things here worth noting. To begin with, Dinah is of a far more attractive type than the average provincial Methodist. Her slender figure and fair skin create a striking juxtaposition with her surrounding community and the typical class-based associations which her religious zeal, unaffiliated with any official Church body, tend to emblematize. Morris is a far cry from the large, matronly farmer's wives of the village that revel in religious sentiment, a stereotype much abhorred by the Anglican gentry of both City and Country.

In fact, we are reminded of these stereotyped images in the same passage that gives us Morris's description. We are introduced to a stranger on horseback, who turns out to be Hetty's turnkey near the novel's end. He comes to see Dinah's preaching, bringing with him all the assumptions of a class-conscience gentleman: "He had made up his mind to see her advance with a measured step and a demure solemnity of countenance; he had felt sure that her face would be mantled with the smile of conscious saintship, or else charged with denunciatory bitterness. He knew but two types of Methodist—the ecstatic and the bilious" (33). To the stranger, a female Methodist minister would be either an angel descended from heaven or a moralistic prude. Morris gives the stranger a pleasant shock by being neither. In short, Eliot creates moral sympathy for Morris by making her a real flesh-and-blood woman. Just as Morris' evangelical calling motivates her to embody (literally 'put flesh on') a sympathetic compassion, Morris herself 'embodies' an ideal of the Evangelical—neither radical saint nor sinner.

From appearance we move to language. To once again demonstrate the immense difference in the characterization of Evangelical ministers between Eliot and other canonical authors from the period, we need only look at the sermonizing language which is used by Dickens's Reverend Chadband. Before we even meet the minister, we are told that he is "endowed with the gift of holding forth for four hours at a stretch" (303). While this comment may initially be in reference to Chadband's gormandizing, we are also made to feel that it is his language which ultimately defines him. His preaching, like Clack's proselytizing and Slope's appearance, is parodic and nonsensical. His initial 'edifying word' is enough to give the reader a feel for the language typical of the Evangelical:

> 'My friends,' says Mr Chadband. 'Peace on be on this house! On the master thereof, on the mistress thereof, on the young maidens, and on the young men! My friends, why do I wish for peace? What is peace? Is it war? No. Is it strife? No. Is it lovely, and gentle, and beautiful, and pleasant, and serene, and joyful? O yes! Therefore, my friends, I wish for piece upon you and upon yours' (305).

With his rhetorical questions, his variations on all possible names and titles, his extended explanation for the most simplistic ideas, Chadband speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more than any man in London.

Like her physical description, Morris' sermon is also vastly different than those typically given by other Evangelical characters in the Victorian Novel. It is filled with an authentic compassion and concern for the lives of those to whom she is speaking. Even before looking at the language itself, we are told of Morris's demeanor. Her words are mirrored by genuine emotion:

> … she came to the words, 'Lost!—Sinners!' when there was a great change in her voice and manner. She had made a long pause before the exclamation, and the pause seemed to be filled by agitating thoughts that showed themselves in her features. Her pale face became paler; the circles under her eyes deepened, as they

> did when tears half-gather without falling; and the mild loving eyes took an expression of appalled pity, as if she had suddenly discerned a destroying angel hovering over the heads of the people. Her voice became deep and muffled, but there was still no gesture. Nothing could be less like the ordinary type of the Ranter than Dinah. She was not preaching as she heard others preach, but speaking directly from her own emotions and under the inspiration of her own simple faith (38).

Like Chadband, Slope, and Clack, Dinah uses the vocabulary of condemnation. Yet, Morris' words of coming judgement are mediated by genuine, emotional concern for those to whom she is speaking. In Ms. Clack's ecstasy, it is clear that her primary motivation is to separate herself from others by condemning them. It is also clear that she has not a genuine affection, but a disdain for those to whom she proselytizes. The same can be said of Chadband, whose posture during his sermonizing of Jo does more to further drive the orphan away than reconcile him to a loving God.

But Morris's call for repentance is understood to come from a love for those who stand condemned. She desires for all to come to repentance, and warns of the dangers of sin. Even in her most pointed condemnation toward Bessy Cranage, we cannot but trace notes of profoundest compassion:

> 'Poor child! Poor child! He is beseeching you, and you don't listen to him. You think of ear-rings and fine gowns and caps, and you never think of the Saviour who died to save your precious soul … And Jesus, who stands ready to help you now, won't help you then; because you won't have him to be your Saviour, he will be your judge. Now he looks at you with love and mercy and says 'Come to me that you may have life'; then he will turn away from you and say, 'Depart from me into everlasting fire!' (41).

Once again, Morris's language resembles that of the parodic portrayals of other Evangelical figures, but with one important difference. In their language, sinners stand condemned simply for being who they are. An orphan, a churchman, a wealthy woman. But in Morris's language, it is made clear that each person holds the possibility of

salvation or condemnation in their own choice. Morris' sad care for Bessy is not based upon the desire to propagate her condemnation, but to make real for her in pleading tones the readily available, free gift of salvation.

Both Eliot and Morris are involved in the same project—to make the once mystical or parodic real. Both Eliot and Morris understand that, once a thing is made real, it can then be infused with the moral sympathy necessary for a connection to the reader or hearer. Realism is of course Eliot's primary goal in her novel-writing[8]. In fact, it is in the first chapter of *Adam Bede*'s second book that Eliot lays out her doctrine of realism using the analogy of Dutch paintings. The purpose of this analogy is to bring readers from their expectations of the ideal hero which may be typically found even in the Victorian novel, to the caste of 'low subjects' that populate Eliot's pages. With this in mind, the symbolic connection to Morris' sermon becomes perfectly clear. Eliot seeks to realize the figure of the Methodist Ranter for her mostly middle or upper-class Anglican audience, just as Dinah seeks to realize the person of Christ for the laboring provincial.

The whole of Dinah's sermon can be said to draw towards this one goal—to make Christ real. As Bessy Cranage listens to the sermon, this fantastical possibility is brought to bear upon her conscience:

> [Bessy] had a terrified sense that God, whom she had always thought of as very far off, was very near to her, and that Jesus was close by looking at her, though she could not see him. For Dinah had that belief in the visible manifestations of Jesus, which is common among the Methodists, and she communicated it irresistibly to her hearers: she made them feel that he was among them bodily, and might at any moment show himself to them in some way that would strike anguish and penitence into their hearts (40).

Yet, even before Eliot interrupts the flow of Dinah's sermon to emphasize this point of doctrine, we as readers can see this theme of the invisible or unknowable made real from

the outset. As is the practice with all good Evangelical preachers, Dinah begins her sermon with a personal anecdote:

> It was on just such a sort of evening as this, when I was a little girl, and my aunt as brought me up took me to hear a good man preach out of doors, just as we are here … he was a very old man, and had very long white hair; his voice was very soft and beautiful … I thought he had perhaps come down from the sky to preach to us, and I said, 'Aunt, will he go back to the sky tonight, like the picture in the Bible?' That man of God was Mr. Wesley (35).

Dinah begins her sermon with a story about meeting the father of the Methodist Movement, a symbol to many millions of Englishman and women of freedom from the constricting oppression of the State Church. At the turn of the century, when *Adam Bede* was written, Wesley had become the closest figure to a deified saint that Protestant Evangelicalism would ever have. And in Morris's introductory description, Wesley takes on an almost divine form. With his long white hair and soft, compassionate voice, he reminds the reader of a semi-divine Ghost of Christmas Past coming back to share with him or her the joys of the Gospel. Yet, Morris is very careful to not let this mystical vision stay with us, but to remind the listener that she "came to know more about him years after, but … was a foolish thoughtless child then" (35). As a child, she was content with the vision of Wesley as a prophet or angel descended from heaven, but desired to know the flesh-and-blood man when an adult.

It is in building on this illustration that Dinah begins her Gospel message:

> Think of that now! Jesus Christ did really come down from heaven, as I, like a silly child, thought Mr. Wesley did; and what he came down for was to tell good news about God to the poor. Why, you and me, dear friends, are poor. We have been brought up in poor cottages and have been reared on oat-cake, and lived coarse; and we haven't been to school much, nor read books, and we don't know much about anything but what happens just round us. We are just the sort of people that want to hear good news (35).

In these few lines we see a striking distinction between the language of Chadband's sermon and that of Morris'. As stated before, the typical Evangelical sermonizer in the Victorian novel seems to desire to create a greater distance between themselves and those they are ministering to. But Morris's approach is the complete opposite. She does not separate herself from the poor and ruined of Hayslope, but comes to them as one of them, able to suffer with them.

Eliot is doing two very interesting things with Morris. On the one hand, she is very much unlike any of the other laboring people around her, despite being born one of their own. For the daughter of a farmer, she is delicately beautiful in a way Bessy Cranage or even Hetty Sorrel is not. The two of these former have about them the beauty of the country girl, while Dinah seems to hail from the London gentry in her slenderness and fairness. She is also, despite her claim of not have much to do with books, incredibly well-spoken, and genteel in both appearance and manner.

Yet at the same time, she does not hesitate to be called one of the poor and classed among them. She herself makes this very admission in her sermon by which she is introduced to the reader. She is then, very much a Christ figure. Like the Saviour she expounds upon in her sermon, Dinah is a semi-divine figure in grace and beauty, who comes down to the poor of Hayslope to do good and preach the Gospel of repentance.

Dinah's doing of good and preaching of the Gospel are both illustrated in the few scenes in which she actually appears in the novel. Though Dinah is perhaps the most interesting character in *Adam Bede*, the primary narrative concerns her adoptive sister Hetty Sorrel and the well-to-do soldier Arthur Donnithorne. If this is the case, why is it that Dinah features so prominently when she does? We understand that Bede was

inspired by an actual account told to Eliot by her aunt who was a female Methodist circuit-rider. However, I would argue that there is a thematic as well as practical connection which can be drawn here. Dinah Morris is a symbol of Eliot's new found religion of humanity; as such, she has Morris operate as a disciple of the religion by doing what Eliot herself would formerly have done as an Evangelical. It is no divine, but Dinah's human presence that aids both Adam and Hetty in times of great need. In other words, *Adam Bede* serves as Eliot's Gospel tract for the new religion she wishes to promote, and Dinah is the prime example of the new believer.

But though Eliot and other scholars would argue that Dinah's compassion and moral sympathy comes from her character rather than her faith, this ignores both the beginning and end of Morris' own motivation. For example, she does not comfort Lisbeth by appealing to the interconnectedness of all humanity, as Eliot might have done, but by the promise of an eternal after in which she and her husband would be reunited:

> 'There,' said Dinah, 'now the kitchen looks tidy and now, dear mother—for I am your daughter tonight, you know—I should like you to wash your face and have a clean cap on. Do you remember what David did, when God took away his child from him? … when he knew it was dead, he rose up from the ground and washed and anointed himself, and changed his clothes and ate and drank … he said … 'I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me' (117).

With this story from the life of David, Dinah comforts Lisbeth in a way that several similar ministrations from her sons were not able to do. In fact, after this scene, Eliot gives us a unique insight into Morris' "method":

> This was what Dinah had been trying to bring about, through all her sympathy and absence from exhortation. From her girlhood upwards she had had experience among the sick and the mourning, among minds hardened and shriveled through poverty and ignorance and had gained the subtlest perception of the mode in which they could best be touched and softened into willingness to receive words of spiritual consolation or warning (118).

With this statement, we have a direct contradiction of what many past scholars have claimed about Morris. That she is, in effect, simply a vessel for human compassion modeled on the religion of humanity that Eliot by this time followed and propagated. Her Methodism is in the strictest sense no part of her true character. Yet, if this were truly the case, the scene described above, along with the subsequent description of Dinah's mode of work, would make no sense. For Eliot, sympathy is an end in and of itself. For Dinah, however, sympathy is only a vehicle for the Gospel. It is sympathy which softens the human heart, and from this softening a way is paved for the Gospel.

Morris's action—her doing of good in the name of the Gospel, would certainly put Victorian readers in mind of a well-known parable from the Gospel of Matthew:

> For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger and you invited Me in; naked and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me. Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we [do all these things?] … The King will answer and say to them. 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even to the least of them, you did it to Me (*NASB,* Matt. 25: 35-40).

As Christ would tell His apostles, doing good softens the heart for the hearing of the Gospel. Morris is following this command.

The final great scene with Morris is of course her night spent in the prison with Hetty. Here she exercises her second major function in the novel—the call to repentance. It is true that Eliot presents this passage near the novel's end, first as a call to human compassion brought about by physical closeness and empathy, but it quickly turns to the call of Gospel repentance: "Not a word was spoken. Dinah waited, hoping for a spontaneous word from Hetty, but she sat in the same dull despair, only clutching the hand that held hers and leaning her cheek against Dinah's. It was the human contact she

clung to, but she was not the less sinking into the dark gulf' (424-425). As with the former example, if Dinah is truly an embodiment of Eliot's religion of humanity, if her Methodist leanings are simply a veil for the human sympathy that is her primary concern, then her physical and emotional care for Hetty would again be an end in and of itself. Yet, Dinah's desire in this scene goes beyond care and comfort to the desire to pull Hetty from 'the dark gulf'.

Dinah's mission now becomes much more difficult. She must convince Hetty to admit to her crime in order to participate once again in the divine presence. As in her sermon, Dinah's prayer for Hetty's soul uses the language of the embodied presence of Christ:

> Jesus, thou present Saviour! Thou hast known the depths of all sorrow: thou hast entered that black darkness where God is not, and hast uttered the cry of the forsaken. Come, Lord, and gather the fruits of thy travail and thy pleading. Stretch forth thy hand, thou who art mighty to save to the uttermost, and rescue this lost one. She is clothed round with thick darkness. The fetters of her sin are upon her, and she cannot stir to come to thee. She can only feel her heart is hard and she is helpless. She cries to me, thy weak creature. … Saviour! It is a blind cry to thee. Hear it! Pierce the darkness! Look upon her with thy face of love and sorrow that thou didst turn on him who denied thee, and melt her hard heart (427).

To Dinah, Christ is present. He is with them as an almost embodied presence. He has 'entered darkness' and come down to those forsaken. Dinah uses language similar to that of her sermon, when she classed herself with the poor of Hayslope. Here, she places Christ in the same position. He is there bodily in the darkness of the cell with both Hetty and Dinah, and Dinah asks him to reach out to Hetty. She asks Christ to 'Look upon her'. Throughout the entirety of her prayer, Dinah casts Christ as the embodied presence, the center of the moral sympathy which is the foundation of both Dinah and Eliot's faith.

This same sympathy can also be found in the character of Seth Bede, Adam's brother. Eliot's sympathy for Seth Bede can be seen from the very beginning of the novel. After forgetting to put panels on the door he is making, the other workman tease him mercilessly: "Hoorray!" shouted a small lithe fellow called Wiry Ben, running forward and seizing the door. "We'll hang up th' door at the fur end o' th' shop an' write on't 'Seth Bede the Methody, his work'" (19). In this comment, Ben connects Seth's ineptitude with his Methodist leanings. We as readers roll our eyes at Ben's insult and are perturbed by his provincial ignorance. This is especially interesting when looking at the dialect of the laborers. Characters like Ben drop endings of words far more often than either Adam or Seth. They are, in a very real sense, men out of their class. The noble demeanor and bearing of the brothers makes us sympathetic to them. This is doubly true for Seth, whose sentimental love (almost an adolescent crush) for Dinah, warms the reader's heart.

After being rebuffed by Adam for his insult, Ben gets one last remark in: "Catch me at it, Adam, It'll be a good while afore my heads full o' th' Methodies" (19). Again, Methodism is seen by Ben as a foolish fancy on the part of Seth. But for the reader, Ben's own coarseness and 'slack-jaw' provincialism turns his disdain to praise, as we desire to be nothing like this ignorant workman.

We have the same feeling when Ben teases Seth for his sentimental attraction to Dinah: "Will't be—what come ye out for to see? A prophetess? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophetess—a uncommon pretty young woman" (20). Adam's response more than satisfies us: "'Come Ben,' said Adam, rather sternly, 'you let the words o' the Bible alone: you're going too far now'" (20). Once again, we want to distance ourselves

from Ben. And this time, in so doing, we feel the moral rightness of Adam's own claim—i.e., Scripture is sacred. Suddenly, without fully realizing it, we have become just as Sola Scriptura as Adam, Seth and Dinah.

And Eliot does take time to address the issue if Evangelical 'Bibliolatry'—or the doctrine that places the authority of Scripture above that of The Church, Creeds, or Apostolic Traditions. For all Eliot's condemnation of Evangelicals who interpret Scripture without the aid provided by tradition or the 'current hermeneutical conversation', she seems to be especially sympathetic to the novel's greatest proponents of these beliefs.

The care for the exactness of Biblical wording is seen again in another passage with Seth, when the two brothers come home to their mother, Lisbeth. Lisbeth remonstrates with Seth; "Take no thought for the morrow—take no thought—that's what thee't allays sayin'; an' what comes on't? Why, as Adam has to take thought for thee" (55). Seth soon corrects this misinterpretation: 'Those are the words o' the Bible, Mother,' said Seth. 'They don't mean as we should be idle. They mean we shouldn't be overanxious and worreting ourselves about what'll happen tomorrow, but do our duty and leave the rest to God's will" (55). As in the dialogue with Wiry Ben, we are once again made to feel that we should align with Seth. Lisbeth's lack of understanding, and in particular her rejoinder that "the Bible's such a big book" and that Seth should quote passages that mean what they say, make us see her as having a severe lack of ability to interpret things correctly. In aligning ourselves with Seth specifically (the quote given by Adam does not come from Scripture), we inadvertently agree not just with Eliot's sympathy for the correct wording of Scripture, but for a correct understanding of it.

Yet, Eliot is not sympathetic only to Seth in his religious principles, but in his person. If Methodism and other sects of the Evangelical strain are represented by the 'low' order of people that Eliot so admires in Dutch paintings, then Seth Bede is certainly a member of this caste. Both Dinah and even Adam to a degree have something of the ideal heroine and hero about them, but Seth has neither Adam's 'rugged' masculine forth-rightness nor Dinah's other-worldly tender compassion. And we can see Eliot's sympathy towards Seth, particularly in his veneration of Dinah. After she has kindly rejected his advances after her sermon, and Seth is in a state of great sadness, Eliot tells us this:

> And this blessed gift of venerating love has been given to too many humble craftsmen since the world began for us to feel any surprise that it should have existed in the soul of a Methodist carpenter half a century ago, while there was yet a lingering after-glow from the time when Wesley and his fellow-labourer fed on the hips and haws of the Cornwall hedges, after exhausting limbs and lungs in carrying a divine message to the poor (47).

As with Dinah, Eliot's sympathy with Seth, and in particular with his veneration of Dinah that is of a love "hardly distinguishable from religious feeling", once again brings the ideal to the real.

Eliot connects sympathy to both Dinah and Seth in the same passage in which she sympathizes with all Methodists. Most importantly, she uses the language of sympathy itself:

> Considering these things, we can hardly think Dinah and Seth beneath our sympathy, accustomed as we may be to weep over the loftier sorrows of heroines in satin boots and crinoline, and of heroes riding fiery horses … Poor Seth! He was never on horseback in his life except once … and instead of bursting out into wild accusing apostrophes to God and destiny, he is resolving, as he now walks homewords under the solemn starlight, to repress his sadness, to be less bent on having his own will, and to live for others, as Dinah does (48).

Not only are we once again given a distinction between the ideal and the real in Eliot's comparison of Seth to the image of the classical hero, but we are given to believe that

Seth's own moral system is based on the idea that he is not such an ideal. Seth is compared to the popular, Byronic heroes of the early novel, tossed about by fate, and Eliot assures us that having failed such a comparison, Seth comes out all the better for it.

Eliot's sympathy for Seth is so present that it even comes from the mouths of her own characters. The Rector's mother, upon seeing the young laboring man at the village games, asks her son who he is. The Rector, Mr. Irwine, gives her this response: "What, don't you know him, Mother? … That is Seth Bede, Adam's brother—a Methodist, but a very good fellow. Poor Seth has looked rather down-hearted of late; … Joshua Rann tells me he wanted to marry that sweet little Methodist preacher who was here about a month ago, and I suppose she refused him" (264).

The Rector's repetition of Eliot's own phrase (poor Seth), suggests an intense sympathy for the good-natured, broken-hearted man. This is important, as we can also see in the Rector's language the typical Anglican assumptions about Methodists from the phrase "a Methodist, BUT a very good fellow".

George Eliot reacts against her Evangelical aesthetic in *Adam Bede* in one very significant way. If Eliot's morally sympathetic depictions of her characters is generated by an Evangelical aesthetic, then a depiction of character that lacks sympathy can be evidence for a reaction against those sectarian values. In *Adam Bede*, there is such a depiction that not only lacks sympathy, but verges on the callous and cruel.

Though the depiction of Eliot as the master of the realist narrative is not un-earned, there is one character 'type' which she returns to again and again; it is a type every inch as iconic as any created by an author such as Dickens. This is the type of the fair-skinned Victorian beauty: Lucy Deane in *The Mill on the Floss,* Rosemond Vincy in

Middlemarch and (to a degree) Gwendolen Harleth in *Daniel Deronda*. Without fail, these characters are unequivocally selfish, superficial, and spoiled. At best they are unbendingly proud. At worst, they are vapid and completely disconnected from the reality around them. Gwendolen at least will gain a portion of realistic sympathy through the modicum of self-awareness she experiences near the novel's end; but as for the others, the portraits are lifeless, dull and unsympathetic to an intense degree. In *Adam Bede*, this type is localized in the character of Hetty Sorrell.

When the reader first encounters Hetty in the dairy at her butter-churn, Eliot gives us her opinion of the character in no uncertain terms. After blushing at Arthur Donnithorne's attentions, we are given this authorial sketch of Hetty's character:

> Bright, admiring glances from a handsome young gentleman with white hands, a gold chain, occasional regimentals, and wealth and grandeur immeasurable—those were the warm rays that set poor Hetty's heart vibrating and playing its little foolish tune over and over again. We do not hear that Memnon's statue gave forth its melody at all under the rushing of the mightiest wind, or in response to any other influence divine or human than certain short-lived sunbeams of morning; and we must learn to accommodate ourselves to the discovery that some of those cunningly fashioned instruments called human souls have only a very limited range of music, and will not vibrate in the least under a touch that fills others with tremulous rapture or quivering agony (102).

Hetty's response to Arthur could certainly be seen as superficial, but it seems a harsh critique from Eliot to call a young woman whose interest is piqued by a handsome man with title 'an instrument without a soul'. Taking into account difference of power, it is Arthur who should be seen as without soul, as he surely has experience of young women just as beautiful as Hetty and far better bred being jealous of his attentions.

Taking into account these power differences, it is Arthur who should be cast as limited. Yet, Eliot goes to great ends to excuse Arthur's behavior:

> You perceive that Arthur Donnithorne was 'a good fellow'—all his college friends thought him such. He couldn't bear to see any one uncomfortable … Whether he would have self-mastery enough to be always as harmless and purely beneficent as his good-nature led him to desire, was a question that no one had yet decided against him; he was but twenty-one, you remember, and we don't inquire too closely in the case of a handsome generous young fellow (127-128).

Eliot's initial characterization of Hetty might be forgiven, as Hetty is in reality a young woman with very little life experience. Yet, on looking back at Hetty's narrative in the moments in which we understand she has become pregnant, Eliot does not change her tone:

> Yes, the actions of a little trivial soul like Hetty's, struggling amidst the serious sad destinies of a human being, *are* strange. So are the motions of a little vessel without ballast tossed about on a stormy sea. How pretty it looked with its parti-coloured sail in the sunlight, moored in the bay! (326).

Without a doubt, it is Arthur who has the greater degree of agency, and Hetty undeniably the lesser. Yet, Eliot seems to blame Hetty's circumstances on a naïve stupidity on her part rather than a difference of agency occasioned by class, education, position and gender.

Chapter 37 gives us the strange story that, in hindsight, we understand to be the description of Hetty's infanticide. No one would attempt to excuse Hetty for her actions. Yet, even the most severe readers would understand Hetty to have a decidedly limited range of agency as compared to Arthur. But at the end of this chapter, Eliot engages in what can only be described as 'victim-blaming':

> Poor wandering Hetty, with the rounded childish face and the hard, unloving, despairing soul looking out of it—with the narrow heart and narrow thoughts, no room in them for any sorrows but her own, and tasting that sorrow with the more intense bitterness! My heart bleeds for her as I see her toiling along on her weary feet, or seated in a cart, with her eyes fixed vacantly on the road before her, never thinking or caring whither it tends, till hunger comes and makes her desire that a village may be near.

> What will be the end, the end of her objectless wandering, apart from all love, caring for human beings only through her pride, clinging to life only as the hunted wounded brute clings to it? (371).

It is not my desire to excuse Hetty from what is perhaps the most evil act someone can commit, but it strikes me as odd that Eliot seems to place none of the blame on Hetty's situation (or on Arthur even), and all of the blame on Hetty's character, particularly given the typical proto-feminist readings most commonly associated with Eliot. At no point is the infanticide committed discussed in the context of Hetty's position in Victorian society, but simply as the act of a stupid girl with a prideful, limited soul.

George Eliot, more than any author during the period, is known for her sympathetic portrayals of lower-class peoples. Traditionally, these sympathetic depictions are related to Eliot's humanist worldview. However, as I show here, though Eliot speaks to her humanism as having the impetus that removes social divides between peoples, it is truly her own Evangelical heritage that provides the foundation for these characterizations. We can see these connections being formed and staying with her in her early correspondence, and see how such sympathy is demonstrated in the characterizations which proliferate her novels.

Notes

[1] Biographer Rosemary Sprague explains what this special impact was: “There was one other area in which Maria Lewis had a profound effect on her favorite pupil: that of religion. [Lewis] was a devout member of the Church of England, but her faith was thoroughly imbued with Evangelicalism as taught by the Wesley brothers, popularly called ‘Methodism’” (21). Sprague notes that “for the Evangelical-minded, soul-searching became a major duty and occupation” (22).

[2] So intense was her Evangelical zeal, that Rosemary Sprague tells us that “Under Miss Lewis’s scrupulosity, Mary Anne renounced ‘worldly pleasures’ to the extent of giving up novel reading and wearing an unbecoming bonnet to mortify her vanity … She avoided every kind of entertainment except instructive lectures; the question of whether or not she might attend a sacred oratorio became a matter for agonizing appraisal of her own motives” (23). Biographer Gordon Haight tells us this: “Yet conversion, the conviction that one was utterly sinful and could be saved from hell only by accepting the atonement of Christ, was the conventional beginning of the religious life. One feels certain that it struck Mary Anne suddenly and hard. Though she had never cared much about dress and had no personal beauty to be proud of, she now began to neglect her personal appearance in order to show concern for the state of her soul. Her acts of charity were performed with greater fervor, and she practiced mild abstinences from innocent pleasures (19)”. From this early Evans to the Dinah Morris of *Bede* is no great step.

[3] Much the same is said by Bernard J. Paris. In an essay collection by Creeger, Paris has a chapter on “George Eliot’s Religion of Humanity”. In it, he plots the intellectual influences and movements that took Eliot from Evangelical to Apostate: “… the positivistic teachings of Comte, Mill, Spencer, Lewes, and Feuerbach, which formed the foundation of Eliot’s thought from the early 1850’s on, placed man in an indifferent universe which provided neither a response to his consciousness nor a sanction for his values. The positivistic cosmology led Eliot to see life as essentially tragic, the tragedy lying in the disparity between the inward and the outward, between the passionate impulses and needs of man and the dispassionate order of things which more often than not frustrates human will and desire” (11-12).

[4] Again from Paris: “What Eliot needed, of course, was a new religion, a religion which would mediate between man and the alien cosmos, as the old religions had done, but which would do so without escaping into illusion, without denying that the cosmos is, indeed, alien … The religion of the future, Eliot felt, would be a religion not of God, but of man, a religion of humanity … The central preoccupation of George Eliot’s life was with religion, and in her novels, which she thought of as ‘experiments in life, she was searching for a view of life that would give modern man a sense of purpose, dignity, and ethical direction” (12, 13).

[5] Although George Eliot rejected completely Christianity’s claim to have the truth about nature and God, she remained always intensely interested in Christianity. The Higher Criticism … converted Christianity, for Eliot, into a source of profound truth about the nature of man … The divine love, the suffering, self-sacrificing, forgiving love of Christ, is identical with the highest human love, which Feuerbach suggests, has a saving power similar to that claimed for Christ’s love … Religion, then, for Feuerbach, and for George Eliot, consists preeminently in the love, admiration, sympathy and sacrifice of man for man. Human relationships are by their very nature religious in character … Man becomes aware of the species and partakes in its life--lives a truly human and religious life--through his relationship with another human being, with a Thou (Paris 22, 25).

[6] “… for the first time she became irritated under Dinah’s caress. She pushed her away impatiently, and said, with a childish sobbing voice, ‘Don’t talk to me so, Dinah. Why do you come to frighten me? I’ve never done anything to you. Why can’t you let me be?’ Poor Dinah felt a pang … She went out of the room almost as quietly and quickly as if she had been a ghost; but once by the side of her own bed, she threw herself on her knees and poured out in deep silence all the passionate pity that filled her heart” (161).

[7] For a portrait of an Evangelical woman who fails miserably to make this shift in focus, look no further than Mrs. Jellyby in Dickens's *Bleak House*. Her own family suffers consistently from an evangelical mother that has never 'come in'.

CHAPTER FIVE

"Neither High-Church, Low-Church, nor No-Church"
Charles Dickens's Dissatisfaction and Dissent in *Bleak House*

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Charles Dickens, like most upper and middle-class Englishman born in the early nineteenth century, was raised Anglican by his family, though that family seemed to be Churchmen in name only[1]. However, in adulthood, Dickens left the Anglican Church for a time and joined a Unitarian[2] congregation. This decision came about as a result of increased dissatisfaction with the Anglican Church as an institution, and was bolstered by a class-conscious dislike of Evangelicalism. As Peter Ackroyd tells us in his exhaustive biography, during the period in which Dickens was writing *Martin Chuzzlewit*, "he had conceived a violent dislike for the Established Church and in particular for those apparently ignorant and bigoted clergymen who quarreled over the 'forms of the service and of their faith'" (396). By withdrawing (for a short time at least) from the national church, Dickens was very much a product of his age, as the mid-nineteenth century saw an increase in the growth of not only 'Low-Church' Anglican sects such as Methodism[3] and Evangelicalism, but of Dissenting or 'Non-Conformist' Protestant sects such as Unitarians and Congregationalists[4]. To many, the religious census of 1851 stood as proof that an increased dissatisfaction with the Anglican Church was occurring nation-wide.

To Dickens, an authentic Christian belief will always make itself known through acts of personal sacrifice and charity[5]; Dickens's own dissatisfaction with the Established

Church comes from his observation that the Church as an Institution was not active in giving aid to those of the poverty class[6]. In fact, Dickens seems to believe that rather than giving aid, the Church actually creates a distance between itself and those which are in desperate need. Dickens is of course known for his critiques of contemporary English society, and The Church is one of the most frequent recipients of these critiques. Julie Melnyk is one example of this by now taken-for-granted view of Dickens. As she states in *Victorian Religion:* "Charles Dickens was largely critical of organized religion or charity … Religious characters in his novels are often portrayed as unattractive and hypocritical …" (111). Nearly all portrayals of Dickens's religious characters and ministers are parodic caricatures of self-important or self-obsessed hypocrites[7]. And as Ackroyd reminds us, nearly all depictions of churches in his novels are of buildings which are dusty or grotesque (507-508). The Church in *Bleak House* is similarly described—if not as grotesque per say, then certainly as spectral. The Church appears throughout the novel as a shadowy presence – like the ubiquitous fog that haunts the city of London and the dark walks of Chesney Wold.

What is unusual is that though The Church is a major presence in the novel, it has received almost no critical attention. One possible explanation could be that scholars choose to analyze *Bleak House* through the focus of corrupt institutions such as the aristocracy and the courts[8]. If scholars tend to focus on Dickens's institutional critiques, then perhaps it makes sense that they have overlooked the church, which in *Bleak House* seems to appear less as an institution than as a character—a grotesquely comic one—that treats those we are meant to sympathize with (i.e., Esther and Jo) very poorly. At the same time, The Church ingratiates itself to those with whom the novel is most

unsympathetic (i.e., the Dedlocks). Thankfully, Dickens suggests a corrective, also through character. It is in the character of Esther Summerson that Dickens embodies his redemptive vision for the Church. By so doing, an institutionalized distance is replaced by a redemptive intimacy.

By ignoring the Church's presence in the novel, we miss something very important about the way in which Dickens distinguishes between authentic and inauthentic faith, and the connection faith has to altruistic acts of charity. This distinction also helps make more sense of the novel's somewhat cumbersome narrative structure, as it mirrors figuratively the juxtaposition of the objective omniscient narrator to the personal voice of Esther. The fact that three major religious denominations are presented in the novel, all of which are irrevocably flawed, helps readers understand Dickens's own sentiments and values regarding the religious sectarian patchwork of his time. Finally, by ignoring the presence of the church in the novel, scholars have passed over a key component essential to an understanding of Victorian values and sentiments. While the ideals in the novel expressed by Dickens are the basis for the condemnation of the courts and the aristocracy, it is his religious belief, and the religious beliefs of all Victorians, that form the foundation for those ideals. To gain an understanding of the Church's position in the novel, we need to see how it is both personified *as* character and embodied *in* character. We do this by looking at passages giving a physical description of the Church itself, and by analyzing the language and actions of characters that represent 'High-Church', 'Low-Church' and 'Nonconformist' (No-Church) sects.

We know for a fact that Dickens is a deeply Christian author. We also know that Dickens attempted to place religious ideas in his novels whenever he could[9].

Unfortunately, any critical attention given to Dickens and religion is always going to be a complex muddle. This is primarily because Dickens's own adult religious ideology is so complex. The nineteenth-century saw an explosion in sectarian movements more than any other previous era, and there seemed to be a denominational leaning for every single peculiarity of character. But what makes Dickens's own religious life so difficult to define is that it seems to evade any single one of the era's prescribed religious molds. Dickens is Anglican—except when he's not. Dickens is a Christian Socialist of the Broad-Church—except when he isn't. Dickens is a Dissenter in every possible means of the word[10]—and it appears he cannot even commit to being uncommitted, as he left the Unitarian Chapel he had attended for a few years of his adult life after the minister, a longtime friend, died[11].

This confusion comes about mostly because Dickens's own 'religious' beliefs are not orthodox church-doctrine at all. Rather, they have a distinctly secular bend. As Julie Melnyk makes clear in *Victorian Religion*, Dickens seems to favor a thoroughly 'secular gospel': "With regard to religious themes and attitudes, Dickens's novels do endorse an individual morality based on humanistic values that are consistent with and possibly derived from Christianity, but the moral content is largely secularized" (111). Melnyk ends by saying that Dickens is "most religious when he portrays the possibility of redemption through 'conversions' … these conversions, however, seem much more psychological than spiritual, and they are effected not by God or the church but by human love and sympathy" (111). Melnyk's assessment of Dickens's religious sentiments is exactly right, most importantly as regards this matter of a 'true' Christianity or spirituality operating outside of the Church[12]. While I would argue that the works are not

totally devoid of a ‘divine presence’ of sorts, in the novels as a whole, and *Bleak House* in particular, true religious devotion and spiritual presence are always found outside of The Church.

The Church is disregarded to such an extent in the criticism, that some scholars ignore it even when discussing the religious symbolism and hypocrisy in the novel. One explanation as to why this is, could be the fact that to some scholars, the Court itself is a corrupted Church. In *Dickens, His Parables, and His Reader*, Linda M. Lewis states that *Bleak House* carries with it a message of Old-Testament judgment on English society, but that the Chancery plot “mixes the message”:

> Chancery visits judgments upon several generations of those who hate or distrust Chancery, *but especially* to those who have a “believer’s reverence” in it. Furthermore, Chancery itself is the ‘graven image’ before whom Chancery suitors “bow down.” As Dickens later does with the Circumlocution Office, he parodies the High Court of Chancery as a false church, distinguished by its crimson draperies, stained glass windows, candles, rituals, ceremonial proceedings, and its Lord High Chancellor with a “foggy glory round his head.” The Court of Chancery may appear to be a cathedral, but the judgmental narrator permits no misinterpretation of its real designation--the “most pestilent of hoary sinners, this day, in the sight of heaven and earth” (BH 12). Both narrators, as well as the reader, collaborate to denounce Chancery, and their judgments are in accord (125-126).

Given this reading, it could be argued that the religious discussions in much of the scholarship are not *missing* from *Bleak House*, but have simply moved from one institution to another.

However, though the Church is almost ever-present in the novel, it never seems to operate like an institution[13]. How is it that the Church in *Bleak House* can be said to behave like a character, particularly when we consider the sharp distinction that Dickens always places between person and place? A possible answer can be found in J. Hillis Miller’s seminal analysis of the novel from his *Victorian Subjects*:

> In *Bleak House* each character, scene, or situation stands for innumerable other examples of a given type. Mrs. Pardiggle is the model of a Puseyite philanthropist, Mrs Jellyby of another sort of irresponsible do-gooder; Mr Vholes of the respectable solicitor battening on the victims of Chancery … The narrator constantly calls the reader's attention to their generalizing role … Each example has its idiosyncrasies (who but Chadband could be like Chadband?), but the essence of the type remains the same" (179-180).

If Dickens creates character from type throughout the novel, is it too much of a stretch to argue that he also transforms a type of sorts (a national institution) into character? Miller states that Dickens 'investigates' the condition of England by means of "synecdochic transference, naming one thing in terms of another" (180). Understanding this device, having a character stand for the Church, or the Church for a vice (like distance or decay), matches Dickens's own investigative goal[14]. Such a transfer is made evident in each of the sects that Dickens explores.

In *Bleak House,* the first sect Dickens introduces to readers is the Anglican 'High-Church'. Early in the novel is the description of the Church in Chesney Wold, and it is a grotesque one. In the second chapter, we are told that "On Sundays, the little church in the park is mouldy; the oaken pulpit breaks out into a cold sweat; and there is a general smell and taste of the ancient Dedlocks in their graves" (21). The description of the church in Chesney Wold as a sweaty, smelly, decaying corpse is very similar to the description given later in the novel to the Reverend Chadband[15], one of Dickens's most grotesque creations: "Mr. Chadband is a large yellow man, with a fake smile, and a general appearance of having a good deal of train oil in his system" (304). The description of the 'yellow skin' which seems to be leaking 'train oil', coupled with his plastered 'fat smile' gives Chadband the appearance of a rotting corpse, like the decaying body of the church that inhabits the Dedlock's ancestral home.

In fact, the chapter in which Chadband is introduced also gives readers a description of the church as a character which distances itself from others. At the end of the chapter, the street-sweeper Jo, who is undoubtedly the empathetic center of the novel, is 'moved along' until he finds himself under the dome of England's most recognizable church. "And there he sits," Dickens tells us, "munching and gnawing, and looking up at the great Cross on the summit of St Paul's Cathedral, glittering above a red and violet-tinted cloud of smoke. From the boy's face one might suppose that sacred emblem to be, in his eyes, the crowning confusion of the great, confused city; so golden, so high up, so far out of his reach" (315). The look of the church is certainly not inviting. In fact, its description suggests that the edifice is *warding off* Jo, the 'great Cross' standing at the top of the dome suggesting an image of a stop sign or 'no entry' to the reader.

In this description, Dickens has very cleverly tied the institution of the church to the 'character' of the church, as the warding off coming from Saint Paul's dome is mirrored in the actions performed to Jo by Chadband later in the narrative. In chapter 25, Chadband gives a stern rhetorical lecture to Jo, whom he addresses by first holding up "his bear's-paw" of a hand (410). The action works only to create more distance between Jo and any kind of love or sympathy. Chadband exacerbates this distance through his incredibly decisive rhetoric: "'We have here among us, my friends … a Gentile and a Heathen … Devoid of parents, devoid of relations, devoid of flocks and herds, devoid of gold and silver, and of precious stones … Why? … because he is devoid of the light that shines in upon some of us" (411). In his actions and his rhetoric, Chadband only widens the gap that exists between those like Jo and the rest of English society. This sermonizing, according to Gary Colledge, would be a familiar dynamic to the Victorian

Churchman. “Clearly,” he states, “Dickens is targeting the ploy here that was so common in the Christianity of Dissenters and Nonconformists—that of using Christian teaching to frighten children into desired religious and moral behaviors” (5-6). In *Dickens and the Broken Scripture*, Janet Larson connects Chadband’s rhetoric to Dickens’s distaste for what she terms “retribution theology”:

> Like Job, Jo voices his belief that the wicked must be punished, but equally he protests his innocence and truthfulness—thus forcing upon our attention the inadequacy of the retribution theory to explain why he and Nemo suffer the calamities of the wicked … Yet retribution theology is the kind of ‘comfort’ Reverend Chadband offers in his discourse on Jo’s troubles as a natural result of his heathen condition (132-133).

To Dickens, Chadband is a symbol of the Church. Both operate in such a way to create rather than reduce the distance between itself and others.

Chadband’s distancing rhetoric can be seen once again in the chapter that ends with Jo looking up at Saint Paul’s dome. Here, Chadband seems to be praising Jo, but for Chadband, even a rhetoric that encourages his subject seems instead to distance. “’My young friend,’ says Chadband, ‘you are to us a pearl, you are to us a diamond, you are to us a gem and jewel” (313). In making Jo into a precious object, he becomes too valuable to be touched. It is as if Dickens suggests that the Church has become so toxic to the society that both its words of encouragement and of rebuke have the same paralyzing effect on the marginalized in Victorian England.

Dickens wants readers to have an unsympathetic view of the church by making two analytical moves in the novel. First, he has the church treat those we care about poorly, as he does above with Jo. Then, he has it treat with ‘reverential awe’ the characters we do not sympathize with as readers. In chapter 18, we are told that the church service at Chesney Wold will not begin until the Dedlocks have taken their seats:

"As the bell was yet ringing and the great people were not yet come, I had leisure to glance over the church … [soon someone] forewarned me that the great people were come, and that the service was going to begin" (290). Before the Dedlocks enter, Esther mentions that there is 'a stir' in the direction of the porch and 'a gathering of reverential awe' on the faces of the parishioners. In the Anglican service, such solemnity would only be afforded to the procession of a cross or image of Christ down the central aisle. Here, however, this awe is reserved for the aristocracy. A distance of class has replaced what should be the true intimacy of a Christian community. To make matters worse, the deference shown to the Dedlocks by the Church may stem not simply from Victorian sentiment regarding class, but from an uneasy alliance between the Church and the Aristocracy reminiscent of the spoils system that has existed since Medieval Feudalism. When we are introduced to Lady Dedlock in the second chapter, we are told that Lady Dedlock operates "as one of a class—as one of the leaders and representatives of her little world … [Is] *a new chapel*, a new anything, to be set up? There are deferential people, in a dozen callings, whom my Lady Dedlock suspects of nothing but prostration before her" (24, emphasis added). The Church does not simply treat the Dedlocks with reverence, it *defers* to them; a deference based on what can be gained by their sympathetic treatment of the aristocracy.

There is one more significant passage that connects the established church with images of the grotesque. It is significant because these images are given in the context of one of the established churches most iconic services: the burial service of Captain Hawdon. "Then the active and intelligent," the narrator tells us, "…comes with his pauper company to Mr Krook's, and bears off the body of our dear brother here departed,

to a hemmed-in churchyard, pestiferous and obscene, whence malignant diseases are communicated to the bodies of our dear brothers … Into a beastly scrap of ground which a Turk would reject as a savage abomination" (180). Rather than sanctify, the ground of the church itself decays and destroys—it makes corrupt. But the ground is not just corrupt, it is 'pestiferous', or disease-causing. Like the letter-writer Nemo himself, who has met his death from a combination of opiates and consumption, the very ground is made sick. The churchyard does not bury Nemo's sickness, rather Nemo and those like him—the poverty-class of England, pollutes the land. That is not to say that Nemo himself is wicked or corrupt, but that his sickness is the result of the distance the Church places between itself and those in need of its aid. The second adjective—obscene—seems to hint at this as it suggests that something very wrong has occurred. 'Obscene' does not simply carry the idea of something being grotesque, but of offensive as set up against normative moral standards. Nemo's 'forgotten-ness' is not just grotesque, it is a social evil.

A passage not too far from the one quoted above seems to point to the morally transgressive nature of Nemo's grotesque body. "With houses looking on," the novel explains, "on every side, save where a reeking little tunnel of a court gives access to the iron gate—with every villainy of life in action close on death, and every poisonous element of death in action close on life … [Nemo becomes] an avenging ghost at many a sick-bedside: a shameful testimony to future ages, how civilization and barbarism walked this boastful island together" (180). Nemo's burial does not just localize corruption in a single body or churchyard, but stands as a symbol of the national corruption which caused it. Nemo's forgotten name, his unmarked grave and uncared-for death and burial,

is a condemnation to the ‘boastful island’ which allowed such forgotten-ness to come about, and to The Church in particular, through the distance that it places between itself and those who are in need[16].

It was not only the Established Church that Dickens was dissatisfied with; he also appeared to exhibit what was perhaps a class-conscious dislike of the ever-growing ‘Low-Church’ or Evangelical sects. Typically, Dickens’s portrayal of Evangelicals are themselves grotesque[17], but his greatest condemnation of the sect is reserved for the Evangelical zeal for foreign missions, which, in his view, ignores need at home. Robert Butterworth, in *Dickens, Religion and Society,* gives us his summation of the religious work described in the novel:

> There is a lot of frantic religious activity going on in the world of the novel, but much of it is completely irrelevant to the needs of society … None of Dickens’s concerns about the less fortunate in society are being addressed through the activities of the religiously engaged that he portrays. The Gospel is not being preached effectively, and so their spiritual welfare is not attended to. Without practical Christian love being shown to them, their immediate suffering is not being relieved and their dehumanization not prevented or remedied. In some highly critical, merciless and quietly angry portraits, he depicts those claiming to do the work of Christ but who squander their opportunities (88).

In *Bleak House*, the failure of the religious work and worker described is embodied in the evangelical characters.

Like Jo and Chadband, the distancing that The Evangelical Church enacts toward Caddy is once again embodied in another character—Mrs. Jellyby. It is clear that the ‘Telescopic Philanthropy’ of the Jellyby household mirrors the raised hand and rhetoric of Chadband, as Mrs. Jellyby does not show any genuine affection for those closest to her. However, it is also clear that Dickens had this mirroring in mind when sketching Jo and Caddy’s characters. In chapter 30, the chapter that gives us Caddy’s wedding, Esther

asks Caddy if her mother is even aware of the approaching nuptials. Keeping the idea of this mirroring between Jo and Caddy in mind, her response is fascinating; "'O! you know what Ma is, Esther,' she returned. 'It's impossible to say whether she knows it or not. She has been told it often enough; and when she is told it, she only gives me a placid look, as if I was I don't know what – a steeple in the distance'" (475). For Dickens, who planned the layout of his novels meticulously, to use the same image (a steeple in the distance) to signify the same effect (detachment of the church from another human being) is undoubtedly the opposite of coincidental.

Mrs. Jellyby's 'mission' is almost certainly modeled on the historical 'Niger Expedition' which Dickens condemned vocally. In fact, David A. Ward states that "the similarity between Mrs. Jellyby's all-consuming project" and this "disastrous … expedition" would be "most prominent in a contemporary reader's mind" (210). Dickens's condemnation of this very expedition, and by extension the evangelical way of thinking that gives primacy to foreign missions, is perhaps most clear in a piece written for *The Examiner*[18]. In a piece published August 19th of 1848, Dickens rails against the Expedition: "It might be laid down as a very good general rule of social and political guidance," the piece begins, "that whatever Exeter Hall champions, is the thing by no means to be done" (108). Exeter Hall was a recently converted music hall that in the mid-nineteenth century was used for various Evangelical and Congregationalist meetings. A group of abolitionists, not unlike the 'Clapham Sect' led by Wilberforce some years earlier, decided to launch a missionary expedition to the African continent. "Exeter Hall was hot in its behalf, and it failed" writes Dickens. "Exeter Hall was hottest on its weakest and most hopeless objects, and in those it failed (of course) most signally" (109).

What follows is a chronicle of an incredibly ill-fated expedition, which claimed the lives of many English sailors.

At the end of the piece, Dickens passionately decries all such expeditions: "The history of this Expedition is the history of the Past … May no popular cry, from Exeter Hall or elsewhere, ever make it, as to one single ship, the history of the Future! … No amount of philanthropy has a right to waste such valuable life as was squandered here, in the teeth of all experience and feasible pretense of hope. Between the civilized European and the barbarous African there is a great gulf set" (123). Understanding Dickens's sentiments as expounded in this piece, the connection to figures like Jellyby is abundantly clear. Such misplaced philanthropy, in Dickens's view, is a 'waste'—of time, resources and lives. If anyone doubts where Dickens's sympathies lie, the final call to Evangelicals is made clear at the piece's conclusion:

> It is not, we conceive, within the likely providence of God, that Christianity shall start to the banks of the Niger until it shall have overflowed all intervening space. The stone that is dropped into the ocean of ignorance at Exeter Hall, must make its widening circles, one beyond another, until they reach the negro's country in their natural expansion … Believe it, African Civilisation, Church of England Missionary, and all other Missionary Societies! The work at home must be completed thoroughly, or there is no hope abroad. To your tents, O Israel! But see they are your own tents! Set *them* in order; leave nothing to be done *there*; and outpost will convey your lesson on to outpost, until the naked armies of King Obi and King Boy are reached and taught (123).

Dickens's point is plain—the Niger Expedition failed, as all missional expeditions will fail, if they look first to need abroad while ignoring the desperate need at home. Jellyby is an embodiment of this social critique, as her continuous dictation is a physical manifestation of the distance she creates between herself and her family. As Esther observes, Jellyby has "a curious habit of seeming to look a long way off. As if … they could see nothing nearer than Africa!" (52). Jellyby's 'Telescopic Philanthropy'

essentially transforms her into an embodiment of the mission-minded Evangelical Church, who focuses all their energies on needs abroad while shutting its doors to those in need at home.

As with the St. Paul's example, the novel once again offers parallel scene to this missional aspect of Jellyby's character. And once again, this parallel is embodied in Jo. As the street-sweeper wanders through Tom-All-Alone's looking for a place to stay, he "sits down to breakfast on the door-step of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts … He admires the size of the edifice, and wonders what it's all about. He has no idea, poor wretch, of the spiritual destitution of a coral reef in the Pacific, or what it costs to look up the precious souls among the cocoanuts and bread-fruit" (258). In Dickens's obvious vitriol for missional evangelicalism, we see a strong resemblance between Jellyby and 'The Society'. Both seem to 'face out' rather than in, and stare far beyond the homeland to peoples and places across the sea, ignoring the needs of those who, in both cases, are literally 'at their doorstep'.

Like Mrs. Jellyby, the character of Mrs. Pardiggle operates as an embodiment of the distancing Evangelical sectarians promote in the novel. As the High-Church establishment seems to distance through the edifices of the church buildings themselves, the low-church sects create distance through their mission work. Two fascinating points are to be made here—first, it is interesting to note that both Pardiggle and Jellyby achieve distance through textual mediation—Jellyby with her letters and Pardiggle with her tracts[19]. Secondly, it is also interesting to note that while it is the *edifices* of the Anglican Churches that are described as grotesque, it is the *bodies* of the Evangelical characters that are given this description[20]. This distinction makes sense when we consider that

Evangelicals celebrate the fact that they operate outside the boundaries of church edifices. This is particularly true of Methodists[21], whose 'open-air' meetings garnered extreme popularity during the Wesleyan era[22].

Mrs. Pardiggle's appearance is described as corpulent and mannish, "She was a formidable style of lady," Dickens tells us, "with spectacles, a prominent nose, and a loud voice" (124). For Dickens, whose portrayal of virtuous women was nearly always the slender, delicate 'Angel in the House', Pardiggle's 'formidable' appearance is no good sign. Even more important to her character than her physical description, however, is her propensity to fill whatever space she occupies. Pardiggle "had the effect of wanting a great deal of room. And she really did, for she knocked down little chairs with her skirts that were quite a great way off" (124). Like Jellyby, Pardiggle's mission-work does not proceed from an authentically charitable soul, but from a self-serving desire for personal praise. Jellyby and Pardiggle are both made grotesque by the medium through which they proselytize. Jellyby, who is obsessed with being read, has a home (and family) covered in papers and ink. Pardiggle, who is obsessed with being seen and heard, possesses a large, ungainly body and a loud, booming voice.

This distinction between the two characters, that of reading and seeing, makes even more sense when we come to Pardiggle's visit to the brickmaker's home. As she begins to proselytize, the laborer remonstrates with her, "Have I read the little book wot you left? No, I an't read the little book wot you left. There an't nobody here as knows how to read it; and if there wos, it wouldn't be suitable to me. It's a book fit for a babby, and I'm not a babby." (132). Pardiggle's distribution of tracts is contrary to the obsessive part of her nature. It is probably safe to assume that tracts read or not, Pardiggle would

make an appearance at the brickmaker's regardless. It may even make sense to speculate that Pardiggle knew about the laboring man's illiteracy, so that she could use it as an occasion to read the book to his family herself—which she proceeds to do, taking the entire family into "religious custody" with her loud, thundering voice (132).

In one sense, it is rather unfortunate that Jellyby's and Pardiggles' character are made so reprehensible to readers. The religious work of these female characters outside of the church was one of the unique-nesses of the religious landscape of the Victorian Era. As Melnyk reminds us, "In every Christian denomination in Victorian Britain, women were barred from becoming ministers" (128). Missional and Evangelical work by a Jellyby or a Pardiggle stands as a testament to a rapidly expanding religious age. As Melnyk makes clear, "Although women might be important within the local churches, their major contributions to religious life occurred outside the institutional context" (129). It is significant that both Jellyby and Pardiggle express their religious zeal through writing, as this was the primary vehicle for religious thought from women in the Victorian age as well[23]. However, it could be added that Jellyby and Pardiggle do not fail in their work—they accomplish it with aplomb. What makes them monstrous is the fact that the work is done without any natural affection for their fellow human beings. In the Victorian Era, the work of religious women was praised only if it was done while keeping intrinsically feminine qualities intact. Jellyby and Pardiggle, though perhaps they succeed as proselytes, fail miserably as wives and mothers.

Like Jellyby, Mrs. Pardiggle's children are miserable, and there is a sense that both women browbeat their husbands. The first night Esther spends in the Jellyby household, she is approached by Caddy, who gives her pathetic exclamation, "'I wish

Africa was dead!' … 'I do!' … 'Don't talk to me, Miss Summerson. I hate it and detest it. It's a beast!'" (60). Even more pitiable is the actions of Jellyby's husband, who "During the whole evening … [sits] in a corner with his head against the wall, as if he were subject to low spirits" (57). He is in fact, so domineered, that he cannot even speak his own mind: "It seemed that he had several times opened his own mouth when alone with Richard, after dinner, as if he had something in his mind; but had always shut it again, to Richard's extreme confusion, without saying anything" (57). Pardiggles's marriage seems to be on similar terms, for after Mrs. Pardiggle discusses the donations she extracts from her family, Esther is left to speculate: "Suppose Mr Pardiggle were to dine with Mr Jellyby, and suppse Mr Jellyby were to relieve his mind after dinner to Mr Pardiggle, would Mr Pardiggle, in return, make any confidential communication to Mr Jellyby? I was quite confused to find myself thinking this, but it came into my head" (126).

Esther seems to know instinctively that the two men are companions in misery, and that their wives give more importance to mission than marriage or family. This supposition is confirmed when one of Pardiggles's children, Egbert, demands a shilling from Esther and then pinches her, "'O Then! Now! Who are you! *You* wouldn't like it, I think? What does she make a sham for, and pretend to give me money, and take it away again? Why do you call it *my* allowance, and never let me spend it?'" (129). Like Jellyby, Pardiggle has so distanced herself from her children in name of her mission, that she projects her own desires onto them, assuming they care about the same mission with the same passion.

This realization goes for much more than another analytical comparison between the two characters. For Dickens, images of religion and the home are closely tied. Dickens was himself, of course, the High Priest of the Cult of Domesticity during the early and mid-Victorian eras. For many Victorians, the home was a church, a sacred space that offered protection and solace from the evils of the outside world. Many of Dickens's novels read like Protestant 'Spiritual Autobiographies'. But rather than ending with a spiritual redemption, they end with a domestic one. In *David Copperfield,* for example, David's marriage to Agnes is a sign that David has reached the height of personal maturity—his family is his earthly paradise.

In *Bleak House*, Dickens's view of the family holds true—those who embody an authentic Christianity have happy homes, those whose homes are miserable are governed by religious hypocrisy—the one never exists without the other. And in *Bleak* House, there are a number of homes bereft of any domestic or spiritual happiness. As George H. Ford states in his essay on darkness in *Bleak House*: "Out of the more than twenty-four households and establishments described in *Bleak House,* perhaps only four or five meet the requirements of a warm, bright, tidy hearth" (207). Though the houses suffer from physical cold and filth, Ford notes that the spiritual and emotional coldness is far more penetrating. "Like the lights struggling against the overwhelming darkness" he states, "each of these households has to struggle to overcome the penetrating cold, but here what might be termed warmth of spirit in affectionate human relations is more the issue than the physical warmth of fire itself" (207).

The character that exemplifies both ideals is of course Esther Summerson. The names given to her as companion to Ada and Richard, and in particular as the head maid

of sorts at *Bleak House* are motherly in nature—Dame Durden, Mother Goose, Mother Hubbard. Esther is both mother of Bleak House and *Bleak House*, bringing domestic joy and a redemptive Christian intimacy to both the Jarndyce home and the other broken communities that inhabit the novel.

The difference Esther gives to the novel, highlighting this distinction between institutional distance and personal intimacy, can be seen immediately from even the very form of her own narratives. Though many critics have looked at *Bleak House* through the lens of its dual narrative form[24], seeing Esther as a voice for The Church (or more precisely, what The Church *ought* to be), demands that we as readers see the dual narrative in a completely new light. The distinction is not simply that between the impersonal and affectionate, but of the distant, institutionalized voice that fosters corruption and the intimate, personal voice that brings redemption. Once again, Esther operates as this voice by bringing to The Church the sanctified value of home and family.

In *Bleak* House, Esther accomplishes the Dickensian ideal of bringing Church and Home together. It makes sense that Esther be the one to fulfill this role, particularly when keeping in mind the value Dickens places on childhood and a child's psychological development as markers of their adult identity. Not surprisingly, Esther's step-mother *divorces* Church-attendance and religious belief from family affection. "She was a good, good woman!" Esther tells us of her step-mother. "She went to church three times every Sunday, and to morning prayers on Wednesdays and Fridays, and to lectures whenever there were lectures, and never missed" (28). As with the Church in the novel, Esther's step-mother is a great *symbol* of religious belief, yet devoid of all natural affection. "She was handsome," Esther's description continues, "and if she ever smiled, would have been

(I used to think) like an angel—but she never smiled. She was always grave and strict. She was so very good herself, I thought, that the badness of other people made her frown all her life" (28). Finally, Esther's step-mother's stern religious moralism creates a distance between mother and child: "I felt so different from her, even making allowance for the differences between a child and a woman; I felt so poor, so trifling, and *so far off*; that I never could be unrestrained with her—no, could never even love her as I wished" (28, emphasis added).

As with the Chadband, we have here another character that embodies the institutional coldness and distance of The Church. The connections that can be made between Esther's step-mother and The Church as a body or even a building are startling. Like the edifice of St. Paul's, Esther's step-mother has a 'stern face' whose perpetual frown wards off any who may pass by. Her beliefs produce only a moralistic coldness, and that coldness distances her from Esther, who is a part not just of her religious, but familial community. In reaction to this treatment, Esther cultivates a personality that strives to connect the religious life embodied in the Church to the affectionate intimacy embodied in the family.

We as readers even get a glimpse into a practical outworking of this connection between church and home. In chapter 36, as Esther slowly convalesces from the fever which blinded her for a period, and from which she almost lost her life, she enters a small country church and witnesses the marriage of a laboring man's daughter to an illiterate laborer. Esther notes that the bride signs an 'X' for her name after seeing her husband do the same on the marriage registry. After the service, the young bride explains her action to Esther, who is struck by their passionate sincerity:

> She came aside and whispered to me, while tears of honest love and admiration stood in her bright eyes. 'He's a dear good fellow, miss; but he can't write, yet – he's going to learn of me – and I wouldn't shame him for the world!' Why, what had I to fear, I thought, when there was this nobility in the soul of a laboring man's daughter! (575)

This short scene is the only time in the novel in which a description of a Church or service is given favorably. Not surprisingly, the service being conducted is a marriage service, the home being made is one built on true and tender affection, and Esther is present, as if to give her benediction to the newly formed community that is both family and church.

The compassion which Esther shows toward Caddy becomes an almost redemptive act, bringing together church and home. In fact, similar reconciliations, begun by Esther, occur for every character throughout the novel which embodies or experiences the distance caused by the Established Church: Jellyby, Caddy, Pardiggle, Jo and Charley are each experience a type of redemption through Esther's compassionate behavior towards them.

Mrs. Jellyby's home is not unlike the church buildings that ward off Jo. Like "The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts" on whose doorstep Jo takes a scant meal, Mrs. Jellyby can "see nothing nearer than Africa!" (52), her vision going beyond her own children, which are some of the 'dirtiest little unfortunates' ever to be seen. Upon Esther's entrance, the house begins to be redeemed into a sacred space. She extricates one child's head from the outdoor railings, nurses the distraught Peepy, and comforts the depressed Caddy. Upon their arrival at Bleak House, Ada recounts Esther's goodness to Jarndyce: "Esther was their friend directly. Esther nursed them, coaxed them

to sleep, washed and dressed them, told them stories, kept them quiet, bought them keepsakes' … No, no, I won't be contradicted, Esther dear!" (85).

Ada's recounting calms Jarndyce, whose worry about the 'East Wind' changes once he hears about her affectionate kindness.

Esther manages to be a salvific figure most specifically to Caddy, who she encourages and aids in her engagement to Prince Turveydrop. In her motherly nature she models for Caddy, a soon-to-be mother, proper Christian affection. When this affection is compared with Mrs. Jellyby's Evangelical zeal, the difference is striking. This distinction is demonstrated most clearly in Caddy's announcement of her engagement to her mother:

> "I am engaged, Ma,' sobbed Caddy, 'to young Mr Turveydrop, at the Academy; and old Mr Turveydrop … has given his consent, and I beg and pray you'll give us yours, Ma, because I never could be happy without it. I never, never could!' sobbed Caddy, quite forgetful of her general complainings, and of everything but her natural affection" (382).

Jellyby's response has none of the 'natural affection' of her daughter. "'Caddy, Caddy!'" she says, "'Now, if my public duties were not a favourite child to me, if I were not occupied with large measures on a vast scale, these petty details might grieve me very much, Miss Summerson. But can I permit the film of a silly proceeding on the part of Caddy … to interpose between me and the great African continent? No, No,' … 'No, indeed.'" (383). Jellyby's focus on Africa distances not only her religious affections but all 'natural' family affections. As Jellyby herself has just admitted, it is her public duties that are a 'favourite child' to her, and it is with this child that all her affection lies.

Esther's redeeming presence takes on a much more serious tone when she is out with another Low-Church sectarian, Mrs. Pardiggle. As Pardiggle reads her tract to the

illiterate brick-maker and his family, Esther comes to a mother whose child has just died in her arms.

> Presently I took the light burden from her lap; did what I could to make the baby's rest the prettier and gentler; laid it on a shelf, and covered it with my own handkerchief. We tried to comfort the mother, and we whispered to her what Our Savior said of children. She answered nothing, but sat weeping – weeping very much" (134).

While Pardiggle's sectarian bent increases the distance between herself and those she seeks to 'redeem', Esther's non-sectarian compassion offers a true redemptive moment by imitating 'Our Savior' through intimate closeness and physical touch. Esther's taking the child, her attempt to give it a respectful 'rest', and her and Ada's comforting of the mother through their compassionate whispering and touch, bespeak the sort of authentic Christian faith that Dickens prizes most highly: that is, a faith which reveals itself naturally through acts of compassion towards those in need.

Yet, it is with the young maid Charley that Esther most imitates 'Christ-like' suffering. As she nurses the girl back to health from a serious illness, Esther worries what she would tell Charley's siblings should their sister die: "At those times I used to think, how should I ever tell the two remaining babies that the baby who had learned of her faithful heart to be a mother to them in their need, was dead!" (500). Like Esther, Charley, is a 'mother in training', and Christian compassion is modeled to her by Esther. Esther bars herself in Charley's room, and in caring for her so intimately, becomes dangerously ill herself. Her eventual recovery finds her with a scarred face. Esther's 'taking on' of Charley's illness would without a doubt put Victorian readers in mind of Isaiah 53:5; "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are

healed" (Bible Hub)[25]. Like Christ in Gethsemane, Esther's dark night of the soul offers a metaphorical tension between old and new covenant.

Of course the disease itself originated with Jo, and the process of transference here is important. There is also a note of the religious (or spiritual at least) here as well, as the decayed churchyard features as the origin of the disease[26]. In fact, when Allan Woodcourt first sees Jo taken badly with the illness that will eventually kill him, the description given the orphan is distinctly apparitional: "he sees a ragged figure coming cautiously along, crouching close to the soiled walls … It is the figure of a youth, whose face is hollow, and whose eyes have an emaciated glare … He shades his face with his ragged elbow as he passes on the other side of the way, and goes shrinking and creeping on, with his anxious hand before him, and his shapeless clothes hanging in shreds" (713). Jo's emaciated form almost makes us think that the orphan boy has already died, and we are seeing his specter haunt the poor streets he knows so well.

In fact, Jo's emaciated form trudging through Tom-All-Alones forms a ready parallel to the figure in the legend of the 'Ghost Walk' at Chesney Wold. There, the step is heard when disgrace comes to the Dedlock household. Here, Jo's spectral step is a sign of the disgrace that has come to the entire English nation which, through inaction or ignorance, have allowed such people as Jo to exist and live in the way he is forced to. Dickens as much as acknowledges this connection when he speaks out his condemnation to the reader after Jo's death: "Dead, your Majesty. Dead, my lords and gentlemen. Dead, Right Reverends and Wrong Reverends of every order. Dead, men and women, born with heavenly compassion in your hearts. And dying thus around us, every day" (734). It is of course critical to note that in Dickens's condemnation, he does not leave out The Church.

It makes the list in addition to the aristocracy (lords and gentlemen). Clearly, Dickens sees the Church as a part of the problem.

It can be argued then, that Esther taking on Charley's illness also creates a redeeming moment for Jo, as this illness forces Jo to wander the slums where Allan Woodcourt finds him, brings him to the shooting gallery to nurse him, and eventually leads him in his dying prayer of repentance. Though Jo does die, the character of Esther represents a hope that the distance between classes can be bridged. It is also significant that Esther is the novel's intermediary of sorts, moving from upper to lower classes without any bar.

Moving one final time from Esther's personal voice to that of the objective, distant institution we end by exploring the 'No-Church' or Nonconformist sects, very popular in mid-nineteenth century England. According to Owen Chadwick's exhaustive *The Victorian Church*, Dissenting sects encompassed about five or six major movements: Methodist, Presbyterian (which included Unitarianism), Independents, Baptists, Society of Friends, and Latter-Day Saints. One or two of these sects, such as the Methodist, had somewhat arbitrary lines of division between themselves and the Established Church.

In *Bleak House*, Protestant Nonconformity is localized in the person of the Reverend Chadband. When he is first introduced to us, we are told that Chadband is "as he expresses it, 'in the ministry'", but that he "is attached to no particular denomination" (303). This phrase as an indicator of Chadband's sectarian leanings is strengthened by the following entry from *The Companion to Bleak House* by Shatto: "Chadband is one of many examples of Dickens's distaste for displays of religiosity, particularly the evangelical cant characteristic of nonconformists" (158). Shatto goes on to mention how

Dickens attacks nonconformist figures in other novels and even in his pamphlet writing.[27]

Most importantly, however, biographer Edgar Johnson demonstrates how Dickens's almost visceral hatred of Evangelically-minded Nonconformists stems from experience in childhood:

> The minister of the Zion Baptist Chapel in Chatham during the time the Dickenses lived in St Mary's Place was the Reverend William Giles … [Though Anglicans, the Dickenses] had no objection … to hearing their neighbour preach occasionally, and Charles suffered bitterly from his or some other preacher's long-winded two-hour sermons.
>
> Sitting there uncomfortably on a Sunday, he felt as if his mind were being steamed out of him, hating the ministers "big round face" and loathing "his lumbering jocularity." Haled out of the chapel, the boy would find himself "catechized respecting" the minister's "fifthly, his sixthly, and his seventhly," until he "regarded that reverend person in the light of a most dismal and oppressive Charade." These experiences laid the foundations for his lifelong hatred of Nonconformity and his revulsion from formal religious affiliation (23).

Peter Ackroyd, however, disagrees with this typical explanation entirely:

> His childhood memory of being dragged to a chapel in order to hear a more than usually pompous sermon has often been used to suggest that Dickens's hatred of Dissenters was part of some childhood trauma, but this seems unlikely. There are a great many more interesting adult reasons why he should despise Nonconformity, chief among them being its dislike of both fiction and theatre (506).

Regardless of its origin, Dickens's dislike of Dissenters is clearly seen from his life and writings.

There are several possible denominations that Chadband could represent. Most likely, however, he is a Baptist. There are several possible reasons for this. For one, Chadwick tells us that among Baptists themselves was a great deal of divergence. On the one hand, Baptist Ministers could come from well-educated stock. As Chadwick explains; "At their educated end in London or provincial cities some Baptist congregations were distinguishable from Independents only by their doctrine of baptism

… Their educated laity demanded as solid a content of instruction. A few of the Baptist flock at Norwich would test their pastor by quoting largely at him from the original Greek or Hebrew of the Bible" (412). On the other end of the spectrum, however, the distinction was vast. While "Congregational chapels contained few labourers", the labor population of Baptist Churches was significant. In addition, "Many Baptist chapels of 1835 were of a low level in society. They bore to Congregationalists somewhat as Primitives bore to Wesleyans. Their pastors were less educated, people more illiterate" (412). It is this lack of education and propriety that seems to be the focal-point of Dickens's disdain for Nonconformist characters.

But it seems that he was not only in his disdain. In this, Dickens was once again a man of his age. As Chadwick relates, the Evangelicals "did good work, sometimes great work, in the parishes. But they were unpopular. No more unpopular than the Puseyites and usually less unpopular, they collected nearly as bad a reputation. The British public feared Puseyites and despised evangelicals" (446). Chadwick also defends the charge of ignorance: "Nothing is commoner than the charge that evangelicals were ignorant … But what has learning to do with religion? They were men with flocks, and spoke to simple hearts, and knew that little children shall inherit the kingdom of God" (450-451). But even if allowing for the 'simplicity' or even 'commonness' of an evangelical congregation, the truth is this appears to be only a portion of the truth:

> It is difficult to see why they were said not to be gentlemen. The Vicar of Wrexhill and Mr. Slope were vulgar beyond redemption. But remove them from the covers of novels and examine the lists of Oxford or Cambridge (especially Cambridge) graduates and they seem gentle. Noblemen sat as packed upon their platforms as at any other form of religion. Bankers and retired officers may be found in plenty. The filial biographer of the clergyman William Marsh studded his pages comically with titled relations or converts … The Duchess of

> Sutherland, the Duchess of Gordon, the Duchess of Manchester, the Duchess of Beaufort befriended evangelicals (451-452).

Not only were evangelicals not ignorant, they could at times count nobility as congregants. Yet, the depiction given by Dickens is most common in the novels of the era, and it is meant to help point us to a flaw in the sect over-all. As is common with Dickens, Chadband, then, stands as a type rather than as a specific individual; the marker for this type being vulgarity and a lack of education.

Shatto discusses the primary vulgarity through which Chadband demonstrates his apparent lack of education—his use of language. A Shatto states, "Chadband's speech mixes actual biblical expressions and archaisms … with mock-biblical … and inappropriate scriptural quotations" (158). He goes on to note that Chadband's 'pugilistic' descriptions 'are in part a satiric comment on the divisiveness and squabbling among sectarian creeds (158), which Dickens detested[28]. Chadband's incoherent rambling, and his painfully obvious lack of accurate biblical knowledge, seems to support the idea of the character as a provincial Baptist.

In fact, could it be possible that Dickens was representing not Baptists in general, but was parodying one Baptist minister in particular? It would make sense that this person be well-known, so readers from across classes could recognize the parody. And it just so happens that the publication of *Bleak House* in the mid-nineteenth century coincides with the meteoric rise of one of the greatest names in English Religious history: Charles Haddon Spurgeon[29].

To begin with, the physical description of the two men seems to coincide nicely. "Outside of the pulpit," writes Chadwick, [Spurgeon] was fat, podgy, unimpressive. He reminded Lord Houghton of a barber's assistant" (420). We then have his demeanor;

"Spurgeon could be vulgar … People found him vulgar in a London pulpit" (420). Chadwick mentions that Spurgeon was jovial, humorous, and had a 'youthful bounce'. Though this description is very much the opposite of that given to Chadband, we must remember that the Reverend in *Bleak House* is given to us through the eyes of Dickens, who repeatedly evinces his strong dislike of Evangelicals through such parodic depictions. Chadwick also reminds us that in Spurgeon "what some found vulgar, others loved. It was partly the humour" (420). Again taking into account Dickens's characterization, it is plausible that adherents such as Guster would agree that Chadband and Spurgeon share an emotive vocal range: "As an orator he possessed not only a lovely voice but a rare range of moving his audience in a moment from laughter to tears, joy to pathos, heaven to hell" (420).

Such a description makes sense if Chadband is truly a parody of the famous minister, as we are told that the minister is "endowed with the gift of holding forth for four hours at a stretch" (303). If Dickens did not see Spurgeon as intelligent or as an effective orator, he would certainly agree with the next description given by Chadwick: "He was not profound. He approached the burning bush with cheerful aplomb, gave forth little awe or veneration" (420), and Dickens characterization of a man who is too readily familiar with those around him would certainly be fit parody for a man who "shook his audience by the hand, patted it, made friends with it, and led it into the temple parlour" (420).

To this description add another fascinating fact. Exeter Hall, which received Dickens' visceral condemnation, was intimately tied to Spurgeon's popular rise in London, as he preached there in the 1850's while his old chapel was being renovated.[30]

Finally, Timothy Larsen states that Spurgeon is not just representative of the Baptist sect, but suggests that "it is fitting for C. H. Spurgeon to represent orthodox Old Dissent in general … To begin," he states, "Spurgeon was raised as a Congregationalist. Indeed, both his paternal grandfather (who Spurgeon lived with for some years when a boy and who was a major influence on his life) and his own father were Congregational ministers. Evan after Spurgeon had become a convinced Baptist and was no longer living with relatives, he was content to become a minister of a Congregational church" (248).

The distancing which Chadband practices has been discussed throughout this article, but one final mention shows us again that the greatest victim of this practice is Jo. As the orphaned street-sweeper lies on his deathbed in George's Shooting Gallery (which takes on itself the look and feel of a church at this point in the novel), Allan Woodcourt comes to the poor boy and asks him if he knows any prayers, "Not so much as a short prayer?". Jo replies in the negative: "No, sir. Nothink at all. Mr Chadbands he wos a prayin wunst at Mr Snagsby's and I heerd him, but he sounded as if he wos a speakin' to his-self and not to me. He prayed a lot, but *I* couldn't make out nothink on it" (732-733). As is true for Jellyby and Pardiggle, Chadband does the work he feels called to with a blind intensity, and does quite a lot of it. Yet, none of the work proceeds from a genuine Christian affection. Rather, like the proselyting females, Chadband's prayers are self-serving. They are done simply to give himself importance rather than to truly benefit others—which he ultimately does not.

One final aspect of this scene is important to mention. The nonsensical nature of Chadband's prayers mark them as extempore, another attribute of dissenting forms of worship that Anglicans took a great dislike to. In contrast to this, Alan Woodcourt's

prayer, the prayer that saves Jo, is the Lord's Prayer—a prayer that is one of the most well-known forms from the Christian tradition. Dickens's point is clear—Chadband's prayers are not genuine for the very fact that they are extempore; in this instance, it is the following of Church tradition rather than the rejection of it that marks the true believer.

In chapter 46 of the novel, Dickens muses on the 'mighty speech-making' concerning 'Tom' (a metaphor for the poverty class in England), and how he shall be 'got right'. There is much 'wrathful disputation' regarding "Whether he shall be put into the main road by constables or by beadles, or by bell-ringing, or by force of figures, or by correct principles of taste, or by high church, or by low church, or by no church…Tom only may and can, or shall and will, be reclaimed according to somebody's theory but nobody's practice" (710). This statement is the sentiment that drives the entire novel. As Dickens looks at the sectarian tapestry of England, both high-church, low-church or even 'no-church', he finds no institution that operates on the basis of true Christian charity. By viewing the novel through the religious tapestry of Dickens's own day, as well as through Dickens's own unique religious sentiment, we discover his critique of the Established Church in all its forms. By recognizing this, we are able to find a central motivation for the personal and redemptive mode of charity that is so important to the author.

Notes

[1] In his excellent biography, Edgar Johnson says this: "The Dickens family were Church of England, though not at all devout or interested in matters of doctrine" (23).

[2] Biographer Peter Ackroyd gives us a little more information about this interesting time: "Of course he believed what most of his contemporaries believed – his attachment to Unitarianism lasted only for three or four years, and was in fact related to his admiration for the Unitarian minister, Mr Tagart – and on the whole his religion could be said to encompass that of the broad Anglican Church" (507).

[3] As will be explained in more detail in the next note, the substance of what Methodism is changes throughout the century. The Wesley brothers, for example, never thought of themselves as anything but Anglicans. Explaining the change which occurred later in the century, Owen Chadwick says this: "After [Wesley's] death, Methodist societies fell easily and inevitably into two attitudes: Methodists who believed that their societies would lose influence if they identified themselves with dissent; Methodists who found a gospel ministry in Methodism and suffered the establishment like dissenters." By Dickens's time (and by the time of *Bleak House* especially), Methodism was a separate sect, and began to be stereotyped in English culture as the obtuse, narrow-minded Bible-drubbers of the Mrs. Pardiggle and Mrs. Clack variety.

[4] In the broadest terms, the Victorian 'crisis of faith' refers to either a complete loss of faith and turn to humanism, or to a breaking away from the National (Anglican) Church. Since its inception, the Anglican Church has promoted itself as a 'Via Media' (middle way) between the ritualistic Catholicism of Medieval Europe and the complete individualism of more hyper-Protestant sects. Initially, 'High' Churchmen separated themselves from 'Low' by the focus on the Church as the primary spiritual representative in the life of the nation-the National Church body being the vehicle by which man communed with God. By contrast, 'Low' sects promoted *individual* spiritual growth, and the idea that spiritual maturity can be achieved outside of membership in the local parish. By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, the terms 'High' and 'Low' refer to those groups within Anglicanism which tried to push the Church more towards Catholic practice and doctrine on the one hand (such as the Tractarians of the Oxford Movement or the Ritualists), or towards more individualistic Protestantism on the other (such as Methodism or other Evangelical sects). The greatest difficulty appears when taking into account the distinction between, 'Low-Church' and 'Nonconformist' sects. The Evangelical / Methodist movement serves as the greatest example of this complexity. Initially, 'Methodism' or 'Evangelicalism' referred to a doctrinal stance and style of Christian living rather than a specific type of service or view of the Church. Also, early Methodists did not seek to separate themselves politically or ecclesiastically from the Anglican Church. In other words, in the early nineteenth century, there were many Anglican ministers that considered themselves 'Evangelical' or even 'Methodist'. It was not until later in the century that 'Nonconformist' sects saw separation from Anglicanism as a necessity for a more Biblically correct style of Christian living, and sought to separate themselves from the political and ecclesiastical authority of the Anglican Church. Examples of such sects are Congregationalists, Baptists, and 'Radical' Methodists. A distinction also should be made regarding nineteenth-century British Unitarianism, a liberal Protestant sect which denies the Trinitarian Unity of God, and contemporary American Unitarian-Universalism, an unaffiliated sect which denies the existence of hell.

[5] In *Dickens and Religion*, Dennis Walder argues that Dickens's promotion of charity and social justice cannot be understood apart from the religious beliefs that are their foundation. "Most modern criticism of Dickens," he states, "while recognizing the developing complexity and seriousness of the social views revealed in his novels … fails to take into account the religious aspect of those views. In fact, Dickens was increasingly concerned to warn his audience, and to call upon it to respond to the sufferings of the poor in terms of the gospel demand for forgiveness and charity" (140).

In *God and Charles Dickens*, this same connection, that a faith lived out is the only true faith, is made again very clearly: "His stories and his people consistently emerged from and were shaped by his Christian worldview … his good people, his strong characters are disciples of Jesus. And for Dickens, that discipleship was demonstrated in practical ways in service and care for others. Just so, he wanted to demonstrate what Christianity and a life of faith looked like lived out. And those times when Dickens

showed what Christianity is *not* speak as loudly and are just as instructive in reminding us of what Christianity is intended to be" (13).

Biographer Peter Ackroyd clarifies this connection between Dickens's religious beliefs and his call for charitable behavior, noting the distinction between personal belief and its national, institutional representation: "His was a religion of natural love and moral feeling … One could put the same point differently by saying that his was essentially a faith established upon practical philanthropy and conventional morality … It is interesting to note that in his actual novels no character seems ever to be primarily impelled by Christian motives, and churches themselves tend to be portrayed as dusty places of empty forms and rituals … in fact this disparity, between his vigorous public expression of Christian sentiment and his almost total lack of interest in Christian institutions or Christian representatives, is close to the essence of the matter" (507-508).

[6] Once again, Ackroyd gives us a bit more information here: "But he also came in the end to be 'disgusted' by the Established Church, and this primarily because of the internecine arguments which dominated religious debate in the middle of the century, a debate where authority was ranged against authority, text against text. He came to hold 'in unspeakable dread and horror, those unseemly squabbles about the letter' while the same men of faith were doing nothing to alleviate the plight of the poor and the wretched who surrounded them and their churches … he remained appalled by the concentration upon what he considered to be the minutiae of faith when God's own creatures were dying of disease and malnutrition in the slums of England" (506).

[7] Some examples include in Mr. Stiggins in *Pickwick Papers PP*, the clergy-man of Little Bethel chapel from the *Old Curiosity Shop* ('by trade a Shoemaker, and by calling a Divine') and the Rev. Melchisedech Howler in *Dombey and Son* . Chadband's appearance and oratorical habits are modeled on the itinerant preacher in *Pickwick Papers,* the Rev. Anthony Humm.

[8] For example, in *Victorian Literature, Energy, and the Ecological Imagination*, Allen Macduffie argues that the Court of Chancery as a 'resource-intensive' system, taking in all the surrounding resources without any subsequent production, thus becoming grotesque and fetid: "Dickens insists on their sticky, mildewed, jumbled, flickering, scattered, messy presence in almost all of his descriptions of the Court and its environments" (91). For Joseph I. Fradin, Chancery becomes much worse than grotesque - it is demonic: "The Devil is everywhere in *Bleak House* ... The nerve center of the Devil's kingdom (and ultimately the symbol of the kingdom itself) is Chancery, the deadly body of stagnant and inhuman social will … Chancery does indeed spread its vicious and suffocating influence throughout society" (46). To Christine van Boheemen, the court is not evil, but impotent – some that's possibly even worse: "Chancery, then, is the central symbol of the evil aftereffects of this loss of a principle of meaning: instead of justice, this court of law produces endless reams of meaningless writing; rather than provide for the 'wards of chancery,' the members of this court have made the process of administration self-serving … Its most important judge, the Lord High Chancellor, is depicted not as the human representative of the divine prototype, whose prestigious power he still shares in the symbolic order, but as the icon of ineffectiveness" (107). Finally, In his chapter on *Bleak House* from the collection *Dialogic Dickens,* David Paroissien points to the second corrupt institution which receives much of the current critical attention – the aristocracy. "Much of the novel's rhetoric," he states, "exposes the selfish isolation of England's aristocracy and their political and parliamentary allies … [they have the ability to govern the country] … But unfortunately they fail to act. There is, concludes the narrator, 'something a little wrong' with their inability to come to terms with the world about them, despite the immense advantages they enjoy" (51).

[9] In a letter John Makeham, written on June 8th, 1870 (the day before Dickens's death), he writes the following: "I have always striven in my writings to express veneration for the life and lessons of Our Savious; because I feel it; and because I re-wrote that history for my children" (548).

[10]Yet, in spite of this, Dickens was also a perfect product of his era in one important way: he maintained a complete distrust of Roman Catholicism. Biographer Edgar Johnson says this: "…he felt still more violently unsympathetic to the Church of Rome than he did to the Church of England. Although he deplored inflicting penalties on any people for their religious affiliations, he thought the influence of the Roman Church almost altogether evil. Everywhere it seemed to him hand in glove with tyranny and

oppression. Everywhere it riveted shackles on the hearts and minds of the poor whom it professed to succor, and wrung its wealth from their toil and misery. Everywhere it did its worst to keep them in degraded ignorance" (297).

[11] Again Ackroyd, in his wonderful biography, makes it clear that Dickens's 'attachment' to Unitarianism "indicates the extent to which he was concerned less with theology and more with the social and moral obligations of faith; good works and public service were the key phrases of Unitarianism" (387). Ackroyd also makes it clear that this 'attachment "lasted only for three or four years, and was in fact related to his admiration for the Unitarian minister, Mr Tagart" (507).

[12] I should clarify here, that the phrase 'outside of the Church' does not refer to the "No-Church" (Nonconformist) sects mentioned earlier. The Nonconformists were (and are) an official sect operating outside THE (National /Anglican) Church. By 'outside the church', I refer to the ideal popular during the Romantic Era that God and the divine can be better experienced outside the walls of *any* church (in nature, in the family, etc.,).

[13] However, David Ward does make a connection between Religious Dissenters and the institution of the Law-Courts of *Bleak House*: "Even the Courts and Parliament image the moral failings Dickens associated with Dissent; in their endless contention and evasion of responsibility, the practitioners of the law resemble no one so much as the novel's Nonconformists … Dickens saw the divisiveness and intransigence of Dissent as part and parcel of the bureaucratic irresponsibility that had taken hold in England" (223).

[14] Edgar Johnson makes a similar statement in his own analysis, which has itself received a good deal of critical attention. His "The Anatomy of Society" again looks at character as symbol or system:

For Dickens does not mean that Sir Leicester Dedlock, or even the aristocracy as a class, is personally responsible for social evil, any more than are the Lord Chancellor or Carboy and Kenge or Inspector Bucket. Individually they may be amiable enough, but they are instruments of a system in which stately mansion and the rotting slum represent the opposite extremes (25).

In addition, Gary Colledge in *God and Charles Dickens,* says this: "To have an even clearer understanding of Esther as disciple, it is important to be familiar with Dickens's caricatures in *Bleak House*--Mrs. Pardiggle, Mrs. Jellyby, and the Reverend Chadband. Each one of these characters represents a slightly different Christian perspective of the nineteenth century. Mrs. Pardiggle appears to have some connection to High Church Anglicanism, Mrs. Jellyby is perhaps an Anglican Evangelical, and Chadband likely a Dissenter or Nonconformist. Whatever the case, Esther is seen in contrast to each one (9)".

[15] I should clarify here that ultimately, Chadband is not just a symbol for, but IS a Non-conformist, though here I am tying him to a description of an Anglican Church. In this connection, I am using Chadband as a representation of the church in a more universal sense. None of the sects in *Bleak House,* or the characters that represent them, come as particularly attractive – just the opposite. I use Chadband here because his description is the most repulsive and therefore the most accurate symbol for the decaying as it appears in the novel in its universal sense.

[16] Some scholars, like David Ward, will argue that Dickens actually *is* sympathetic to the Anglican Church, but that this sympathy is not unmixed with a degree of distaste: In "Distorted Religion: Dickens, Dissent, and *Bleak House*", David A. Ward argues that Dickens is actually sympathetic to the Established Church in the novel. On the one hand, he sees the "wholesomeness" and "benevolence" of characters like Boythorn, Jarndyce and Woodcourt as embodying a "Broad Church Anglicanism … that is liberal in its theology, keenly sensitive to the social imperatives of the Gospel, and nostalgic for a vision of rural communal life untroubled by the divisiveness and ugliness of Nonconformity" (214). Ward further states that the sympathies that we see in the novel were in fact life-long. Despite Dickens's frustration when the Church became embroiled in "the sectarian squabbles of the day" and despite his late-life "interest in Unitarianism", Ward states that the Church "was an embodiment of the ritual, ceremony, and celebration that gave continuity and stability to English life" (214). At the same time, however, Ward acknowledges a dangerous mixing between Anglicanism and Dissent (most likely represented by Anglican ministers that adopted Evangelical zealotry) which occurred during Dickens's own time. If any sympathy for

Anglicanism is truly in the novel, it is this mixing with the practices of Dissent that corrupts a once-stable institution.

[17] The depiction of Evangelical ministers as hypocritical, avaricious, lustful gluttons is not new. The depictions begin with Frances Trollope's *The Vicar of Wrexhill*, and continues with her son Anthony's characterization of the Reverend Obadiah Slope in *Barchester Towers*. The proselytizing Mrs. Clack in Collins's *The Moonstone* is cut from the same cloth as Mrs. Pardiggle.

[18] Ward, David A. "Distorted Religion: Dickens Dissent and *Bleak House*". *Dickens Studies Annual*, Volume 29

[19] Mrs. Pardiggle's penchant for distributing these tracts marks her as unquestionably evangelical. In a lengthy passage, but one worth quoting, Chadwick gives the following description of evangelicals and their tracts: "The distribution of tracts took no account of seasons. They were handed out in pleasure-boats and omnibuses, left open on the tops of hedges, proffered on sticks to galloping horsemen, sent to criminals awaiting the rope, given to cabmen with their fare. Occasional recipients tore up the gift or greeted it with *Don't read nuffin*, or left the inside of the stage-coach to demand a safer seat on top" (443).

[20] Jellyby may actually serve as an intermedium between the two types of description, as Esther tell us she "was a pretty, very diminutive, plump woman of from forty to fifty, with handsome eyes" (52). For Jellyby, it is her house rather than herself that is grotesque, though it could possibly be argued that the one is certainly a symbol for the other, as she is never comfortable outside of it and away from her writing.

[21] Most scholars agree that Pardiggle is a Methodist.

[22] It should be mentioned that, according to Ward, "some twentieth-century critics have labeled [Pardiggle] a Puseyite because of the saintly names she gives her children". However, he also makes clear that, "for Victorian readers, the practices of Mrs. Pardiggle and her cohorts--the distribution of tracts to the poor, outdoor preaching, and temperance activity … more strongly align her with Dissenters" (211).

[23] Melnyk addresses this idea quite beautifully: "Barred from the pulpit, religious writers … 'preached through their novels. Women poets … felt themselves called to write religious poetry. Women editors of Christian periodicals sought to deepen the faith and broaden the horizons of their mostly female readers, encouraging them to see themselves as part of a vibrant Christian communion and urging them to participate actively in its work within their local communities" (129).

[24] A typical example of this analysis can be seen in Joseph I. Fradin's "Will and Society in *Bleak House"*: "the question of 'will and society' has, by virtue of the dialectic implied in the question, the immediate sanction of the novel's form: the two separate narratives and the debate between them of which the novel is composed. For what makes the first impact on us is not, after all, a matter of plot but of rhythm, a powerful and insistent beat created by the double narrative technique, the changing back and forth between the impersonal, ironic third person voice and the emotional, committed voice of Esther Summerson" (41).

[25] Again from Larson, we get another view of Esther's suffering that makes her all the more Christ-like:

The scriptural allusions associated with Summerson's major crises in the second half of the novel mark her alterations between Joban confusion and despair, Joban patience, and queenly hop; the allusions also mirror her internal stresses between Law and Gospel, showing the reader the moral importance of the endangered New Testament values in which Esther struggles to believe (165-166).

[26] Mark Spilka makes a similar claim in his *Religious Folly,* though his critique focuses on the Aristocracy rather than the Church. Spilka argues that "Jo, as a symbol of the slums, is a source of pollution which compassionate men might remedy" (217). In speaking of Captain Hawdon's grave, to which Jo conducts Lady Dedlock, Spilka states that "This supposedly Christian burial ground is itself a source of malignant disease, so that Jo's later illness might stem as much from the grave as from the slum" (217).

[27] In *Sunday Under Three Heads* (1836), his political pamphlet opposing a proposed Bill to prohibit all recreation on Sundays, he criticized a representative chapel for its intolerant zeal and lampooned its preacher for his blasphemy, ranting and egoism.

[28] A description of Chadband from Walder has this: "Like his predecessors, Chadband battens on the poor and ignorant, whom he exploits under the cover of the fierce, evangelical cant Dickens despises most, accurately identified by George Eliota 'stringent on predestination, but latitudinarian on fasting'" (166).

[29] Chadwick gives us this brief biographical sketch of Spurgeon's beginnings, which I believe to be important here: "Of a family of Essex independent ministers, Spurgeon supplied the pulpit of the Baptist chapel in Waterbeach at the age of seventeen, with results astounding enough to reach the ears of a deacon in London. The new Park Street chapel in Southwark was famous in old Baptist history, but now dingy and down-at-heel and unable to find a satisfactory minister. In 1853, when Spurgeon was nineteen, he was invited to preach at Southwark. A congregation of eighty smiled at his bumpkin voice and giant cravat and blue handkerchief with white spots, but four months later invited him there to be settled. So began a preaching career without parallel in modern history" (418).

[30] Chadwick gives us the following description: "After he (Spurgeon) had preached in Southwark for a few months, and people were sitting on the window-sills or waiting outside in hundreds, the deacons enlarged the chapel at a cost of £2,000. During the builders' mess Spurgeon took Exeter hall for his services … The alleged impropriety of holding services in a hall caused controversy, and the controversy blocked the Strand with carriages, and London began to talk about Spurgeon" (419).

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

This project is very personal to me. In truth, it has been the work of many years. Beginning in my first year of college, I would drive what was nearly an hour to the regional Undergrad University in North Florida each day. To occupy my mind during these drives, I would listen to a wide variety of audio-books on CD checked out from the local library—Austen, Hardy, Stoker—these drives were some of the first encounters I had with these authors. But of all these, my favorite was Charles Dickens. These drives created the deep and abiding love I have for the works of Charles Dickens to this day, and I still remember with clarity driving home while listening to the concluding paragraphs of *A Tale of Two Cites*, deeply affected by the story of the good man who gives his life for the people he loves.

Listening to these texts, it was never a question in my mind to think of Dickens as anything other than a deeply Christian author. This belief was only confirmed as I started reading his more demanding works in the later years of my undergrad—*David Copperfield, Hard Times,* and finally *Bleak House*—I saw these as an apologetic for genuine Christian belief, and a polemic against those who took upon themselves the name of Christian while not practicing its mandates.

Which is why I was surprised to find, as I entered my Master's Program, that many critics see Dickens as not only quasi-Christian, but completely secular in his foundational beliefs. I knew that there must be something more happening with Dickens's religious views, and that to discuss them in terms of only two possible binaries

(Christian / Secular), was doing a dis-service to the complex beliefs and values of this complex author.

Initially, I viewed Dickens's complicated views regarding religion simply as a function of his disagreements with official clerical figures of his day. But this explanation seemed a bit too reductive, and I knew that there must have been more at work. Upon entering my studies at Baylor, I was introduced to the Victorian 'Crisis of Faith' debate that raged during the era. The socio-historical reality of sectarian division in the nineteenth century gave me the vocabulary for analysis that I so desperately needed. I am grateful to Dr. Dianna Vitanza for introducing me to this concept through her Victorian Survey course; the seminar paper I wrote for her class served as the basis for the final chapter of this dissertation, and I am delighted to say that it has just recently appeared as a peer-reviewed article in the latest installment of the *Dickens Studies Annual* (vol. 49, no. 2).

The idea for this project grew as I learned more about the historical framework of Victorian religious debate and sectarian difference. I owe this growth in knowledge to Dr. Joshua King, whose course on Victorian Poetry inspired me to take the religious-sectarian reading he used as a theoretical construct of the course and apply it to the novel.

There is one major shift that has occurred as my dissertation developed. At the beginning of my writing, I spent a great deal of time laying the groundwork for the historical framework of the religious divisions in the era. I have always had a great love for English History, and I found these debates fascinating. Even more engaging were the personalities that gave their voices to each of the major religious sects operating at the time. I was intensely interested by the figures of men like Newman, Keble, Maurice and

Kinglsey. The fact that these men were literary in their own rights added to my interest. However, this gave my writing tendency towards prioritizing the historical framework over a direct analysis of the novels themselves. I have since corrected this faulty prioritization.

I would also say that initially, I saw the authors I have chosen as simply being a representative of the sect to which they are most closely aligned. But on further analysis, I decided this was far too simplistic, and have nuanced the claims of each chapter to demonstrate how each author both *adheres to* and *reacts against* the system with which they are most commonly aligned.

Each author not only embeds their sectarian beliefs into their novels, but does so in a way that most closely relates to those beliefs. For Yonge, the Tractarian concept of Reserve encourages her to encode her religious faith in the novel—she never editorializes or “proselytizes” for her own religious view as an Evangelical might do, but like a true Tractarian, uses symbol and image to convey Christian truth. At the other end of the spectrum, Eliot announces her sympathetic view of the characters with whom she deals through several direct addresses to the audience. She gives a thoroughly evangelical defense of her evangelical characters, preaching her doctrine of sympathy by calling our attention to those personality traits and psychological motivations which we would not be able to see in an unassisted reading. By doing so, Eliot becomes an Evangelical minister, illuminating to each reader the truths to be found in her own text.

In a similar manner to the above authors, Charles Kingsley provides a very Broad-Church approach to his Broad-Church text, including all aspects of Patristic-Era Alexandrian life. *Hypatia* breaks down all barriers between peoples and people groups:

between Christian, Hellenistic, Semitic and Teutonic cultures, and between Christianity and Platonism; much like the Broad-Church ideology to which he ascribed attempted to do in the Victorian era. Finally, Dickens practices Dissent in the most absolute terms, dissenting from any fixed religious sect or institution; giving a concerted critique of each one.

I feel that my argument adds to the discussion of religious culture and the nineteenth-century novel in two ways. In the first instance, I take into account the personal religious journey of each author rather than just the sect they most commonly 'represent'. Secondly, as stated above, I address how each author (and the novels they created), both adhere to and react against the beliefs of the sect with which they are most commonly aligned.

Taking into account the framework of the sectarian debates of the Victorian period, and the personal religious life of each author surveyed in this dissertation, the author's own religious views can be clearly seen in his or her own work.

If I continued this project further within the parameters of my own field, I would add two extra chapters. Both of these would deal with the final "sect" active during the religious debates of the nineteenth century: humanism. In what would be a fifth chapter, my primary text would be Mary Ward's *Robert Elsmere.* In this novel, Miss Ward engages directly with the German theologians that gave so much power to intellectual doubt during the period. In the novel, the eponymous Elsmere is a newly-minted cleric from Oxford. He marries a young woman related to the family and takes his living at the local parish. However, while he is there he begins reading the German Higher-Critics (Strauss, Heinlein et. al.) and becomes a skeptic and apostate. Stepping down from his

role in the parish, he begins to teach at a small building in a London slum, 'preaching' a humanist gospel, and arguing against the divinity of Christ.

A possible sixth chapter would be a reading of Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*. This text deals directly with the Church, but from the viewpoint of a thorough atheist. In contrast to Elsmere, who fights an intense battle with skepticism throughout the novel, Hardy's God is dead well before the opening pages. Even before we know her, Jude's cousin Sue demonstrates a peculiar interest in Pre-Christian paganism, and all of Jude's ambition is swallowed by the Immanent Will that drives Hardy's cosmos.

If I were to take this project outside of my special field of interest, I would make the argument Trans-Atlantic, and look to the religious underpinnings of two great American novelists and their work.

I would first want to dedicate a chapter to the Separatists—the Puritans who decided to leave the English Church all-together rather than attempting to reform it from within. In this chapter, I would look at what is the greatest representative in literature of New-England Puritanism: Melville's' *Moby Dick*. I would then dedicate a chapter to American Evangelical dissent. In this genre, I can find no better representative than Mark Twain and his novel *Tom Sawyer*.

Finally, if I looked outside of my field in terms of time rather than place, I would focus on E. M. Forster and T. S. Eliot. For Forster, I would analyze the Edwardian continuation of the Victorian era's crisis faith, looking at the ways in which Forster replaces the Church with the emerging modernist transcendentals of intellectual inquiry and aesthetics. Finally, in looking at T. S. Eliot I would argue for a possible return to faith after years of doubt.

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