THE ARK OF GOD

In this book the author, who is Assistant Head of Religious Broadcasting, B.B.C., discusses the novels of James Joyce, Aldous Huxley, Graham Greene, Rose Macaulay, and Joyce Cary. He holds that the stuff of the novel is human character and human conflict and these are also the stuff of Christian theology. He writes: "It is a sincerely held conviction that the authors here studied are living voices who have a message not simply for the world but for the Church, and that the Church in all her forms is impoverished by her deafness."

8s. 6d. net

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Studies in Five Modern Novelists

James Joyce — Aldous Huxley
Graham Greene — Rose Macaulay
Joyce Cary

W. T. Whitley Lectures for 1960

by
DOUGLAS STEWART

LONDON
THE CAREY KINGSGATE PRESS LIMITED

The Carey Kingsgate Press Limited
6 Southampton Row, London, W.C.1

First published 1961

The "W. T. Whitley Lectureship" was founded in 1949 for the purpose of encouraging Baptist scholarship, primarily (though not exclusively) in Great Britain. The lectures are so named in grateful appreciation of the outstanding services of the Rev. Dr. William Thomas Whitley, M.A., F.R.Hist.S., to the cause of Christian learning and Baptist historical scholarship

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
BY EBENEZER BAYLIS AND SON, LTD.
THE TRINITY PRESS, WORCESTER AND LONDON

Man is either the ark of God or a phantom of the earth and of the water.

WILLIAM BLAKE

To
MARY

PREFACE

At a time when the Church is becoming acutely aware of her failure to communicate her message to the secular world, when in every European country (America they say is different) she is no longer in mid-stream but appears rather to be drifting into a position of isolation from the main currents of thought, it is paradoxical that the great Christian themes of man's moral dilemma, of his spiritual anxiety, of sin and of salvation, should increasingly occupy a primary place in the writings of secular novelists, and should, partly through them, infiltrate into the worlds of the theatre, the cinema and the radio. The attitude of churchmen to this development is somewhat reminiscent of the attitude of the Western allies to the advance of the Russian armies into Europe in 1945. We were indeed glad to see our enemies assailed on a second front, but we remained suspicious of our Eastern allies who seemed to incorporate in their system some of those very evils against which we had taken up arms. The Church is similarly glad to see a second front opened against the materialism of our time, but remains suspicious of some of these new allies who appear almost as dangerous as the common enemy whom they assail. Mr. Graham Greene's championship of the Roman Catholic Church, for example, has been somewhat coldly received in Catholic circles both official and unofficial, and Joyce Cary's evocation of the spirit of Protestant nonconformity has scarcely been recognized among Nonconformists for what it is. Sheerly prudential considerations might be expected to

move us to some examination of these lay preachers who succeed in discussing sin and salvation on the West End stage before audiences who turn a deaf ear to these themes when they are introduced by a clerical voice. They at least communicate.

The motive behind these lectures, however, is not prudential. It is a sincerely held conviction that the authors here studied are living voices who have a message not simply for the world but for the Church, and that the Church in all her forms is impoverished by her deafness. There is no monopoly of vision either inside or outside of the Church and the time has surely come to open conversation with our secular allies.

Interestingly enough, the Greek Orthodox Church is not inhibited at this point as the Protestant churches, despite their own theological presuppositions, seem to be. Dostoevsky is accepted by the Russian theologians as one of themselves and Professor L. A. Zander's *Dostoevsky* is only the most recent study by a theologian of that novelist. Yet English literature is full of theological writing which is largely ignored by the theologians. The late Dr. W. R. Maltby drew our attention to this a generation ago when he wrote, "—and so men entertain Him unawares. These vast tracts of the unbaptized human life we make over to poets, and novelists, and dramatists, who explore them with inexhaustible interest and sympathy. Yet that interest and sympathy comes from God, who loves this human life of ours, not only as a moralist approving where it is good, and disapproving where it is bad, but as a poet or artist loves it, because He cannot help loving a thing so strange, piteous, and enthralling as the story of every human soul must be".[1]

Christian theology can never be fully Christian while it remains systematic, withdrawn from life as men actually experience it. The stuff of the novel is human character and human conflict and these are also the stuff of a Christian theology. Certainly those who stand in the pulpit, midway between the theological schools and the world of passion and ambition, cannot afford to deprive themselves of the insights which the novelist, the poet, the dramatist, and the painter can provide.

Here, however, a new complication emerges. It has been strikingly stated by W. B. J. Martin in his book, *Five Minutes to Twelve.*

"What are 'religious' books? Several members of my congregation have told me recently, obviously angling for my approval, that they have been reading, and actually enjoying, the novels of Lloyd Douglas and the works of Norman Vincent Peale. They have surprised themselves, and obviously wish it to be counted unto them for righteousness, by finding *The Robe* and *The Big Fisherman,* both interesting and informative. It puts me in an awkward position when they ask what I think of these volumes, for the honest answer is that I consider them unreadable. If I say frankly that I consider them dull and uninspired, written in clichés and journalese, deficient in penetrating religious judgment, it sounds as though I am discouraging their newly awakened interest in 'good' books.

"If I go further and say that I find more real religion in writers like William Faulkner and Joyce Cary, or John Steinbeck and Graham Greene, they are apt to be scandalized, for these are not good books about good people. There is little here that bears the obvious label 'religious'. There is much both in the language and in the situation that offends the conventional churchgoer. How can I explain that a 'religious' book is not necessarily a book that

reconstructs a New Testament incident, or that depicts the ultimate triumph of right, or that avoids the presentation of unpleasant people. A 'religious' book is the result of a religious attitude to life, it is the product of deep compassion, of a fundamental seriousness about the reality of good and evil, about the depth and power of evil. It is a book that takes seriously the human predicament, that does not gloss over what is ugly and malign and misshapen. It is informed and suffused with a great pity for man in his plight; it sees man, not men; the individual in his solitariness, not types or stock characters. It may not use religious terminology or quote the words of Jesus, but it stands where He stood, for all that is living, spontaneous and free, against all that is dead, mechanical and necessitated. A religious book, no matter how sordid its characters or how foul its language, is a prayer of wrath and a plea for pity".[2]

If Martin were only saying that church people are aesthetically conservative, he would be saying something which every working minister who has tried to introduce his people to post-Victorian literature, drama, music or painting knows to be true. There is a time-lag between the creative artist and the appreciative reception of his work which is inevitable, and religious art cannot be exempt from that law of nature. But Martin is, in fact, saying something much more serious when he says of religious writing, "it stands where He stood". If Christian people cannot recognize the compassion of Christ when it assumes the form of a novel like Joyce Cary's *Charley is my Darling*, where are we? For such writing presents no stylistic difficulty and the situations described are all too familiar in our twentieth century. That is to say that almost any literate person can read and understand such a book, and if, when they have

done so, they only see Charley as a wicked boy, one more example of "juvenile delinquency", and are unaware that they have been reading of the compassion of Christ which is of the essence of Cary's creative vision, what must we conclude? Have we really reached the point that we can only recognize Christ in the context of church and Bible and are blind to his everlasting mercy in the world around us?

The most common objection taken to James Joyce, to Aldous Huxley, to Graham Greene and to Joyce Cary is almost a direct quotation from the Gospels. The Pharisees sought to discredit our Lord by saying, "Look at the company he keeps!" What is alarming about the respectable churchman's attitude to the characters in *Eyeless in Gaza*, in *Brighton Rock*, and in *The Horse's Mouth* is that it reveals the extent to which Pharisaism has replaced Christianity in the organized church.

May not this take us to the very heart of our communication problem for we learn from the Gospels also that our Lord communicated as the Pharisees could not? Certainly this is the bar before which we are summoned by each of the writers here studied, and as one encounters this issue successively, although in a different form, in each of them it begins to emerge as the central problem for the organized church today. Entrusted with a gospel of charity we have subtly altered it in spirit into a gospel of purity, so that we feel happier with John the Baptist living apart in the wilderness and preaching of judgment than with Jesus the Christ living the ordinary life of his time and eating with publicans and harlots.

One specific instance of our failure to communicate is that, despite the thousands of sermons preached every week,

preaching as such has fallen into disregard if not into disrepute. To localize this fact, one could easily construct a historic chain of dominant London preachers from John Donne to Charles Haddon Spurgeon who, generation after generation, in their immensely varied traditions, shaped and influenced the life of London. But somewhere between Spurgeon and ourselves the chain is broken, and those who would restore it seem to have no better idea than to imitate the high days of Victorian church oratory.

Why should the chain have broken? The twentieth-century preacher has to hand a wealth of biblical and theological scholarship unknown in previous centuries and it is difficult to believe that on the intellectual side he is in any way inferior to his predecessors. Would it be unfair to make the generalization that modern preaching fails on the opposite side, that it is unimaginative, uninspired? Living in the greatest of all ages of discovery which has lit up the human imagination at every level from Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's *The Phenomenon of Man*, down to the child's comic strip, the last point to catch fire would seem to be the Sunday sermon. If those engaged in the task of preaching were more in touch with the imaginative writers of our time, might they not catch fire sooner?

So much by way of *apologia* for the subject of these lectures. As to treatment, one point calls for explanation. Novelists are not systematic theologians and it would be an intolerable impertinence for any interpreter to seek to impose a system on them. The theological term added to each author's name must, therefore, be interpreted loosely, as indicating perhaps that had this man been a systematic theologian he might have been found here or hereabouts on the

doctrinal globe. The apparent order emerging from these theological terms—Apocalypticism, Mysticism, Roman Catholicism, Anglicanism, and Protestantism—is almost fortuitous. Certainly the writers were not selected either to create, or to fit into, such a scheme. The principle of selection was indeed quite different. These five writers have over the years profoundly influenced the lecturer.

[1] Quoted from *The Idea of Perfection*, Newton Flew, pp. 340–1.
[2] *Five Minutes to Twelve*, W. B. J. Martin (Collins, 1957), pp. 123–4

LECTURE 1

JAMES JOYCE - APOCALYPTICISM

"——I sent for you today, Stephen, because I wished to speak to you on a very important subject.

——Yes, sir.

——Have you ever felt that you had a vocation?

Stephen parted his lips to answer yes and then withheld the word suddenly. The priest waited for the answer and added:

——I mean, have you ever felt within yourself, in your soul, a desire to join the order? Think.

——I have sometimes thought of it, said Stephen.

The priest let the blindcord fall to one side and, uniting his hands, leaned his chin gravely upon them, communing with himself.

——In a college like this, he said at length, there is one boy or perhaps two or three boys whom God calls to the religious life. Such a boy is marked off from his companions by his piety, by the good example he shows to others. He is looked up to by them; he is chosen perhaps as prefect by his fellow-sodalists. And you, Stephen, have been such a boy in this college, prefect of Our Blessed Lady's sodality. Perhaps you are the boy in this college whom God designs to call to Himself.

A strong note of pride reinforcing the gravity of the priest's voice made Stephen's heart quicken in response.

——To receive that call, Stephen, said the priest, is the greatest honour that the Almighty God can bestow upon a man. No king or emperor of this earth has the power of the priest of God. No angel or archangel in heaven, no saint, not even the Blessed Virgin herself, has the power of a priest of God: the

power of the keys, the power to bind and to loose from sin, the power of exorcism, the power to cast out from the creatures of God the evil spirits that have power over them; the power, the authority, to make the great God of Heaven come down upon the altar and take the form of bread and wine. What an awful power, Stephen!

A flame began to flutter again on Stephen's cheek as he heard in this proud address an echo of his own proud musings. How often had he seen himself as a priest wielding calmly and humbly the awful power of which angels and saints stood in reverence! His soul had loved to muse in secret on this desire. . . .

"He listened in reverent silence now to the priest's appeal and through the words he heard even more distinctly a voice bidding him approach, offering him secret knowledge and secret power. . . .

"——I will offer up my mass tomorrow morning, said the director, that Almighty God may reveal to you His holy will. And let you, Stephen, make a novena to your holy patron saint, the first martyr, who is very powerful with God, that God may enlighten your mind. . . .

"He held open the heavy hall door and gave his hand as if already to a companion in the spiritual life. Stephen passed out on to a wide platform above the steps and was conscious of the caress of the mild evening air. Towards Findlater's church a quartet of young men were striding along with linked arms, swaying their heads and stepping to the agile melody of their leader's concertina. The music passed in an instant, as the first bars of sudden music always did, over the fantastic fabrics of his mind, dissolving them painlessly and noiselessly as a sudden wave dissolves the sand-built turrets of children. Smiling at the trivial air he raised his eyes to the priest's face and, seeing in it a mirthless reflection of the sunken day, detached his hand slowly which had acquiesced faintly in the companionship.

"As he descended the steps the impression which effaced his troubled self-communion was that of a mirthless mask reflecting a sunken day from the threshold of the college".[1]

The quiet narrative conveys in its own subtle way a sense of the Damascus road. This is autobiography and the young Joyce, like a young river, hesitates on the watershed. He may become a priest—a man dedicated to God and with all his gifts committed to the Church. He may choose the other side and allow his life to flow into another ocean a continent's breadth away. We are so aware of Joyce as sceptic, as mocker, and we are so prejudiced by the conflict over the alleged indecency of his work, that we need the corrective of this picture of the boy hesitating about his vocation to the priesthood. The river might have flowed the other way. And, while in that case it would have been a different river, in another and deeper sense it would have been the same. So, conversely, the Joyce we know, blasphemous, ribald, uproarious, irreverent, yet carries in his being the Catholic he once was, the priest he might have become, and amongst the rich ores which give texture to his work there is a seam of theological metal, at once dark and fiery, which is as significant for our time as is his literary impact.

That extract comes from Joyce's semi-autobiographical book, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. He was educated in a Jesuit college and his recreation of the life of the college in that book has had one interesting consequence. In *Elected Silence* the book in which Thomas Merton tells of his spiritual pilgrimage from American secularism to a Trappist monastery, there is a description of an unexpected meeting in the cloister with a brother who exclaimed, "Here is a man

who was converted to the faith by reading James Joyce".[1] Merton is careful to explain that he was not converted by Joyce, but that the picture of Catholic life painted by Joyce in *A Portrait of the Artist* was among the influences which drew him to the cloister.

In particular, Merton was moved by a description of "the Mission" held in the school and by the sermon on hell preached by the missioner.[2] Perhaps nowhere in his work is Joyce's evocative power greater. He recreates for us that world of Catholic piety and enables us to understand the burning faith which produced such sermons. But, despite Thomas Merton, it is not here that we must look for Joyce's theological significance. When he wrote that sermon he had long ceased to hold the faith. It is not his sermon but that of his early teachers. For him it was a memory; a part of his essential denial.

Theology is for each man an ultimate—his foundation—his last word. It may lie so deep in him that he himself is unconscious of it and unable to formulate it. The artist, and here Joyce would agree, is the conscious man; the man who patiently searches his own depths to draw from them his vision and his truth. Joyce has done this not in *A Portrait of the Artist* but in *Ulysses*, and it is in that much more difficult work that we must attune ourselves to hear his personal message. With the straightforward narrative quoted above contrast the opening sentences of *Ulysses*.

"Stately, plump Buck Mulligan came from the stairhead, bearing a bowl of lather on which a mirror and razor lay crossed. A yellow dressing-gown, ungirdled, was sustained gently behind him by the mild morning air. He held the bowl aloft and intoned: '*Introibo ad altare Dei*'." [3]

At a first reading that too is straightforward narrative. Buck Mulligan is an impecunious medical student addicted to impudent impiety. Here we see him at the beginning of that long day in which Joyce will conduct us upon our strange twentieth-century odyssey. He is preparing to shave himself. But throughout *Ulysses*, as perhaps in no other book, the surface meaning is like the note of a bell. We hear it surrounded by overtones and undertones, by harmonies and disharmonies which confuse the ear and mystify the mind by their reverberations. Behind Buck Mulligan stands another "stately" figure, his "yellow" chasuble "ungirdled", making the sign of the cross, holding up his chalice, intoning, "I will go unto the altar of God." The priestly vocation, rejected long ago in boyhood, lives in this ghostly fashion in the profane world of manhood.

These sentences are a fair example of the way in which *Ulysses* is written. Picture is imposed on picture and image upon image as though a whole series of exposures had been made of one film before developing it. Even single words are carefully inserted, like the word "crossed" above, for their evocative power. And the danger, as in the New Testament Apocalypse, is one of over-interpretation. Every man reads his own meaning into the symbols and the original meaning is lost in the process. How is it possible to disentangle any theological intention and claim that here is Joyce's ultimate vision?

Paradoxically enough an examination of the main objections taken to *Ulysses*, and of the arguments used to support the ban originally imposed on the book, seems to take us most quickly to the heart of the matter. All the charges levelled against Joyce can really be reduced to two—

obscurity and obscenity. His style is obscure and his material is indecent. It is as we study these objections that the profound significance of *Ulysses* begins to emerge.

First, then, obscurity: and it cannot be denied both that many passages in *Ulysses* are obscure in the simple meaning of that word, and that, even in the apparently simple passages, like that quoted above, the simplicity is deceptive. But to admit that Joyce is a difficult writer does not close the matter. All art is difficult in the sense that it goes beyond nature and beyond literalism. The real question is why is Joyce difficult? Is there a positive reason for his obscurity?

He has suffered more than most creative men, from the demand, always made upon the artist, for the familiar. Since the great Victorian novelists wrote stories which can be understood in one straight reading, why could not Joyce do the same? And this is germane to our central inquiry, because, even on the level of his style, Joyce could not write like the Victorians because in fact his vision was a different vision and his truth a different truth.

Berdyaev has made us familiar with the idea that we live "at the end of the Renaissance". He had taught us to see our age and our lives as part of an historic span of four hundred years now drawing to its end. Joyce's vision is similar but much more vast. He sees us as living at the end of the Homeric age. The span of history of which we are a part, and which now draws to its close, is four thousand years long. His wavelength is ten times greater than Berdyaev's, and it is this vaster wave which he sees breaking in our century.

The idea that Western culture is a unity is not, of course, original to Joyce. It is the basic conception behind all classical

education. What is original is the intensity with which Joyce realized it, and the vision which he had of "the end". We distinguish between "the classical" and "the modern" even when we are most aware of their inter-relatedness. Joyce is seeking to melt down and fuse both classical and modern worlds and to pour out an alloy in which they shall be indistinguishable.

It may help us to understand this if we contrast Joyce with Bunyan. Bunyan had his relationship with Homer which can best be illustrated by using Chesterton's dictum, "The *Iliad* is only great because in it all life is a battle: the *Odyssey* is only great because in it all life is a journey". Journeying and strife are the elemental forms in which life may be conceived and here Bunyan follows Homer. He writes his *Holy War* in which life, more subjectively conceived than in Homer, is a battle. He writes his *Odyssey*, *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The forms of journeying and strife are the same but in every other respect it would be difficult to think of writers more different than Homer and Bunyan. *The Pilgrim's Progress* and the *Odyssey* are parallel straight lines which never meet because of the theological gulf between them.

Had Joyce been like Bunyan he could easily have written a modern Irish *Odyssey*, full of colour and fun, giving rein to his fancy and wit and unbaring the soul of twentieth-century man as Homer reveals the soul of archaic man and Bunyan the troubled soul of the seventeenth-century evangelical. In that case we would have the right to complain that the Irish epic is not crystalline as are the Greek and the English. But that is not what Joyce set himself to do. Bunyan, probably unconsciously, parallels Homer. But Joyce

consciously re-writes Homer: he brings him up-to-date. And not only Homer: *Ulysses* is an attempt to gather up the whole of our Western culture and to express its unity.

In form he takes us back to Homer and each of the eighteen books of the *Odyssey* is paralleled in the eighteen chapters of *Ulysses*. But when we come to content even an attempt to list the main themes is a formidable undertaking. The first three chapters, running parallel to their Homeric prototypes in which Odysseus does not appear but in which his son, Telemachus, sets out to look for him, continue the theme of *A Portrait of the Artist*. Their hero is Stephen Dedalus whom we already identify with Joyce in youth. Upon the ancient story are superimposed the worlds of Irish nationalism, Catholic piety, and modern scepticism. With chapter four we are introduced to Joyce's hero, Mr. Leopold Bloom, who is a Jew and who brings with him into the tapestry, not only the wandering Jew of the Middle Ages, but also that other, Hebraic, pattern of life which merges with the Greek to make our modern culture.

It is no part of our purpose to elucidate all the lesser themes which can be found in *Ulysses*. Some interpreters claim that the book contains an exploration of our physical anatomy treating man as microcosm of the macrocosmic universe; that it contains a compendium of the arts and sciences of mankind; that it follows an elaborate system of astrological symbols.[4] What is beyond dispute is that it is deliberately written in an astonishing variety of literary styles. Three chapters are written in differing narrative styles. Two chapters consist of monologues (one male one female). One chapter is written like a modern newspaper with large, catchy, and irrelevant headlines. Another imi-

tates the musical fugue. Two follow the style of the catechism—question and answer, and yet another is written like a Platonic dialogue. Chapter fourteen, symbolizing perhaps the growth of the embryo in the womb, runs through the gamut of English styles from Malory to Joyce.

Joyce has an astonishing literary virtuosity, which was doubtless a temptation to him, but when that has been said, one still stands amazed at the sheer magnitude of *Ulysses*. The greater the complexity of the work, the stronger must have been the driving intention behind it. Why attempt to cram the whole of Western culture into one volume?

Here is a little conversation between Buck Mulligan and an Englishman called Haines. They are talking about Stephen (the young Joyce) and Mulligan explains him by saying,

"——They drove his wits astray by visions of hell.

—He can find no trace of hell in ancient Irish myth, Haines said, the moral idea seems lacking, the sense of destiny, of retribution. Rather strange he should have just that fixed idea".[5]

"The fixed idea" in *Ulysses* is the end of the world. It is a twentieth-century Apocalypse. The age which opens with Homer ends now. *Ulysses* is a summing-up. And so Joyce seeks to put Homer and medieval theology and the wandering Jew and Shakespeare and astronomy and the symbols of astrology and all the arts and sciences of mankind into one book, as a child crams all his books and toys into his playbox, because night has come and he must go to bed.

"the childman weary, the manchild in the womb.
Womb? Weary?
He rests. He has travelled.

With?
Sinbad the Sailor and Tinbad the Tailor and Jinbad the Jailor and Whinbad the Whaler and Ninbad the Nailer and Finbad the Failer and Binbad the Bailer and Pinbad the Pailer and Minbad the Mailer and Hinbad the Hailer and Rinbad the Railer and Dinbad the Kailer and Vinbad the Quailer and Linbad the Yailer and Xinbad the Phthailer".[6]

The circle is closed.

This interpretation of *Ulysses* is reinforced when we turn from Joyce's obscurity to his obscenity. It is notoriously impossible to produce a satisfactory definition of the obscene or to create a generally accepted standard which can be applied to works of art. Different times, cultures, classes and individuals differ, and argument is apparently profitless. There are many elaborate passages in *Ulysses* which go beyond good, clean, English fun and good, broad, Irish humour. Joyce's detractors had no difficulty in finding quotations which, read in isolation, suggested that it was an indecent book. But a far more satisfactory approach to all questions of indecency is to ask not, "Will this offend public taste?" but, "What is the author's intention?" Public taste and private taste alike differ and are constantly in flux. Moral judgement can only be directed to intention. Pornography is pornography because of its essentially evil intention.

The process of reading aloud selected extracts from *Ulysses* proves nothing because the act of selection has prevented the author's intention from being understood. Had Joyce a reason for writing as he did?

It may help us at this point to contrast Joyce with his contemporary and compatriot, George Bernard Shaw. The same generation which accepted, lauded, idolized and in-

cidentally enriched Shaw, banned Joyce and left him to eke out a poverty-stricken existence teaching English in Trieste. Was this because Shaw is a "clean" and Joyce a "dirty" writer? Or was it a matter of credo? An age, like ours, which has drifted in the main from the classical Christian creeds, tends to have its own deeply-held creed, all the more precious because it is unformulated. The hatred of Joyce had in it an element of passion which suggests that he was felt to be an enemy of the creed. The unwritten creed of the early twentieth century contained at least two identifiable articles: that this world is all: and that man is a wonderful being.

For all his fun and games, his Fabianism, his Ibsenism, his Irish wrong-headedness, Shaw was, in terms of the credo, completely trustworthy. He never broke the closed circle of this-worldliness, and what he stole from human dignity with his right hand he restored with his left. With a capacity unique amongst English dramatists for portraying religious emotion on the stage (in fact he can portray no other emotion) he could always be trusted deftly to explain it all in irreligious terms and to laugh at himself for being carried away by it. And though he could stretch and strain this life into impossible shapes, as in *Back to Methuselah*, yet it always remains this life. Even St. Joan goes to the stake in the end because her love of nature makes the thought of life imprisonment unendurable. This is a completely modern sentiment and it is followed by the splendid romp of the last act in case anyone should have thought we were becoming too serious. Shaw never breaks out. All his saints and clergymen are thoroughly secular at heart and all his rationalistic heroines are invincible upholders of the dignity of mankind. Therefore the modern creed was safe with him.

In *After Strange Gods:*[7] Mr. T. S. Eliot has written, "I trust I shall not be taken as speaking in a spirit of bigotry when I assert that the chief clue to the understanding of most contemporary Anglo-Saxon literature is to be found in the decay of Protestantism—I mean that amongst writers the rejection of Christianity—Protestant Christianity—is the rule rather than the exception; and that individual writers can be understood and classified according to the type of Protestantism which surrounded their infancy, and the precise state of decay which it had reached".

That penetrates to the heart of Shavianism. Shaw is a secularized evangelical. What then is Joyce? He is Catholicism in decay. He too is secular, but he remains otherworldly. He will not accept the facile optimism of the world around him. He rends the veil, and looks beyond this world and this life to the dark void once lit by faith and hope. It is this apocalyptic element in Joyce which is his real offence. "This-worldmanship", at which Shaw was an adept, is anathema to him. He looks beyond the world and sees—nothing.

In the first book of *Ulysses*, Haines, the Englishman, questions Stephen about faith.

"——You're not a believer are you? Haines asked. I mean, a believer in the narrow sense of the word. Creation from nothing and miracles and a personal God.

——There's only one sense of the word, it seems to me, Stephen said".[8]

"There's only one sense of the word". In that phrase you have the key to Joyce's mind. And Joyce at this point has the courage of his convictions. More, there is an element of

bitterness in his denial which bears witness to his sense of cosmic disappointment. No writer in any age has written anything comparable to "the Ballad of Joking Jesus".

> "——Good-bye, now, good-bye. Write down all I said
> And tell Tom, Dick, and Harry I rose from the dead.
> What's bred in the bone cannot fail me to fly
> And Olivet's breezy . . . Good-bye, now, good-bye".[9]

This is blasphemy. But in a world without God what does blasphemy mean? As T. S. Eliot also has perceived, blasphemy has become impossible in our time. Through that apparent blasphemy, therefore, Joyce is revealing to the modern world its suppressed truth. He is confronting it with the emptiness of its own heart, with its hidden and unspoken despair.

Despair has in Joyce the urgency of a passion. Kierkegaard speaks in another connection of "the despair of the heathen", and there is a form of despair which is heathen in the sense that it has never greatly hoped. This was perhaps the form of despair in the classical world. Certainly Dante saw the noble heathen in the upper circle of hell and Dorothy Sayers defends him at this point.

> "To the great heathen Dante has allotted just that beatitude which they were able to imagine for themselves. Dante, as Charles Williams has pointed out, could not have let Virgil and the other great pagans into the Christian heaven without making nonsense of their work. ——Beautiful and peaceful, pathetic and fatigued, 'All passion spent', it is only the upper circle of an immense despair. ——The endless games, the shining phantom horses, the odes and the choric measures are touched with the eternal futility, the eternal melancholy of hell".[10]

But that classical world remained in the upper circles of despair. It had not experienced the balancing height of Christian hope. The higher the flight, the deeper the plunge. The abyss which Joyce explores is possible only to the once-Christian soul. His hell is not the mild hopelessness of paganism, but the profound agony of a great hope forever lost.

"When, lo, there came about them all a great brightness and they beheld the chariot wherein He stood ascend to heaven. And they beheld Him in the chariot clothed upon in the glory of the brightness, having raiment as of the sun, fair as the moon and terrible that for awe they durst not look upon Him. And there came a voice out of heaven, calling: *Elijah! Elijah!* And he answered with a main cry: *Abba! Adonai!* And they beheld Him even Him, ben Bloom Elijah, amid clouds of angels ascend to the glory of the brightness at an angle of forty-five degrees over Donohoe's in Little Green Street like a shot off a shovel".[11]

Man, who has heard the mysterious words, "Thou art my son": Man, who has learned to pray, "Abba, Father", seems to have learned in our time that he is in reality only an apparition momentarily cast up by the blind energies of the physical universe, "a shot off a shovel". "Man," said Blake, "is either the ark of God or a phantom of the earth and of the water". For James Joyce man is no longer the ark of God and he faces the alternative without evasion.

Joyce's despair is not that of the older apocalyptists who despaired of the world, or the history, or the men of their time, but who had an ultimate hope in God and in His chosen people. Nor is it the despair of modern man who despairs of God and of His salvation, but continues to hope in man and in man's world. Joyce remains the Jesuit logician. When hope in God is gone, hope in man is absurd.

"The day of the Lord is darkness, and not light, as if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light? Even very dark, and no brightness in it".[12]

This theological implacability has its inevitable effect upon Joyce's conception of man. Not only will he not practise "this-worldmanship", he will not even subscribe to the modern doctrine of the autonomous dignity of man. He celebrates indeed man's achievement, his science, his art, his government, his literature, his music, his thought. But man himself, the maker and creator, is a curiously shrunken creature.[13] The Homeric Ulysses, contending against gods and men, voyaging for years over the wine-dark deep, is heroic and therefore tragic in his stature. The modern Ulysses, setting out from his terrace house on his daily journey around the Dublin shops, offices, and pubs, touting for adverts, timorous and cuckolded, is man stripped of heroism and incapable of tragedy.

"Mr. Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls. He liked thick giblet soup, nutty gizzards, a stuffed roast heart, liver slices fried with crustcrumbs, fried hencod's roes. Most of all he liked grilled mutton kidneys which gave the palate a fine tang of faintly scented urine".[14]

No character so introduced can be either heroic or tragic. And Joyce spares us nothing, not even a visit to the dry closet at the bottom of the garden after breakfast. But this is not obscene because it is central to his theme. He is seeking to deflate our human pretension, and he does it by dwelling on our physical reality. This heir of all the ages; this creator

of the arts and sciences; this man whose image has become for himself the image of God; this Homeric voyager; this Old Testament prophet; this New Testament priest; behold him enthroned and reading his newspaper before putting it to a less exalted use. Here Joyce is recognizably the successor of Swift. Without Swift's bitterness, with a wide embracing charity not possessed by Swift, there is the same deep sense of man's physical shame. Is there something in the Irish nature, a form of pride perhaps, which makes Irishmen of genius feel in an intense and peculiar way man's physical humiliation? It is there in Shaw too albeit in a negative form. His characters are disembodied intelligences, as though he could not bear to look at man's animal and passionate being. Here the Irishman differs from the Englishman as Ham, the father of Canaan, differed from the other two sons of Noah.

"And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness".[15]

These supposedly offensive passages in *Ulysses* in which Joyce looks upon "the nakedness of his father" are deeply necessary to his intention. To dwell exclusively on man's spiritual dignity is to create a humanist illusion which is contradicted by innumerable happenings in the everyday life of every man.

Joyce is here a seismograph registering the earthquake shocks which have disrupted man's spiritual complacency during the last century. The first shock was that of Dar-

winism which seemed to dislodge man from his position of privilege and reduce him to the level of an animal. But that shock, despite its immense surface repercussions was not fundamental. Indeed it seemed to offer a kind of antidote. Man could, after Darwin, make some sense of his physical shame by telling himself that he was "working out the tiger and the ape".

The second shock, much profounder although much less noticed by the theologians, is associated with the name of Freud. As modern physics has disintegrated the solid world around us leaving only the tenuous shell of sensory appearances, so depth psychology has disintegrated the solid human personality. Man may stand upon his dignity so long as he can innocently believe in the integrity of his own rational being.

Now that the home of reason is conceived of as an open boat buffeted and tossed upon the vast ocean of the unconscious, now that our vaunted integrity is discovered to be an uneasy equilibrium between forces of which we are largely unconscious and over which we exercise no control, what becomes of our humanist pride?

Mr. Leopold Bloom, heir of all the ages and all the cultures, voyaging round Dublin on a June day is not even king in his own little castle, since his wandering thoughts pursue their own odyssey independently of his will and despite his pain and shame. As he crosses the Liffey a handbill is thrust into his hand announcing, "Elijah is coming". (Elijah again). He crumples it up and throws it into the river, noting that it does not deceive the hovering gulls. Thereafter that crumpled throwaway (and "Throwaway" is the name of the horse which wins the Ascot Gold Cup on the same

afternoon)pursues its separate odyssey down the river. Lock and the seventeenth-century philosophers used the simile of the sheet of paper to describe the human mind. Now the sheet of paper, inscribed with an apocalyptic message of doom, soiled and crumpled by the act of man, sails helplessly on the dark, unconscious tide which bears it to the ocean of oblivion. And so Mr. Bloom's mind floats on a dark tide which bears it towards its final disintegration.

The Homeric story of Circe, who turns the companions of Odysseus into swine, is paralleled in *Ulysses* by the scene in the brothel. Despite the setting only a most cursory reading would interpret this as a description of lust. Joyce here shows us the splintering of human personality, the break-up of the person into the senseless images of nightmare. At the climax, Stephen, taking his ash-plant, shatters the light.

"*He lifts his ashplant high with both hands and smashes the chandelier. Time's livid final flame leaps and, in the following darkness, ruin of all space, shattered glass and toppling masonry*".[16]

All things have successively been reduced to nothingness, and the mind of man, which extinguishes every other light, must finally extinguish its own. Here is a summing-up by Professor Curtius.

"Joyce's work springs from the revolt of the spirit and leads to the destruction of the world. With implacable logic he presents in his Walpurgis night, amid larvae and lemurs, a vision of the end of the world. A metaphysical nihilism is the substance of Joyce's work. The world, macro- and microcosm, is founded upon the void. . . . All this wealth of philosophical and theological knowledge, this power of psychological and aesthetic analysis, this culture of a mind schooled in all the literatures of the world,

all these gifts serve but to spend themselves, to refute themselves in a world-conflagration, a flaming welter of metallic irridescence. What is left? An odour of ashes, the horror of death, sorrow of apostasy, pangs of remorse—'Agenbite of inwite'."[17]

What interpretation should we put upon all this? Are we to see James Joyce as an accident—a strange comet burning itself out in the twentieth-century sky—a man tearing himself free of his mother and destroying his personality in the process—a Catholic tearing himself from Mother Church and condemning himself to eternal despair—a Nationalist hating his country and the father who begat him? Or is this comet also a portent, warning humanity of approaching disaster?

In *The Courage To Be*[18] Paul Tillich asserts that man has three ontological fears and that these have been successively encountered in the course of human history. First, there is the fear of death, which was the typical fear of the classical world; second, there is the fear of guilt, which men encountered most agonizingly in the Middle Ages; third, there is the fear of meaninglessness, which, Tillich says, we experience in modern times. Because in a sense they lie behind us, we can see more clearly the besetting fears of other ages. We can watch the classical world wrestle with death, and, in myths like that of Orpheus in the Underworld, seek to conquer it. And we can watch in the *Divine Comedy* the wrestling of medieval man with his sense of eternal guilt. Because we stand within the modern battle we see it less clearly and it may surprise the unreflective to be told that our spiritual wrestling is against meaninglessness.

And yet in *Murder in the Cathedral*, T. S. Eliot has a passage which comes close to Tillich's three ontological fears,

"only is here
The white flat face of Death, God's silent servant,
And behind the face of Death the Judgement
And behind the Judgement the Void".[19]

Twentieth-century man is notoriously unmoved by sermons which seek to evoke in him the fear of death and hell. The hell-fire sermons of Joyce's Catholic youth have no more power than their evangelical parallels. It is the meaningless void which now chills our souls.

The typical creation of modern man is Hamlet. He is typical for us as Orpheus is typical for classical man. Hamlet has no parallel in the older literature of the world and he is inescapable in post-Shakespearian thought. The Hamlet theme reverberates throughout *Ulysses* and we encounter it again in Aldous Huxley.

It is worth re-reading the play with Tillich's analysis in mind. There is fear of death in *Hamlet* and yet it is as of something long past—a joke in a graveyard. There is fear of guilt in *Hamlet* and this is nearer home. Hamlet can see around him men and women of simpler nature who are driven to action by their moral convictions. He even feels that he also ought to be similarly stirred. And yet he is not. Those interpreters who have read his inactivity as a moral failure have surely missed the point. Hamlet cannot act because the nerve of moral action has been cut. He is modern man for whom life has become meaningless. Life and death, right and wrong, sin and judgement, what do these things mean? Hamlet is an alien in the physical and in the moral worlds? He sees himself alienated. This enigma, this creature called man, who, what, is he? "What is this quintessence of dust?" Aldous Huxley gives one answer to

that question in Anthony Beavis's notes in *Eyeless in Gaza.*

"To himself and others (Hamlet) was just a succession of more or less incongruous states. Hence that perplexity at Elsinore and among the Shakespearian critics ever since. Honour, Religion, Prejudice, Love—all the conventional props that shore up the ordinary personality have been, in this case, gnawed through. Hamlet is his own termite, and from a tower has eaten himself down to a heap of sawdust".[20]

And there is, in Hamlet's case, a simple cause. The world has become "insubstantial". This is the factor in human experience since the Renaissance which has gradually undermined all the certainties upon which men in other times rested their hopes and based their actions. In *The Tempest* Shakespeare confronts us with our situation:

> "The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
> And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a wrack behind".[21]

Leaving aside any question of religious revelation, this is the situation of man as man, and every discovery of science, every philosophical speculation from the seventeenth century to our own time has gone to reinforce its inevitability. The multifarious activities of men, our absorption in practical living, our obsessive possessiveness, our mechanized entertainments, our passionate politics, may distract us from the ultimate meaninglessness of our existence but this is, as Tillich says, an "ontological" fear. It is in the structure of reality. It can temporarily be evaded; it cannot, ultimately, be avoided. There is a certain feverish quality in man's life

in our century which is due to the unacknowledged fear that, in face of a vast and silent universe, in face of unmeasurable but mindless energies, in face of time's inconceivable immensity, the life of man is nothing.

The nihilism of Joyce is not an accident but a portent. He retains the power of religious vision after the death of his religion. He is modern man without God but without also the inhibitions of secularism. He looks beyond this world to the dark void where faith once beheld light. He looks upon the void and he dares to bring into conscious expression the fear which lies in the soul of the twentieth century, that the glory of man is meaningless. He, and not Shaw, is now proved the true prophet of the early twentieth century.

The true prophet is vindicated by the event, and Joyce sees modern man and his world as "atomized". It is this process of "atomization" which is the key to our history, threatening our social structures, our personal consciousness, and finally the material world around us. "The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and the thing which I was afraid of is come unto me".[22]

The spiritual successor of James Joyce is Samuel Beckett and one by one the main themes of *Ulysses* re-emerge in *Waiting for Godot*. Here again we see man at the end of his long journey. Here again the journey seems to be meaningless. Here again man looks beyond the seen and known into a void.

"Pozzo: Ah, yes! The night.

Be a little more attentive, for pity's sake, otherwise we'll never get anywhere. Look. Will you look at the sky, pig!

Good, that's enough.

> What is there so extraordinary about it? Qua sky? It is pale and luminous like any sky at this hour of the day. In these latitudes. When the weather is fine. An hour ago—roughly—after having poured forth ever since say ten o'clock in the morning tirelessly torrents of red and white light it began to lose its effulgence, to grow pale, pale, ever a little paler, a little paler, until pppff! finished! it comes to rest. But—but—behind this veil of gentleness and peace, night is charging and will burst upon us (*he snaps his fingers*) pop! like that! just when we least expect it".[23]

Behind the light we see lies the darkness of the void. "Behind this veil of gentleness and peace night is charging". In Act 2 Pozzo prophesies again. "They gave birth astride a grave, the light gleams for an instant, then it's night once more".[24]

In *Waiting for Godot* also, in the character of Lucky, we witness the terrifying spectacle of the disintegration of the human mind. As the scene in the brothel is a climax in *Ulysses* so is Lucky's torrent of eloquence in the first act.

". . . in the plains in the mountains by the seas by the rivers running fire the air is the same and then the earth namely the air and then the earth in the great cold the great dark the air and the earth abode of stones in the great cold alas alas in the year of their Lord six hundred and something the air the earth the sea the earth abode of stones in the great deeps the great cold on sea on land and in the air".[25]

But despite these striking similarities, there appears in *Waiting for Godot* something which is absent from *Ulysses*, and which we can only call a far-off and tremulous note of hope. We need to be very careful here because there is an

ambivalence about Mr. Beckett's work which becomes even more acute in his radio play, *All That Fall.*

Is that play an expression of ultimate despair or of ultimate hope? Different listeners have derived quite different impressions from the same performance. *Waiting for Godot* was produced simultaneously in Paris and in London and critics who saw both performances say that the Paris one (which Beckett himself approved) created an impression of stark despair absent from the London production.

Nevertheless, and apart from differing emphases in production, there are certain themes in the play which cannot be paralleled in *Ulysses*, and which create quite a different atmosphere. There is the barren tree which mysteriously in Act 2 appears bearing leaves. There is the discussion as to whether that tree might bear the weight of a man, if, in his despair, he were to try to hang himself upon it. This certainly evokes in Christian minds the sense of the cross as the answer to man's despair. Then there is the appearance at the end of each act (each age?) of the boy who comes from Godot, and the conversation between him and Vladimir about the sheep and the goats. That conversation reminds us of Vladimir's earlier pre-occupation with the question of the dying thief upon the cross. Again we confront the possibility of salvation in Christ. And there is the strangely moving moment towards the end of Act 1:

"VLADIMIR: Your boots. What are you doing with your boots?
ESTRAGON: I'm leaving them there. Another will come, just as—as—as me, but with smaller feet, and they'll make him happy.
VLADIMIR: But you can't go barefoot!
ESTRAGON: Christ did.

VLADIMIR: Christ! What's Christ got to do with it? You're not going to compare yourself to Christ!
ESTRAGON: All my life I've compared myself to him.
VLADIMIR: But where he was it was warm, it was dry!
ESTRAGON: Yes. And they crucified quick".[26]

This is not merely an echo, a reverberation from a Christian past. There is in it the quiver of hope. And it is this which is so strangely absent from Joyce. For Beckett, Christ is a person, where for Joyce he is a Person, the second Person of the Trinity, part of a system to which in his youth Joyce felt himself enslaved.

"——I am the servant of two masters, Stephen said, an English and an Italian.

——Italian? Haines said.

——The imperial British state, Stephen answered, his colour rising, and the holy Roman catholic and apostolic church".[27]

In the violence of his rejection of the Catholic Church and of the Catholic system of thought, Joyce refused to consider that behind that vast system of thought and practice there might be a living reality, something which had in it the seed of resurrection. In *A Portrait of the Artist* he tells us that after leaving the seminary, seeing in the priest's face "a mirthless mask reflecting a sunken day", he walked along the shore and had an almost visionary experience as he watched a girl paddling. He felt that he must choose between Church and world, and that it was a choice between death and life. But in which setting, the seminary or the seashore, can we more easily picture the Christ of the Gospels?

To a Protestant reader this is the strangest aspect of *Ulysses*. It is "super-saturated with the religion in which you

say you disbelieve",[28] and yet the missing person is Christ. Stephen Dedalus (the Greek) finds in Leopold Bloom (the Hebrew) his spiritual father, and Leopold finds in Stephen his long-lost son. But Jesus seeking "the Father" as a boy in the Temple, and seeking "the Father's will" from the Jordan to Gethsemane is excluded. Joyce investigates the Father-Son relationship in terms of Hamlet, and he is aware of it as a Patristic controversy, but of its supreme manifestation in St. John's Gospel he says nothing. The Roman Church must see Joyce as an apostate and judge him accordingly. But it is also possible to see in him a judgement upon a Christianity, whether Catholic or Protestant, impressive in its institutional power, and in its intellectual coherence, which has yet failed at the centre, so that it can neither convey the living reality of Christ, nor defend itself against the endemic despair of man in the secular world.

The sermon on hell admired by Thomas Merton is not, despite its influence upon him, a Christian sermon either in its theological conception or in its human appeal, and the rejection of such an appeal cannot be equated with ultimate rejection of Christ.

Joyce's significance for our century is that he compels us to see our spiritual situation. He says, "Man is without God, and therefore without hope". The humanist, accepting Joyce's premiss, wrestles with his conclusion. The Christian must agree with the conclusion if the premiss be correct, but is man without God? It is that question which engages each of the writers we shall study in this series.

[1] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Jonathan Cape, 1952), pp. 179–83.
[2] *Elected Silence*, Thomas Merton (Hollis and Carter, 1950), pp. 339: 168: 174.
[3] *Ulysses* (John Lane, 1947), p. 1.

[4] *James Joyce*, Stuart Gilbert, pp. 40–1.
[5] *Ulysses*, p. 236.
[6] *Ulysses*, p. 697.
[7] *After Strange Gods*, T. S. Eliot, p. 38.
[8] *Ulysses*, p. 17.
[9] *Ulysses*, p. 17.
[10] *Essays Presented to Charles Williams*, pp. 32–3.
[11] *Ulysses*, p. 329.
[12] Amos, Chapter 5, verses 18–20.
[13] *An Introduction to the Study of Blake*, Max Plowman (J. M. Dent, 1927), p. 116.
[14] *Ulysses*, p. 48.
[15] Genesis, Chapter 9, verses 22–23.
[16] *Ulysses*, p. 550.
[17] *Nene Schweitzer Rundschan*, Heft I. January 1929. Quoted by Stuart Gilbert, p. 222.
[18] *The Courage To Be*, Paul Tillich (Nisbet, 1952), pp. 30–59.
[19] *Murder in the Cathedral*, T. S. Eliot (Faber, June 1936), p. 69.
[20] *Eyeless in Gaza*, Aldous Huxley (Chatto and Windus, 1936), p. 148.
[21] *The Tempest*, Act 4, scene 1.
[22] Job, Chapter 3, verse 25.
[23] *Waiting for Godot*, Samuel Beckett (Faber and Faber, 1956), p. 37.
[24] *Waiting for Godot*, p. 89.
[25] *Waiting for Godot*, p. 44.
[26] *Waiting for Godot*, p. 52.
[27] *Ulysses*, p. 18.
[28] *A Portrait of the Artist*, 273.

LECTURE 2

ALDOUS HUXLEY – MYSTICISM

HUXLEY. The name still conjures up memories of the nineteenth-century battle between science and religion in which the great T. H. Huxley, like Goliath of Gath, stood forth as redoubtable champion of the scientific Philistines before whom the Victorian faithful trembled. How strange that battle seems to us now, and how naïf, like a painting of the Battle of Waterloo. The battlefields of the spirit can no longer be delimited or defined; nor is the battle fought, as it was on both sides in those days, with the cannon-balls of hard, intellectual certainties. The brave soldier carrying the flag, or saving his comrades by his valour, is lost in the anonymity of mass man. Both David and Goliath are anachronisms,

> "And we are here as on a darkling plain
> Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
> Where ignorant armies clash by night".[1]

Autres temps autres mœurs. Aldous Huxley belongs to our world of "confused alarms", and so far from furthering the cause championed by his grandfather, he has reserved some of his sharpest attacks for the Philistines of the twentieth century, scientific, sociological, and psychological. *Eyeless in Gaza*, perhaps his greatest novel, derives its title from the *Samson Agonistes* of Milton, and Samson, Judge in Israel, prisoner of the Philistines, fighting alone, shaking the pillars

of the house and burying himself with his enemies in the ruins, is no bad symbol for Aldous Huxley. He is the iconoclast of our time, destroying the idols which twentieth-century man has created for adoration, and in which we put unthinking trust.

Aldous is not only grandson of T. H. Huxley, he is also descended from another great nineteenth-century figure, Dr. Arnold of Rugby. In terms of heredity, therefore, he spans the world of faith as well as that of scepticism, and it is his breadth of understanding which first impresses the reader. He seems to be equally at home in every part of the intellectual world. Here is his description of Anthony Beavis's room at Oxford.

"Books. The table in Anthony's room was covered with them. The five folio volumes of Bayle, in the English edition of 1738. Rickaby's translation of the *Summa contra Gentiles*. De Gourmont's *Probleme du Style. The Way of Perfection*. Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground*. Three volumes of Byron's *Letters*. The works of St. John of the Cross in Spanish. The plays of Wycherley. Lea's *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy*".[2]

Philosophy, history, biography, letters, piety, drama. Nothing is alien to him and it is not difficult to believe that that description gives us a fair picture of Huxley's own undergraduate existence. To it we must add his extra literary interests. He will analyse a painting and describe the music of Bach or the last quartettes of Beethoven. He is a traveller and something of an anthropologist. Without being himself a scientist, he has amassed wide scientific knowledge, and, more importantly, he has mastered the philosophy of science. Like Joyce, the range of his mind is immense.

In popular thought, and probably because of *Brave New*

World, Aldous Huxley tends to be unequally yoked with H. G. Wells. There is, superficially, a resemblance. Scientific discovery lit the flame of Wells's imagination and stimulated his creative power. Up to a point it does the same for Huxley, but the result is significantly different. Wells is a single-minded, not to say a simple-minded, believer in science. Science is his god. For Aldous Huxley science is not god but idol.

Look at *Brave New World.* It is a scientific fantasy akin to the fantasies of Wells. But it is written not to glorify the scientific Utopia, but to debunk it. He debunks the Utopian dream by the simple expedient of imagining that it has come true. He creates for us the world we think we want: a world from which pain and disease have been eliminated: a world in which man is freed from the shackles of nature and is servant only of his own knowledge: a world in which sexual pleasure has been divorced from biological consequences: a world of babies born from bottles, where infancy and childhood are spent in a prolonged course of psychological conditioning which ensures that everyone is perfectly happy in that station in life to which it has pleased a beneficent and omnipotent world government to call him. In this most totalitarian of states where each of our desires is eliminated or satisfied, and where all our dreams have come true, only one thing is lacking—humanity. But that loss, the loss of the soul, outweighs every gain. The Savage, who represents our suffering world, unhesitatingly rejects the "brave new world".

" 'But I don't want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin'.

'In fact', said (the Controller), 'you're claiming the right to be unhappy'.

'All right, then', said the Savage defiantly, 'I'm claiming the right to be unhappy'.

'Not to mention the right to grow old and ugly and impotent; the right to have syphilis and cancer; the right to have too little to eat; the right to be lousy; the right to live in constant apprehension of what may happen tomorrow; the right to catch typhoid; the right to be tortured by unspeakable pains of every kind'.

There was a long silence.

'I claim them all', said the Savage at last''.[3]

Huxley discards scientific utopianism in the name of the soul of man. But what is this imponderable, the soul? That is the question with which he wrestles. In a world which grows increasingly extraverted, centring its attention on science, on economics and on politics, hoping even to reduce psychology to a technique of man management, he remains introverted. His gaze is fixed on the inner man. Before a man can be a man of science or a politician he must first be a man, living that strange, incommunicable inner life, fighting that mysterious inner war, which is the inescapable destiny of each human being. And no technological device, no economic adjustment, no political revolution, can create a radical alteration in the world within. It is the ego, the person, I, who experience peace and war, prosperity and adversity, freedom and imprisonment, guilt and reconciliation. Who am I?

In *Point Counterpoint* as part of the story of Marjorie Carling's unhappy pregnancy, Huxley confronts us with the mystery of man's creation.

"Six months from now her baby would be born. Something that had been a single cell, a cluster of cells, a little sac of tissue, a kind of worm, a potential fish with gills, stirred in her womb and would one day become a man—a grown man, suffering and enjoying, loving and hating, thinking, remembering, imagining. And what had been a blob of jelly within her body would invent a god and worship; what had been a kind of fish would create and, having created, would become the battle-ground of disputing good and evil; what had blindly lived in her as a parasitic worm would look at the stars, would listen to music, would read poetry. A thing would grow into a person, a tiny lump of stuff would become a human body, a human mind. The astounding process of creation was going on within her; but Marjorie was conscious only of sickness and lassitude.

"A cell had multiplied itself and become a worm, the worm had become a fish, the fish was turning into the foetus of a mammal. Marjorie felt sick and tired. Fifteen years hence a boy would be confirmed. Enormous in his robes, like a full-rigged ship, the Bishop would say: 'Do you in the presence of God, and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your Baptism?' And the ex-fish would answer with passionate conviction: 'I do' ".[4]

Great as has been the increase of our biological knowledge, what does it do but increase the mystery of being? That embryonic man should recapitulate in nine months the ages of creation, is in no sense an explanation of the origin of man.

It is, in itself, a new and deeper mystery. In that passage Aldous Huxley confronts a problem set for us in different terms by Sir Charles Sherrington's Gifford Lectures, *Man on His Nature*. It is the problem of the unity in one organism of a physical being with a spiritual perception. Sir Charles

Sherrington narrows the problem to the unity of physical brain with spiritual mind.

"There science stopped and stared as at an unexpected residue which remained after its solvents had dissolved the rest. Knowledge looking at its world had painfully and not without some disillusions arrived at two concepts; the one, that of energy, which was adequate to deal with all which was known to knowledge, except mind. But between energy and mind science found no 'how' of give and take. It could meet all efficient causes but not a final cause. To man's understanding the world remained obstinately double".[5]

How can the electrical energies in a brain be experienced as a thought? Impassable gulf. Aldous Huxley views the problem more widely. How can the ex-fish affirm the Deity?

Huxley sees also that this is not just a question of man's origin, the problem remains throughout life. Every spiritual perception involves this inexplicable act of translation out of the physical. In the same book he describes Lord Tantamount at work in his private laboratory. His wife is giving a musical party in another part of the house. The sound of the music disturbs the scientist.

"Pongileoni's blowing and the scraping of the anonymous fiddlers had shaken the air in the great hall, had set the glass of the windows looking on to it vibrating; and this in turn had shaken the air in Lord Edward's apartment on the further side. The shaking air rattled Lord Edward's *membrana tympani*; the interlocked *malleus*, *incus* and stirrup bones were set in motion so as to agitate the membrane of the oval window and raise an infinitesimal storm in the fluid of the labyrinth. The hairy endings of the auditory nerve shuddered like weeds in a rough sea; a vast

number of obscure miracles were performed in the brain, and Lord Edward ecstatically whispered 'Bach!' "[6]

We learn more and more about the mechanics of our experience. The experience itself remains wrapped in mystery. Nothing in the mechanics of the ear explains Bach or our ecstasy. The world of the spirit obstinately exists and obstinately resists the scientific method. Entwined as it everywhere is with the world of physics and biology, so that every biological or physical discovery bears upon our human life, there yet remains a rocky core of human experience, of which scientific thought is itself a part, which cannot be inundated by the tides of discovery.

The exploration of this world of the spirit, however, reveals a surprising, because seemingly contradictory, fact. The spirit of man, which resists the erosion of scientific method, is yet divided and unhappy in itself. The states of consciousness which fill the novels of Aldous Huxley are, in the main, painful. We have already seen one aspect of Marjorie Carling's pregnancy; here is another:

" 'You won't be late?' There was anxiety in Marjorie Carling's voice, there was something like entreaty.

'No, I won't be late,' said Walter, unhappily and guiltily certain that he would be. Her voice annoyed him. It drawled a little, it was too refined—even in misery. 'Not later than midnight'. She might have reminded him of the time when he never went out in the evenings without her. She might have done so; but she wouldn't; it was against her principles; she didn't want to force his love in any way.

'Well, call it one. You know what these parties are'. But as a matter of fact, she didn't know, for the good reason that, not being his wife, she wasn't invited to them. She had left her hus-

band to live with Walter Bidlake, and Carling, who had Christian scruples, was feebly a sadist and wanted to take his revenge, refused to divorce her. It was two years now since they had begun to live together. Only two years; and now, already, he had ceased to love her, he had begun to love someone else. The sin was losing its only excuse, the social discomfort its sole palliation. And she was with child".[7]

That vignette of modern misery is a characteristic Huxley situation. It is interesting to read the novels in chronological order and to observe the deepening sense of our unhappiness. Read in this way the novels appear as one novel—a story in which the scenery, the social background, the situations, even the characters, change little. What changes from book to book is the mood—the understanding—of the author. We are following his spiritual pilgrimage. At first there is the bright undergraduate cleverness of *Chrome Yellow*, followed by *Antic Hay* and *These Barren Leaves* in which the "shades of the prison house begin to close upon the growing boy". Then comes *Point Counterpoint*, where the mature Huxley emerges, and *Eyeless in Gaza* where we confront the moral *impasse* of humanity.

Inscribed on the title-page of *Point Counterpoint* there is a stanza of Fulke Greville:

> "Oh, wearisome condition of humanity,
> Born under one law, to another bound,
> Vainly begot, and yet forbidden vanity,
> Created sick, commanded to be sound,
> What meaneth nature by these diverse laws,
> Passion and reason, self-division's cause?"[8]

That is the theme-song of all the novels. Man is a divided and

unhappy creature, engaged in an endless inner war with himself, torn by conflicting desires and aspirations, bleeding inwardly from the unstaunched wound of his own passion. There is a single hero at various stages of his martyrdom from *Chrome Yellow* to *Eyeless in Gaza*. He is young, intelligent, economically secure, upper class, artistic, having everything outwardly which is supposed to make for a happy life, but inwardly he is the unhappy victim of his own weakness and shame. Joyce's self-chosen name is Dedalus—the man who made the wings with which Icarus flew too close to the sun. In *Time Must Have a Stop* the Huxley hero appears once more under the symbolically appropriate name of Sebastian. "Ominously significant, it was the name of fate's predestined target." For Huxley's hero, like St. Sebastian, is shot through and through by a hundred arrows; arrows of vanity, of moral indecision, of cowardice, of selfishness, of lust and of fear. He is a victim unable to master the conflicting elements in his soul; unable to control the inevitable and evil consequences of his actions; bearing the mounting burden of his guilt and shame.

Ours is an extrovert age. We look outside for solutions to our problems. But Aldous Huxley refuses to allow us to see our ultimate problem as external to the self. It is the problem of personal unity and integrity. Into *Point Counterpoint* he has introduced the characters of Frank Illidge the Communist and Everard Webley the Fascist, who typify the would-be political saviours of mankind. They are deliberately drawn against the background of our schizophrenic existence to which their activities have no relevance. We see them passionately engaged in solving problems which are not the real problem. They will save us from everything except

ourselves. In their fanaticism they are incapable of seeing themselves as entangled in the same web of human ambition and desire as other men. The *dénouement* comes when Illidge is involved in the murder of Webley, and is appalled by what he has done. In the shattering experience of guilt he discovers the human being he essentially is for whom political theories have no healing.

It is one of the consequences of the dichotomy of our culture that all this side of Aldous Huxley's work should have been ignored by theologians and largely misunderstood by Christians in general. This is a restatement in terms of contemporary experience of the age-old experience of sin. "The good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"[9] The spiritual predecessors of Aldous Huxley at this point are St. Paul and St. Augustine and his vision of man's moral dilemma is akin to theirs.

In a philosophical book, *Ends and Means*, he himself has suggested that someone should write a History of Sin, showing how it runs like a river through human life. Men are constantly trying by reform movements to dam it up and sometimes in history they have appeared to be successful. But ultimate success is impossible. Behind the dam the waters are rising. They may not flow out along the old river-bed, but, if not, they will find for themselves a new channel. "An old outlet for some particular wickedness is closed; but a new outlet is opened".[10] Far more than we think, man's destiny lies in man's nature. Spandrell who in *Point Counterpoint* is the incarnation of the Hamlet theme, voices this idea at the end of the book in a conversation with

Philip Quarles whose child has died and who is proposing to take his wife abroad.

"Spandrell nodded slowly. 'Do you remember that conversation we had at the Club, with Illidge and Walter Bidlake? Nothing ever happens to a man except what's like him. Settling down in the country in England wasn't at all like you. It didn't happen. It's been prevented. Ruthlessly, by God! But providence uses foul means as well as fair, Travelling about, being unfixed, being a spectator—that was like you. You're being compelled to do what's like you'.

"There was silence. 'And living in a kind of dust-heap,' Spandrell added, 'that's like me. Whatever I do, however hard I try to escape, I remain on the dust-heap. I suppose I always shall.' "[11]

Man's destiny lies in man's nature. Man is cause rather than effect. It is not what happens to a man which makes him what he is, rather what he is conditions what happens to him. Another contemporary writer who has seen causation at work in the depth of human personality is Laurens van der Post. He is following in his book, *Venture to the Interior*, a clue dropped by Carl Jung who foretold the 1939–45 war on the basis of what was happening in the unconscious minds of his patients in the 1930s. Van der Post cites what we would call a sheer accident and traces its cause back to the state of his own personality.

Here first is the accident. He and two experienced forestry men, Quillan and Vance, were prospecting after the war on Mount Mlanje in Nyasaland. They had a group of African bearers with them and were struggling with exceptionally bad weather on the mountain when they found their path unexpectedly blocked by a swollen river. Vance volunteered to ford the stream with a rope so that they could

effect a crossing. It seemed a perfectly possible thing for an experienced man to do and yet in the attempt Vance was drowned.

"Vance waded in. The water came about to his navel. He went steadily on for some distance then, to my bewilderment, turned his back slightly on the stream.

"He took another step or two, stopped, suddenly abandoned his stick to the stream and yelled to us, 'Let out the rope!'

"I was horrified. What the hell was he up to? Before we had even properly grasped his meaning he had thrown himself on the stream and was swimming a breast-stroke. As was inevitable, the stream at once caught him and quickly swept him to where it foamed and bubbled like a waterfall over the edge of the track. The unexpected speed with which all this had happened was the most terrifying thing about it. Even so, Vance had got to within a foot of the far bank, was on the verge of reaching it—when the water swept him over the edge and he disappeared from our view.

"Quillan and I were braced for the shock. As we saw it coming we both shouted for the bearers, who rushed to our assistance in a body. The rope tightened in a flash. The strain was tremendous. Vance's body, no longer water-borne but suspended out of sight, below the edge of the rocky track, with the weight and stream of water pouring on top of it, strained the rope to the utmost. Yet it held.

"I think it would have continued to hold if the angle and violent impact of the water on the body had not now with incredible speed whipped Vance along the sharp edge of the rocks, swung him from the far side over towards our bank and chafed the rope badly in the process. It still held for a second or two. We worked our way along towards him—were within two yards of him—when the rope snapped.

"At that moment we knew that he was dead".[12]

It was an accident. Vance had been a jungle fighter in Burma. He lived on the mountain and was experienced. It was an accident for which no one could be blamed. And yet Laurens van der Post blames himself.

"I had had all the time an uneasy feeling about this trip. I had left England in a mood of resentment and had always been in a divided state about Africa. Supposing my own conflict about it had been resolved, could I have ever got entangled in a set of circumstances so disastrous as those on Mlanje?

"My instinct was to say no; that a split in ourselves produces a split in the pattern of our lives, creates this terrible gash down the middle, this deep, dark Mlanje gorge, through which disaster runs and the devil drives. Accident and disaster without feed on accident and disaster within. The design of our outward life, from its minutest detail up to the atom which we put in our latest bomb, reflects and confirms our deepest and most private purposes.

"——The world to my mind has never been fuller of finer thinking than it is today. I never pick up a paper, magazine or book, be they in Japanese, French, Javanese, Russian, English or Twi, and fail to be struck by the fine thoughts, the idealistic feelings, the noble sentiments they express. Yet, though all the contributing writers appear to be merchants of man's finest feelings, has there ever been an age that, considering its lights, has done worse things, than this one, with its class hatreds, race hatreds, colour prejudices, world wars and concentration camps? Has there been another age that, knowing so clearly the right things to do, has so consistently done the wrong ones?"[12]

"By their fruits ye shall know them". The contradiction between promise and performance has its causation in the soul of man. We tend to see man always as victim, as suffering at the hands of nature or of destiny. We are not suffi-

ciently aware of man as cause, projecting on to both nature and history his own disease. Man lives in a fallen world because he is fallen. Joyce foresaw the "atomization" of consciousness and of destiny and Huxley similarly foretells the consequence of our modern madness. His book, *Ape and Essence*, is written in the form of a film script. It envisages an age beyond the atomic age in which the survivors of the great explosion, "the Thing" live a demoralized life worshipping Belial. The Arch-Vicar of Belial looks back at one point and surveys our twentieth century.

"These wretched slaves of wheels and ledgers began to congratulate themselves on being Conquerors of Nature. Conquerors of Nature, indeed! In actual fact, of course, they had merely upset the equilibrium of nature and were about to suffer the consequences. Just consider what they were up to during the century and a half before the Thing. Fouling the rivers, killing off the wild animals, destroying the forests, washing the topsoil into the sea, burning up an ocean of petroleum, squandering the minerals it had taken the whole of geological time to deposit. An orgy of criminal imbecility. And they called it Progress".[13]

The true artist is a spiritual barometer. He registers the atmospheric pressure of his age or society, and from his sensitive appraisal it is often possible to foretell the weather into which we are running. It has often been remarked that, although Jane Austen lived through the Napoleonic Wars, she never mentions them in her novels. Simple explanations of this immediately suggest themselves, but may there not be this deeper one? The Napoleonic Wars were not in fact symptomatic of the nineteenth century. Jane Austen was writing for a society which was about to experience a period of economic expansion, of social security, and of

prolonged peace unparalleled in human history. It is such a society she describes. Conversely, coming at the end of the Victorian age Thomas Hardy's "pessimism" was a great problem to his contemporaries. He was writing in a time of abounding optimism. Why should his works be so full of foreboding? An interesting point here is that Hardy himself was puzzled by his pessimism and had no explanation to offer. His non-creative, rational, everyday self lived in the optimism of his time. It was his deeper, creative self which experienced the coming change in the spiritual weather of Western man, as rheumaticky people can "feel in their bones" that it is going to rain.

It should disturb us more than it does that our technological society has so signally failed to "sell" itself to the creative artists in its midst. Joyce sees man's glory as founded on the void. D. H. Lawrence cries in agony against the industrialization to which we are inevitably committed. Aldous Huxley points us continuously to the inner man, the inner division, the "deep, dark Mlanje gorge, through which disaster runs and the devil drives". The Church has largely ignored these profoundly Christian aspects in the thought of writers like Joyce, Lawrence and Huxley, and, reacting sharply against their sexual attitudes (a subject we must examine later at much greater length), has written them off as "demoralizing". But the Church has something to learn at this point. Carl Jung, and he is representative of the revolution in man's knowledge of himself, Laurens van der Post, and Aldous Huxley are ignoring the outward form of our society and looking into the depths of the human personalities who compose it. They are viewing man as he is in depth, and relating the "deepest and most

private purposes" of the individual to the outer happening in history. They are interested in the tide rather than in the waves. By comparison the Church often appears childish; attracted by the waves and careless of the tide; dealing excitedly with the immediate and the superficial and surprised by the ebb and flow of history, surprised in Liberal England by the 1914–18 war, in Orthodox Russia by the Bolshevik revolution, in Catholic Italy and Spain by the rise of Fascism and in Lutheran Germany by the emergence of Hitler. This unpreparedness, this unawareness of what is going on in the spiritual world of man, should breed in us a new humility and a new willingness to listen to those who view life in depth.

So far we must classify Aldous Huxley as a Christian writer. But although his vision of our human nature and our human dilemma is Pauline or Augustinian, when he addresses himself to a solution he decisively cuts himself away from any form of Christianity. In *Eyeless in Gaza* there first emerges a new Huxley character, that of James Miller; and this character is further developed in *Time Must Have a Stop* as Bruno Rontini, the mystic. Into a corrupt society comes the saint, the man who has found healing and integration, the man who does not participate in the evil of the world around him, who is spiritually detached, and who therefore spreads wholeness instead of disease. But it is important to notice that this character is not for Mr. Huxley a Christian character.

In this period of his life, he wrote two philosophical books, *Ends and Means* and *The Perennial Philosophy* in which he directly examines religion. His conclusion is that it is possible to distil from the world religions and the great

philosophical systems a syncretistic religion which will be for mankind the way of salvation. Certain aspects of this syncretism are negative—it is a withdrawal from evil. Others are positive—it inculcates a moral and mystical discipline which lifts man into communion with a purer spiritual world. Mr. Huxley has rightly seen that mysticism is common to many religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism. He concludes that mysticism is the vital soul of all religious experience which can be separated from the accidental accretions of historic religion and presented in a pure form as the way of salvation.

In *Grey Eminence*, a study of the life of François Leclerc du Tremblay, better known as Brother Joseph, the Capuchin Friar who was adviser to Cardinal Richelieu, Aldous Huxley expressly rejects a specifically Christian mysticism. In an analysis which strikes one as being, for him, singularly naïf, he argues that the concentration of Christian devotion on the Passion of Christ has, as it were, given Christians a taste for blood, and that this is one factor in the undoubted belligerence which has characterized the history of Christendom. Pure religion must therefore, he feels, be purged from this obsession with the crucifixion.

"A constant dwelling on the sufferings of Christ and of the martyrs may produce in the emotional Christian an altogether admirable indifference to his own pain; but unless he is very careful to cultivate a compassion commensurate with his courage, he may end by becoming indifferent to the pains of others. The child (brother Joseph) who had sobbed so bitterly because they had hurt and killed poor Jesus was father of the man who, fifty years later, did everything in his power to prolong a war which had

already caused the death of hundreds of thousands of his fellow-creatures and was reducing the survivors to cannibalism".[14]

It may be true that certain artists have seen the crucifixion as a purely human spectacle, and have been morbidly fascinated by suffering *per se*; it may be true that both in Catholicism and in Protestantism there have been movements which tended to isolate out the sufferings of Christ and worship them (the Sacred Heart and the Old Rugged Cross for example); but the main stream both of devotion and of theology has always interpreted the cross of Christ as a part of a greater whole. It is both revelation and redemption, revealing the nature of God Himself and being His act for the redemption of mankind. Christian devotion has seen in Abram's words to Isaac, "God will provide himself a lamb"[15] a prophecy of Christ, and in the *Apocalypse* St. John sees "a lamb slain from the foundation of the world".[16] The crucifixion, therefore, is not so much a demonstration of human suffering as of Divine self-giving.

This concept of Divine action marks the difference between Biblical and Natural religion. In the Bible the initiative lies with God. It is God who creates: God who breathes His spirit into man: God who calls Abram: God whose purpose unfolds in history: God who is "in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself". Christian mystics are therefore in the strict sense of the word, eccentrics. The centre is the action of God, not of man, and in so far as all forms of mysticism entail a movement of the spirit initiated by man, a discipline, a technique of salvation, they reverse the Biblical dialectic. Our salvation ultimately depends not upon us, we cannot rescue ourselves, but upon God.

The classical expression of this distinction is in Pascal who

contrasts "The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob" with "the god of the philosophers".[17] The god of the philosophers is a rational abstraction and one can neither worship an abstraction without idolatry nor expect salvation from it.

There is a dichotomy here in Mr. Huxley's vision. His religion is that "of the philosophers". It contains no Divine action. It proceeds from the will of man. But he himself has demonstrated with acute percipience the division of the human will. How can that will, then, be both problem and solution, both patient and physician? It is of the essence of man's tragic situation that his desire for good cannot reach achievement, and in that History of Sin which Mr. Huxley would like to see written, many a page would repeat the story of those good intentions which pave the road to hell. "For to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not":[18] Man cannot be saved by technique, because every technique is a technique of man and is corrupted by man's corruption.

It is here that the immense significance of the Incarnation emerges. An Italian theologian, Romano Guardini, has made the point most clearly: "Man has so lost himself in sin, and so fallen away from his divine vocation that true humanity can only be realized by God. That is why the Son of God called Himself the Son of man. It is no longer possible for a simple, carnal man to be truly human—it is beyond him: only God can be a real man".[19]

Perhaps the contrast drawn here between Biblical and Natural religion is too sharp. Revealed religion ("cheating" to Aldous Huxley) was unknown to the Greek world before the advent of Christianity, and yet, in their own way the

Greek dramatists stand here on the Biblical side of the line. They saw that the human situation is so tragic that it cannot be solved except from without. The *Deus ex machina* of Greek drama is not, of course, a revelation of God, but it is an acknowledgement of man's need of God. Just as man is a castaway in the universe, who must perish or be rescued from beyond the natural order, so is his moral state. He cannot atone for his past nor create his new future. If there is not a living God, if there is no "design for rescue", he is beyond hope and no mystical exercise can save him.

Aldous Huxley would seem to be the last person on earth likely to claim that he could date his conversion and yet there is, in *Eyeless in Gaza* where each chapter is headed by a date, one date in particular which is of immense importance both for that book and for his work as a whole. It is the 30th of August 1933 and it stands at the head of Chapter 12 in which he describes a genuine, if not an evangelical, conversion. The story is bizarre. Anthony and Helen are sunbathing naked on the roof of a villa in the Riviera.

"A faint rustling caressed the half-conscious fringes of their torpor, swelling gradually, as though a shell were being brought closer and closer to the ear, and became at last a clattering roar that brutally insisted on attention. Anthony opened his eyes for just long enough to see that the aeroplane was almost immediately above them, then shut them again, dazzled by the intense blue of the sky.

" 'These damned machines!' he said. Then, with a little laugh, 'They'll have a nice God's-eye view of us here', he added.

"Helen did not answer; but behind her closed eyelids she smiled. Pop-eyed and with an obscene and gloating disapproval! The vision of that heavenly visitant was irresistibly comic.

" 'David and Bathsheba', he went on. 'Unfortunately at a hundred miles an hour . . .'

"A strange yelping sound punctuated the din of the machine. Anthony opened his eyes again, and was in time to see a dark shape rushing down towards him. He uttered a cry, made a quick and automatic movement to shield his face. With a violent but dull and muddy impact the thing struck the flat roof a yard or two from where they were lying. The drops of a sharply spurted liquid were warm for an instant on their skin, and then, as the breeze swelled up out of the west, startlingly cold. There was a long silence. 'Christ!' Anthony whispered at last. From head to foot both of them were splashed with blood. In a red pool at their feet lay the almost shapeless carcase of a fox-terrier.

"Anthony drew a deep breath; then, with an effort and still rather unsteadily, contrived to laugh. 'Yet another reason for disliking dogs', he said—'What about a bath?' he asked, turning to Helen.

"She was sitting quite still, staring with wide-open eyes at the horribly shattered carcase. Her face was very pale, and a glancing spurt of blood had left a long red streak that ran diagonally from the right side of the chin, across the mouth, to the corner of the left eye.

" 'You look like Lady Macbeth,' he said, with another effort at jocularity. '*Allons.*' He touched her shoulder. 'Out, vile spot. This beastly stuff is drying on me. Like seccotine.'

"For all answer, Helen covered her face with her hands and began to sob.

"For a moment Anthony stood quite still looking at her crouched there, in the hopeless abjection of her blood-stained nakedness, listening to the painful sound of her weeping. 'Like seccotine': his own words re-echoed disgracefully in his ears. Pity stirred within him, and then an almost violent movement of love for this hurt and suffering woman, this *person*, yes, this per-

son whom he had ignored, deliberately, as though she had no existence except in the context of pleasure. Now, as she knelt there sobbing, all the tenderness he had ever felt for her body, all the affection implicit in their sensualities and never expressed, seemed suddenly to discharge themselves, in a kind of lightning flash of accumulated feeling, upon this person, this embodied spirit, weeping in solitude behind concealing hands".[20]

In the unfolding of Mr. Huxley's plot this incident triggers off the latent guilt and shame in Anthony. He is changed by it, as by an evangelical conversion, and as in every profound conversion, he feels that there has been a shift in his perspective on the universe. He sees everything anew. But this "trigger incident", as the psychologists would describe it, is so bizarre that one wonders if one is reading of an actual experience. Paradoxically it seems too strange to be fiction, even although in *Eyeless in Gaza* it awakens Anthony to the significance of Brian Foxe's suicide. However that may be, there is a symbolism in it which applies to Aldous Huxley himself. Refusing to be washed in the blood of the lamb, it is as though he had been washed in the blood of the dog. And that ritually unclean baptism has let loose within the initiate a full apprehension of our human shame without any compensating apprehension of the eternal love and pity of God.

Ape and Essence and *The Devils of Loudun* are not books in which the theme of mystical salvation is pursued. Instead, Mr. Huxley returns in them to a further exploration of man's sinful nature, but they betray a disgust for humanity which is absent from his earlier work. Half the Gospel is a dangerous thing. There have been in the history of the Church many theologians and preachers whose acute perception of

sin has led them into the heresy of believing in the total depravity of man. A strong and immediate intuition of the evil in human nature is by itself too bitter a draught for any man to drink with impunity. We cannot endure the sin of man in isolation from the mercy of God, and Mr. Huxley's new religion is flight from evil rather than faith in redemption.

The theme of the fall of man and of his salvation has been explored by another novelist of great imaginative power, William Golding. His first book, *Lord of the Flies*, is a marriage between the Garden of Eden and *Coral Island*. In one of our future wars a plane carrying a group of schoolboys is shot down over the Pacific. The pilot is killed but the boys land safely on an uninhabited island. There is plenty of food, there is fresh water, there is a safe lagoon and at first the boys are thrilled by their sense of freedom. They elect a leader, they make rules, they light a fire on the mountain to attract attention and bring a rescue party. But soon their idyllic existence breaks up. Hunting brings out latent savagery, gangs begin to form, the essential work is neglected, and above all they fall a prey to apparently senseless fears. In the night they dream and cry out. They are afraid of the beast which may lurk in the forest, the beast which may emerge from the lagoon after dark, the beast emerging from within themselves. These fears corrode their society. They break into warring groups. As in *Ape and Essence* they worship Beelzebub "Lord of the Flies". One boy is ritually murdered, another is killed in a fight. Finally, in an attempt to kill their original leader they set the whole island on fire. Driven out of the jungle on to the beach by the fire they themselves have kindled the *Deux ex machina* appears in the

form of a naval ship and a naval officer who had seen their smoke and come to the rescue.

It is not difficult to see in this story an analysis at some depth of man's tragic situation and of his acute danger. Anxiety, as Kierkegaard has taught us, is the seed-bed of sin, and sin "when it hath conceived bringeth forth death". The island, the planet, is in danger. But what does Mr. Golding's *Deux ex machina* signify?

In a later novel, *Pincher Martin*, he pursues the theme of evil in the individual. A ship is torpedoed in the Atlantic and a man succeeds in struggling out of the sea on to a barren rock. There he fights for life, and, as in *Lord of the Flies*, waits for rescue. Only at the end of the book does Mr. Golding reveal that in fact Martin was drowned within a few moments of the torpedo hitting his ship. What we have been reading of is his purgatorial experience, his struggle against man's sense of that Other,

"Whose sea of love surrounds them evermore".

William Golding's solution reads like mysticism also. His vision is of man clinging desperately to the rock, a limpet anchored on his sinful selfhood, but for him the active force, "the lightning", is God's mercy playing upon him, breaking his grip, winning him away, seeking to pierce the centre of his being.

"The lightning crept in. The centre of consciousness was unaware of anything but the claws and the threat. It focused its awareness on the crumbled serrations and the blazing red. The lightning came forward. Some of the lines pointed to the centre, waiting for the moment when they could pierce it. Others lay against the claws, playing over them, prying for a weakness,

wearing them away in a compassion that was timeless and without mercy".[21]

It is interesting to compare the experience of Pincher Martin upon his rock with the post-mortem experience of Uncle Eustace in *Time Must Have a Stop*. Uncle Eustace, too, clings to his selfhood and resists the in-coming of the light. He struggles to return to the world he knows and loves and after an abortive attempt to communicate through a medium at a seance he succeeds in achieving reincarnation. Strictly within the limits he sets for himself, Aldous Huxley cannot conceive the fate of Eustace Barnack in any other way, because he cannot conceive of an activity, an initiative, from the side of God. Despite the outward similarity William Golding's solution is profoundly different because he conceives of "a compassion that is timeless and without mercy".

"Man", in Sir Thomas Browne's famous definition, "is the great amphibian". He inhabits two worlds, the world of space-time and energy; the world of the spirit. Man's fundamental temptation, therefore, is to ease the tension of this situation by denying one or other of the realities of his existence. Pincher Martin and Eustace Barnack are this-worldly men warring to the death and beyond against their spiritual reality. James Miller and Bruno Rontini are other-worldly men seeking, it is the definitive word in Aldous Huxley, detachment; detachment from the life of the body and the sinful historic order. We frequently imagine that these are our only human alternatives and that we are ultimately confronted with an either-or. But the Biblical doctrine is different and it is now gaining support from a somewhat unexpected quarter, that of natural philosophy.

Writing as a scientist in the series of Gifford lectures already quoted, Sir Charles Sherrington suggests that man's destiny lies neither in this-worldliness nor in other-worldliness, but in the very tension we seek to ease.

"Between these two, perceiving mind and the perceived world, is there nothing in common? Together they make up the sum total for us; they are all we have.——Are they then absolutely apart? Can they in no wise be linked together? They have this in common—they are both parts of one mind. They are thus therefore distinguished, but they are not sundered.——We are the tie between them. Perhaps we exist for that".[22]

"Perhaps we exist for that". Perhaps man's destiny is that of the link in creation between matter and spirit—a link which must never be broken by this-worldliness or other-worldliness. Compare Sir Charles Sherrington's flash of insight with the great passage in the eighth chapter of Romans where St. Paul speaks of the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain awaiting the redemption through man. In siding with the older religions of the East against Christianity, in seeking a more spiritual and less material religion, Aldous Huxley is dreaming of escape rather than accepting the redemption of "the whole creation". But this is the way to lose the reality of both worlds, both spirit and matter, since neither is real without the other. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth". God without creation is abstraction. Creation without God—shadow.

[1] *Dover Beach*, Matthew Arnold.
[2] *Eyeless in Gaza* (Chatto and Windus, 1936), p. 115.
[3] *Brave New World*, p. 283.
[4] *Point Counterpoint* (Chatto and Windus, 1947), pp. 2: 205.
[5] *Man on His Nature*, Sir Charles Sherrington (Cambridge University Press, 1951), p. 200.

[6] *Point Counterpoint*, p. 44.
[7] *Point Counterpoint*, p. 1.
[8] *Point Counterpoint*, title-page.
[9] *Romans*, Chapter 7, verses 19 and 24.
[10] *Ends and Means* (Chatto and Windus, 1937), pp. 18–19.
[11] *Point Counterpoint*, p. 590.
[12] *Venture to the Interior*, Laurens van der Post (Hogarth Press, 1952,) pp. 141–2, 160–1.
[13] *Ape and Essence* (Chatto and Windus, 1949), p. 93.
[14] *Grey Eminence*, pp. 190–1.
[15] *Genesis*, Chapter 22, verse 8.
[16] *Revelation*, Chapter 5, verse 6.
[17] *Pensées*, Pascal (Everyman, 1931), pp. 153–4.
[18] *Romans*, Chapter 7, verse 18.
[19] Quoted in *Dostoevsky*, L. A. Zander (S.C.M. Press, 1948), p. 113.
[20] *Eyeless in Gaza*, pp. 152–4.
[21] *Pincher Martin*, William Golding (Faber and Faber, 1957), p. 201.
[22] *Man on His Nature*, Sir Charles Sherrington, p. 257.

LECTURE 3

GRAHAM GREENE - CATHOLICISM

"I STINK, therefore I am". With that appropriate twentieth-century emendation of Descartes, Father Golden Orfe begins his lecture to "the Club" in Nigel Dennis's play, *Cards of Identity*. In the original novel Father Orfe is described as "an ascetic who is a heavy drinker and has fixed his point of self-recognition precisely mid-way between religious faith and the hip-flask: this is a modern tendency among devout priests".[1] These satirical shafts seem to be aimed at Graham Greene who, in his novel, *The Power and the Glory*, and again in his play, *The Potting Shed*, has delineated the character of the "whisky priest", and they represent an immediate and obvious judgement on his work. Graham Greene appears to be working to the paradoxical formula of uniting incompatibles to create a character. Alcoholism and priesthood are incompatible; unite them. Gangsterism and religious faith are incompatible; unite them. Adultery and belief in hell are incompatible; unite them. Suicide and Catholicism are incompatible; unite them. It is such self-contradictory characters who fill his books. A convert to the faith from which James Joyce was an apostate, Mr. Greene, at a superficial level, derives no comfort from it. He appears rather to use it as the final turn of the screw enabling him to outbid Joyce and Huxley in his exposure of our human self-torture.

It would be difficult to find a significant writer who in

style presents a greater contrast to Joyce. There are quite considerable paragraphs containing no word of more than three syllables. It is a Whodunit style, proceeding swiftly and apparently superficially, surrendered to action rather than to reflection. Like his heroes it is nail-bitten and terse, and this increases the paradoxical effect. It is difficult at first to believe in his religious seriousness and to realize the depth at which his story is unfolding, and this can create in us a sense of incongruity when we unexpectedly encounter the theological issue.

Greene's world is, socially, "the other half" of Aldous Huxley's world. Walter Bidlake encountering the working classes in the tube between Chalk Farm and Camden Town, felt himself looking through the bars at a form of life of which he had no comprehension and with which he could feel no sympathy. Pinkie and Rose, in *Brighton Rock*, riding on a bus between Brighton and Peacehaven and passing Roedean, look through the bars from the opposite side.

". . . the bus climbed up behind Rottingdean: red-brick buildings behind a wall, a great stretch of parkland, one girl with a hockey-stick staring at something in the sky, with cropped, expensive turf all around her".[2]

Graham Greene's characters look in from the outside at that world of public schools, universities, country houses and continental villas where Aldous Huxley's characters are at home. Their hell has a different social geography. None of them reads *The Times*. At best his heroes are second top people struggling feverishly to maintain that altitude and feeling the ground perpetually slipping away beneath their feet. They are social and professional and marital failures,

filled with a sense of personal inadequacy and harrowed by anxieties which drive most of them over the thin line which divides rectitude from criminality.

In *Brighton Rock* that line has been crossed before the story opens. Pinkie on the bus between Brighton and Peacehaven is having a day off (although even then with fell purpose). On the job he is, at seventeen, a gang leader extending his "protection", at a price, to bookmakers on Brighton racecourse. One of the bookmakers, Brewer, has decided to accept "protection" from another gang led by Colleoni. Pinkie sets off, accompanied by a lieutenant called Dallow, to win Brewer back to the fold.

"Brewer had a house near the tram lines on the Lewes road almost under the railway viaduct. . . .

" 'He's gone to bed,' Dallow said. Pinkie rang the bell, holding his finger on the switch.

"A light went on upstairs, a window creaked up, and a voice called, 'Who's that?'

" 'It's me,' the Boy said. 'Pinkie'.

" 'What do you want? Why don't you come around in the morning?'

" 'I want to talk to you, Brewer.'

" 'I've got nothing to talk about, Pinkie, that can't wait.'

" 'You'd better open up, Brewer. You don't want the mob along here.'

" 'The old woman's awful sick, Pinkie. I don't want any trouble. She's asleep. She hasn't slept for three nights.'

" 'This'll wake her,' the Boy said with his finger on the bell.

" 'Leave off, Pinkie, and I'll open up.'

"Pinkie shivered up as he waited, his gloved hand deep in his damp pocket. Brewer opened the door, a stout elderly man in

soiled white pyjamas. 'Come in, Pinkie,' he said, 'and walk quiet. The old woman's bad. I've been worrying my head off.'

" 'That why you haven't paid your subscription, Brewer?' the Boy said. He looked with contempt down the narrow hall. . . .

"Brewer said, 'Come in here and be snug. It's warm in here. What a cold night.' He had a hollow, cheery manner even in pyjamas. He was a legend on a racing card—The Old Firm. You Can Trust Bill Brewer.—'Have a drop of Scotch?' Brewer invited them.

" 'You know I don't drink,' the Boy said.

" 'Fred will,' Brewer said.

" 'I don't mind a spot,' Dallow said. He grinned and said, 'Here's how.'

" 'We've called for that subscription, Brewer,' the Boy said.

"The man in white pyjamas hissed soda into his glass. . . .

" 'Was that the old woman?' Very faintly from the room above came the sound of coughing. Brewer said: 'She's woke up. I got to go and see her.'

" 'You stay here,' the Boy said, 'and talk.'

" 'She'll want turning.'

" 'When we've finished you can go.'

"Cough, cough, cough; it was like a machine trying to start and failing. Brewer said desperately: 'Be human. She won't know where I've got to. I'll only be a minute.'

" 'You don't need any longer than a minute here,' the Boy said. 'All we want's what's due to us. Twenty pounds.'

" 'I haven't got it in the house. Honest I haven't.'

" 'That's too bad for you.' The Boy drew off his right glove.

" 'It's like this, Pinkie. I paid it all out yesterday. To Colleoni.'

" 'What in Jesus' name,' the Boy said, 'has Colleoni to do with it?'

"Brewer went rapidly and desperately on, listening to the cough, cough, cough upstairs. 'Be reasonable, Pinkie. I can't pay both of you. I'd have been carved if I hadn't paid Colleoni. . . .'

"The Boy suddenly drew his hand back and slashed with his razored nail at Brewer's cheek. He struck blood out along the cheek bone. 'Don't,' Brewer said, 'don't,' backing against the sideboard, upsetting the biscuit tin. He said, 'I've got protection. You be careful. I've got protection.'

"The Boy laughed. 'Look at him. He's got protection. You want any more. . . ?'

" 'Colleoni'll have my blood, Pinkie.'

" 'You needn't worry. We'll protect you.'

" 'I don't keep my money here. Let me fetch it.'

" 'You go with him, Dallow,' the Boy said. 'I'll wait here,' and he sat down on a straight-carved dining-room chair and stared out—at the mean street, the dustbins along the pavement, the vast shadow of the viaduct".[3]

Our name for this is "juvenile delinquency". And we are surprised when Mr. Greene tells us that Pinkie is a Roman Catholic. It appears to be somewhat unhelpful, to say the least, to the cause he has at heart. And yet this paradoxical fact enables him to penetrate to the heart of the matter as surely as phrases like "juvenile delinquency" condemn us to superficiality.

Pinkie and his gang had committed a murder. They have an alibi which can only be broken by one witness, a girl of sixteen called Rose who is a waitress in a café. To ensure her silence Pinkie decides that he must marry her. Marriage is abhorrent to him but it is necessary for their safety. He compromises by deciding he will be married before the

registrar. Rose is also a Catholic so such a wedding has no validity for either of them. It is not a "real" marriage but it is legal and will keep Rose out of the witness box.

" 'Only marriage,' he said, 'will do for me. We got to be married properly.'

" 'We won't be that whatever we do. The father up at St. John's—he says——'

" 'You don't want to listen too much to priests,' he said. 'They don't know the world like I do. Ideas change, the world moves on . . .' His words stumbled before her carved devotion. That face said as clearly as words that ideas never changed, the world never moved: it lay there always, the ravaged and disputed territory between two eternities. They faced each other as it were from opposing territories, but like troops at Christmastime they fraternized".[4]

Ideas never change: the world never moves: it lies there always, the ravaged and disputed territory between two eternities. This is the essence of Graham Greene's vision. It creates the unique atmosphere in all he writes. Beneath the deceptively flat style there is this third dimension. There are "two eternities". Macneille Dixon once pointed out that in our humane desire to block the road to hell, we had also, and inevitably, shut the gate of heaven. No one can swing one portal without the other and Mr. Greene has the courage of this conviction. The marriage of Rose and Pinkie is Blake's "Marriage of Heaven and Hell". The attraction between them is that of polar opposites. They are alone in their world, locked in the eternal conflict between love and despair. The other characters rotate at a distance, not sharing in the magnetic field which unites them.

Pinkie is a "pure" spirit from hell. "He trailed the clouds

of his own glory after him: hell lay about him in his in-infancy". This is the secret of his power. The youngest member of the gang and the least experienced he is yet the leader. He alone is unfettered, undivided.

" 'The world's got to go on,' Dallow said uneasily.

" 'Why?' the Boy said.

" 'You don't need to ask me,' Dallow said. 'You know best. You're a Roman aren't you? You believe . . .'

" '*Credo in unum Satanum*,' the Boy said.

" 'I don't know Latin. I only know . . .'

" 'Come on,' the Boy said. 'Let's have it, Dallow's creed.'

" 'The world's all right if you don't go too far.'

" 'Is that all?' "[5]

For Pinkie there cannot be anything in this life which is going "too far". He is without horizons, the slave of his negative eternity. He kills Hale; he kills Spicer; he tries to kill Rose. Even his virtues burn with the fire of hell. His teetotalism and his virginity are only aridity and sterility. Their root lies in that pride for which all companionship of bed or board is impossible.

Rose is his polar opposite. She burns with the same fire but in her it is the fire of heaven. And Pinkie cannot avoid the recognition. On their first night out together—the evening on which he had first tried unsuccessfully to frighten her with vitriol—they discover the terrifying truth.

" 'What's that?' the Boy said when something clinked in her bag; she showed him the end of a string of beads.

" 'You a Roman?' the Boy asked.

" 'Yes,' Rose said.

" 'I'm one too,' the Boy said. They ran from doorway to doorway until they were back on the parade in one of the empty glass

shelters. They had it to themselves in the noisy stifling night. 'Why, I was in the choir once,' the Boy confided and suddenly he began to sing softly in his spoilt boy's voice: '*Agnus dei qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem. . . .*'

" 'I don't go to Mass.'

" 'But you believe, don't you,' Rose implored him. 'You think it's true?'

" 'Of course it's true,' the Boy said. 'What else could there be?' he went scornfully on. 'Why,' he said, 'it's the only thing that fits. These atheists, they don't know nothing. Of course there's Hell. Flames and damnation,' he said with his eyes on the dark, shifting water and the lightning, and the lamps going out above the dark struts of the Palace Pier, 'torments.'

" 'And Heaven too,' Rose said with anxiety.

" 'Oh, maybe,' the Boy said. 'Maybe.' "[6]

"O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world". What can heaven do but bear the sin of the world? This is what Rose does. In the eyes of the police she is eventually guilty as Pinkie is, for she knows about Hale and she knows about Spicer. Her confession of faith is in the little note she writes on the night of her marriage and puts in Pinkie's pocket.

" 'I love you, Pinkie, I don't care what you do. I love you for ever. You've been good to me. Wherever you go, I'll go too.' "[7]

The struggle between them is the war of heaven and hell. She has no weapon except her self-giving. She sets her love against his pride and despair. Even her squalid registry office marriage and the long, aimless hours after it before they return to Pinkie's cheerless room, where they are disturbed by a drunken brawl, cannot quench the flame of her joy. She wakens in the morning alone—for Pinkie has long

ago gone out driven by his inveterate egocentricity—and feels she must share her joy. In a passage as heart-rending as any in Dostoevsky, Graham Greene describes her return to the restaurant where she used to work.

"Then through the pane she caught Maisie's eye: she stood there with a duster staring back, bony, immature, like her own image in a mirror. And *she* stood now where Pinkie had stood—outside, looking in. This was what the priests meant by one flesh".

Rose is now an outsider with Pinkie. She signals to Maisie to go round to the side door.

"The door opened and Maisie was there. 'Rose, what's wrong?' She ought to have had wounds to show: she felt guilty at having only happiness. 'I thought I'd come,' she said, 'and see you. I'm married.'

" 'Married?'

" 'Kind of.'

" 'Oh, Rose, what's it like?'

" 'Lovely.'

"The childish face in front of her took on the wrinkled expression of grief. 'God, Rosie, you're lucky. Where did you meet him?'

" 'Here.'

"A hand bonier than her own seized her by the wrist: 'Oh, Rosie, ain't he got a friend?'

"She said lightly: 'He's not got friends.' "[8]

Pinkie only has enemies. His most inveterate enemy is Ida Arnold who is investigating Hale's death. Like Dallow, Ida moves outside of the gravitational field of heaven and hell. She belongs to the moral, as distinct from the religious,

world. Her only approach to that other world is through her planchette board. She tries to save Rose from the impending disaster.

" 'You're young. You don't know things like I do.'

" 'There's things *you* don't know.' She brooded darkly by the bed, while the woman argued on: a God wept in a garden and cried out upon a cross:

" 'I know one thing you don't. I know the difference between Right and Wrong. They didn't teach you *that* at school.'

"Rose didn't answer; the woman was quite right; the two words meant nothing to her. Their taste was extinguished by stronger foods—Good and Evil. The woman could tell her nothing she didn't know about these—she knew by tests as clear as mathematics that Pinkie was evil—what did it matter in that case whether he was right or wrong?"[9]

Like Sonia in *Crime and Punishment* Rose appears to have made her sacrifice "for nothing". For *Brighton Rock* has an ambivalent ending. From the Whodunit point of view it ends "happily". Ida Arnold, like a bloodhound on the trail, is not to be deflected or evaded. She runs Pinkie down before he is able to complete his plan for killing Rose. He is killed with his chosen weapon, vitriol. "Right" triumphs over "wrong". But from the theological point of view hell triumphs over heaven. Love wist not to pursue as hate wist to evade. It is the Hound of Heaven who is baulked. Pinkie's bitter pride is proof against Rose to the end. She doesn't reach the end. She turns back from the ultimate sacrifice in her strange Gethsemane above the cliffs at Peacehaven. She is left with "the worse horror of all".

Wandering aimlessly on Brighton Pier on their wedding day, Rose had tried to win from Pinkie some token of

affection. Finally and unwillingly he had agreed to record his voice for her. They had no gramophone and so, safe in the knowledge that she could not immediately play the record, Pinkie had given rein to his trapped hatred. For Rose the record was his only gift—his only legacy. But Pinkie had recorded, " 'God damn you, you little bitch, why can't you go back home for ever and let me be?' "[10]

It is hell's last word to heaven. "Let us alone: what have we to do with thee? Art thou come to destroy us?"[11]

Brighton Rock is the triumph of hell over heaven. *The Power and the Glory* is the victory of heaven over hell. Hell in this book has a recognizable geography and history. The geography (one of the Mexican States) had already been recognized by Anthony Beavis on his abortive revolutionary adventure with Mark Staithes. "When I die, this is the part of hell I shall be sent to. I recognize it instantly".[12] In Graham Greene it is a world of swamp and forest with squalid villages and mean townships baked by a merciless sun and whipped by tropical storms. The fauna are the mule, the rat, the mosquito, and the vulture. Especially the vulture. Clutching the corrugated iron roofs with its claws, and brooding with its tiny, moronic head over the human scene below, it is a heraldic image of the reign of death.

In this land history is unfolding. This is a modern, progressive, revolutionary state ruled by its police. It is Ida Arnold's world of "right" and "wrong". It is established in the name of justice to the poor. The Church has for eight years been proscribed. Priests have three choices: they can go into exile, they can renounce the faith and marry, or they can be shot. The bishop and many of the priests are exiled.

One character in the story, Padre José, is a married priest. The hero is the only practising priest left and he is being hunted from village to village.

Hero, in this context, is a misleading word. For this man is, humanly speaking, insignificant. He is never named throughout the entire book. He is a man without human dignity, without any special ability, and even without moral character. For he is the archetypal "whisky priest". The enlightened, anti-God State is a prohibition State, so his life is complicated by the difficulty of procuring both wine for the Mass, and brandy to keep up his courage while on the run. His presence in the State is not due to a greater courage than that possessed by other priests but, as he explains, he first stayed because he didn't quite believe in the danger, and then because it made him feel superior to those who had escaped, and finally because each of his attempts to escape failed. His refusal to marry also is not due to any moral superiority over Padre José because he is the father of an illegitimate child.

Set against "the priest" is "the lieutenant". He is the believer in "socialism", in the State, in human welfare, in the anti-God persecution. He is dedicated to the extirpation of the Church and is bent on capturing the last priest. He seizes hostages from the villages where the priest is known to have been. He begins to shoot them. He captures the priest's hidden store of wine for the Mass.

It is this loss which tips the scale. The priest tries to buy more wine through a blackmailer who knows a bootlegger. He succeeds in getting a little but in the attempt he is involved with his accomplices in a party in which all his wine is drunk. Feeling now that he can do no more he sets out

and escapes over the border. But entwined with his story there is that of an American gangster on the run and also being sought by the police. Beyond the border the priest receives a message from the gangster. He has been mortally wounded and desires absolution. Knowing that this is a police trap he returns, is captured and shot.

The word which sounds like a bell through *The Power and the Glory* is "abandoned". The priest feels himself abandoned in an abandoned world. So does Padre José. He is introduced to us sitting in his courtyard at night, looking at the stars.

"The glittering worlds lay there in space like a promise—the world was not the universe. Somewhere Christ might not have died. He could not believe that to a watcher there *this* world would shine with such brilliance: it would roll heavily in space under its fog like a burning and abandoned ship. The whole globe was blanketed with his own sin".[13]

Because Padre José had been a priest he knew the abandonment for what it was. The others, less aware of cause and effect, yet experience it in their souls. While the priest is involved in his drinking bout with the blackmailer and the bootlegger they are joined, a little to his surprise, by the Chief of Police. This only augments the party and means that the wine which might have been sanctified to create communion between God and man is poured away faster in a human comradeship which is based on fear and appetite and is without the faintest sympathy or understanding.

"The lightning shot down over the harbour and the thunder beat on the roof: this was the atmosphere of a whole state—the storm outside and the talk just going on—words like 'mystery'

and 'soul' and 'the source of life' came in over and over again, as they sat on the bed talking, with nothing to do and nothing to believe and nowhere better to go".[14]

We are already familiar in Joyce and Huxley with this world. But Greene brings it into contact with the other world, the Church. At first sight it is a strange Church existing in the person of its fugitive priest. It is a Church stripped of every external sign. There is no building: there are no vestments: the priest has no special clothes: he abandons his altar stone: he loses his missal: everything goes down to the last scrap of paper on which were some notes of a speech delivered long ago in the days of peace and prosperity. It is a Church also spiritually stripped. There is no daily Mass, no daily office, no personal discipline. Finally it is a Church stripped of moral pretension. This man possesses none of the classical virtues—courage, temperance, chastity, fortitude, he fails everywhere. "There is no beauty that we should desire him". With sardonic humour Mr. Greene describes a pious mother reading a sentimental *Lives of the Saints'* story to her children at bedtime. That mock-heroic epic with its hero behaving heroically, forgiving his enemies, crying, "*Eviva el Christo Rey*" in the moment of martyrdom, proceeds alongside his real story, with its priest in his last hours crouching on the floor of his cell, clutching the brandy-bottle charitably provided by his enemy the lieutenant, and wishing he could pray.

This may read like modern realism doing its worst, but it is nevertheless "the power and the glory". When all that the world means by power and glory are removed, when virtue and heroism are denied, there remain faith, hope and charity. These are the essential heart of the Church and these

are what the priest retains. If at times faith and hope burn low in him, as when he feels "abandoned", as when he dies with all his sins upon his soul, his charity never fails. We know even after he has crossed the border and is safe that he will not really escape. He cannot escape. He cannot desert his people. The dying gangster is a pretext for him as for the lieutenant. He is bound to his world as God is bound to this world by a bond of charity which death cannot destroy.

On the night of the bootlegger's party he is actually caught by the police and charged with being in the possession of brandy. They do not recognize him and he spends a night in the common cell. It is crowded. A man and woman are making love. A pious woman is protesting. An old man, deprived earlier by the Church of his illegitimate child, is wandering in his mind.

"This place was very like the world: overcrowded with lust and crime and unhappy love: it stank to heaven: but he realized that after all it was possible to find peace there, when you knew for certain that the time was short".

"He was moved by an enormous and irrational affection for the inhabitants of this prison. A phrase came to him: 'God so loved the world . . .' ".[15]

"Scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us".[16] This is the world for which Christ died. Christ dying is the hope of this world. It is not at this point that anyone who has studied St. Paul would wish to quarrel with Graham Greene. And indeed he is saying something to which the Church must listen.

The Church is always tempted to heal "the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly," [17] to apply a lesser cure to a lesser ill. The tragedy of modern man is his despair. A Church which ignores the despair in the heart and engages man on the smooth, shining surface of his life is an irrelevance and is treated as such by the masses of people today. A Church which, going deeper, grapples with the moral symptoms of despair becomes a kind of Christianized Pharisaism applying "the law" of salvation.

Alcohol is an understandable refuge for man in despair; it is symptomatic. Certain parts of the Church are greatly exercised about alcohol. Sexual immorality is another refuge —another symptom. Most parts of the Church are acutely sensitive here. But the whole Church should evince a profounder awareness and concern for the spiritual disease of which drunkenness and promiscuity are symptoms. It must grapple with man's despair.

Graham Greene's "whisky priest" is a protest. He is protesting against our inveterate moralism which "shuts the gates of mercy on mankind". Man is not saved by teetotalism nor by chastity. He is saved by the everlasting love of Christ. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God". Salvation is not by law but by grace. Greene's process of stripping the Church of her accessories of ritual and of human virtue reveals her supernatural life—a life both experienced and demonstrated by countless named and nameless Christians in the prisons and concentration camps of our time. The world of ecclesiastical order and *bourgeois* virtue which we call the Church is so often in St. Paul's sense, "the law". It may be a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ. It may be a gaoler to keep us

from Christ, burning with zeal not to evangelize but to proselytize. "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves."[18] Mr. Greene's books are full of "good" Catholics who are of that sort and who are brother and sister (especially sister) to equally "good" Protestants of all denominations.

Up to this point no evangelical Christian could take exception to Graham Greene's theological position. It is with his book, *The End of the Affair*, that the gulf begins to yawn. It would be interesting to see an assessment made by a Catholic theologian of the theological implications of this story, for it reads at times almost like a Protestant travesty of Catholic doctrine. It is a defence, in a modern setting, of what are often called "ecclesiastical" miracles, of relics, and of a material, almost a mechnical, conception of grace. These are, of course, acutely controversial questions and Mr. Greene is clearly trailing his coat, but would Catholic theologians generally accept the statement of them in this book as being orthodox?

The heroine, the saint, in *The End of the Affair* is Sarah Miles, the wife of a top-grade civil servant. Sarah is having "an affair" with a writer called Bendrix. The 1944 doodlebug blitz is on and Bendrix is apparently killed. Sarah, who believes nothing and practises no religion, prays that Bendrix may live and promises in her prayer that if he does she will end the affair. Bendrix lives (we are left in doubt as to whether or not he was raised from the dead) and Sarah struggles unhappily to keep her promise to the unknown God. Wishing if possible to be released from it, she attaches herself to an anti-god orator called Richard Smythe, a

handsome man with a disfigured face and an embittered soul, in the hope that he will convince her that God does not exist and so release her from her vow. Husband and lover are now united in a common jealousy of Sarah's secret life and they set a private detective to watch her. Smythe, however, succeeds only in convincing Sarah of the existence of God and in driving her into the Catholic Church. Before she can actually be received, Sarah dies, and almost at once two miracles follow. The child of the detective employed to shadow her is cured through having a book of hers by his bedside: Smythe's disfigured face is cured through sleeping with a piece of Sarah's hair on his pillow. After Sarah's funeral, Bendrix inadvertently stumbles on the cause of these manifestations. Sarah's thriftless mother tells him of how, when the child was two years old, and not from any religious belief but only to annoy her husband, she had Sarah baptized while on holiday in France. It is the mysterious work of grace in Sarah, stemming from that baptism, which has led to her power to heal the sick and perhaps to raise the dead.

It would be difficult to conceive of grace in a more mechanical way. It is here applied, like one of the impersonal energies of nature, like a powerful drug or an electric shock, to an unconscious patient with miraculous effect. Mr. Greene's own metaphor is that of a virus in the bloodstream. And, as in all therapy of this sort, the personality of the patient is an irrelevance. But the Christian conception of God in Christ is the meeting of Person with person and "the Divine-human encounter" can never be adequately conceived in mechanical terms. Man cannot be pushed about even if it leads to his eternal salvation since, in that case, the

being who is saved would not be a human person. And, however the doctrine of Divine grace be developed, it cannot escape from the limiting factor that it is "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ". An experience from which the personal factor is missing on both sides of the equation cannot be a Christian experience.

Secondly, it is a well-attested rule of the spiritual life, to which Catholic saints continuously bear witness, that "you cannot make a bargain with God". Prayer as a bargain is, essentially, heathen prayer, the imposition of the human will upon the divine. Sarah's prayer after the doodlebug and the priest's prayer in his play, *The Potting Shed*, are an attempt on Mr. Greene's part to establish the validity of a kind of prayer which is very ancient, very attractive to the human will, but which belongs to what Joyce Cary calls the religion of "juju". It profoundly misunderstands the dialectic of Christian prayer in which the petitioner, even as he expresses his desires, surrenders his will to the goodness of God. Although they seek to raise the dead, Sarah and the priest are praying, "My will be done".

In *The Potting Shed* there is no ambiguity; the priest does raise his nephew from the dead. God then extracts the price from him; he loses his faith and becomes an alcoholic. But what kind of miracle is this which destroys the faith of the man who works it? And what kind of faith is this which can be "lost" after witnessing the miracle? Faith is here conceived, as grace is in *The End of the Affair*, as an object, a handbag, say, or an umbrella, which can be left behind at some point in life's journey, and later reclaimed at the Lost Property office. Underlying the psychological improbability of the boy's resurrection destroying his uncle's faith

there is the theological inadequacy of Mr. Greene's conception of faith. In New Testament terms faith is the response of the personality in its totality to the Divine approach, it is an act, an experience, not something detachable from, because external to, the faithful person.

One must allow, of course, for Mr. Greene's method. He is seeking to defend the Catholic position at those points where it may appear to be weakest in the modern world, miracles, relics and so on, and by so doing he is applying a kind of shock therapy to modern materialism, but in *The End of the Affair*, although using the same method as in *The Power and the Glory*, he overplays his hand.

Much play has been made in Catholic–Protestant controversy with the words "objective" and "subjective", and it might be well to drop them for a time and use instead the words "personal" and "impersonal". We have seen in our study of James Joyce that Christ seems to be for him an impersonal figure, the second Person of the Trinity, and in Graham Greene faith and grace are similarly impersonal forces. Because of this Mr. Greene cannot relate them successfully to the moral life of man.

Let us return to the dispute between Rose and Ida Arnold in *Brighton Rock*. For Rose the words "right" and "wrong" were "extinguished" by the words "good" and "evil". Everything depends upon the interpretation of "extinguished". It may simply mean "destroyed", in which case we fall into the Antinomian heresy: or it may mean "comprehended" as the candle flame is "extinguished" by the sun. The latter is the New Testament meaning defined by St. Paul against the antinomians who suggested continuing in sin that grace might abound. The Christian is "beyond

morality", living in the world of "good and evil" and not in the world of "right and wrong", but his vaster world comprehends the world of "right and wrong", it is a world which "exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees". It is simply putting the same thought in different words to say that religion extinguishes because it comprehends morality. It is vaster than morality, it has an eternal dimension, and it is personal as "the law" can never be. Therefore morality as a substitute for religion is, in the strict sense of the word, damnable. This Graham Greene sees. But a religion of grace because it comprehends the moral life of man has immense moral consequences. To this Graham Greene seems strangely blind. His reaction from moralism, from Pharisaism, from the "right" and "wrong" world, is so powerful that it leaves him in an antinomian position.

In a recent public controversy with Colm Brogan (when Mr. Brogan referred to the fact that they both belonged to the same Church, Mr. Greene characteristically replied, "So does Torquemada") Graham Greene deplored the driving of the prostitutes from the London streets. Had it been published at the time he could have found valuable ammunition for his point of view in an anonymous book entitled, *Streetwalker*, written by a prostitute, which contains a damning indictment of the moral hypocrisy of our society on this issue.

"It is part of the penalty we pay for our easy money that, although we ask for no trial, we are tried and condemned without advocate or chance to bear witness, by people schooled to spit on us in public, while using us in private for their various ends. And this condemnation, the hypocrisy of which we can

hardly overlook, is perhaps the reason why we are, in the majority, so blatantly prostitutes in speech and dress, so actively on the defensive that we easily become offensive in street and café scenes; perhaps this is why we talk so loud, swear so hard, and laugh so coarsely.

"We come into continual contact with upright, respected citizens whose voices are loudly raised against us in public, and yet who visit us in private, or make use of us in some way. If they are afraid at all, during or as a result of these surreptitious jaunts, their fear is not that they are sinning against the laws of God or of decency, or even so much that they may pass on to their wives or families whatever disease we may be suffering from, and never that they are adding to the demand whose supply they have so virtuously condemned, but rather that they will somehow be discovered consorting with us and lose thereby the respect of their fellows. And these pillars of society are harder to bear than all the rest of one's night's visitors put together.

"After the first couple of doctors, parsons, policemen and welfare workers, one loses faith, not so much in the sentence itself, as in the judge and jury who pass it".[19]

But after condemning the Pharisaism of society at this point the ultimate Christian word has still not been spoken. For *Streetwalker* opens to the imagination a world of lust divorced from pleasure, of emotion divorced from joy, of money divorced from profit, of men and women divorced from the essential springs of humanity, which cannot simply be left to putrefy within the body of our society. And this is the classical gospel situation in which we see Christ condemned by the Pharisees yet bringing redemptive grace to the outcast. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" is not something which is manifested in bizarre miracles, but is a

redemptive power at work in the personal lives of men and of societies.

In Protestant countries, of course, a true sense of redemptive grace is often lost and a secular idealism substituted for it. This is the justification of Graham Greene's *The Quiet American*. To Protestant eyes, on the other hand, there is a too great dichotomy in Catholic countries between the forms of piety and the facts of life, moral, political and economic. Grace seems insufficiently applied to cleanse the body politic, and a study of Mr. Greene (and also of James Joyce) suggests that it is the Catholic conception of grace and of faith which is at fault.

One question insistently raised by Graham Greene, which may at first sight appear personal to him and almost academic in its logic, turns out, on closer inspection, to carry this theme a stage further and in an unexpected direction. In *The Heart of the Matter*, and again in his play, *The Living Room*, he wrestles with the teaching of the Catholic Church about suicide. The logic of the question is clear. Suicide is an act of despair. Despair is the ultimate sin—the denial of faith. Therefore those who commit suicide die in mortal sin and are damned. What Mr. Greene sets out to demonstrate is that life will not fit into that logic.

In *The Heart of the Matter* we watch Henry Scobie gradually enmeshed, partly by circumstances and partly by his nature, in a web from which there is for a man of his kind no escape. At each crisis he is entangled not by his vices, but by his pity and compassion. His is a burning compassion towards the weak and the unfortunate which he cannot restrain. Eventually, when the net is drawn close round him, he is tied to two women, his wife and his mistress, neither

of whom he can renounce. And his faith shuts off every avenue of escape. He cannot continue to live in mortal sin and take communion; that is an offence to God. He cannot divorce his wife and so destroy her. He cannot desert the girl he has befriended. He cannot commit suicide without damnation. Characteristically, when his choice is to offend God, to wound either of the women, or to destroy himself eternally, he decides upon that last alternative.

> "The last temptation is the greatest treason:
> To do the right deed for the wrong reason".[20]

Mr. Greene has a happy knack of reversing the poets. What of the man who does the wrong deed for the right reason?

The important point here is not so much that we cannot believe that Scobie is a soul damned beyond the mercy of God (or Rose who commits suicide in *The Living Room*), but that Graham Greene cannot believe it either. And if we are then told that "the Church teaches" that the ultimate act of despair irrevocably estranges the soul from God this does not alter our conviction, nor his. We still do not believe that Scobie is damned. There is an interesting meeting between him and his priest, Father Rank, at the point where Scobie begins to know that he is trapped. The priest is talking about his previous work in Northampton.

" 'I wasn't any use to a single living soul, Scobie. I thought, in Africa things will be different. You see I'm not a reading man, Scobie: I never had much talent for loving God as some people do. I wanted to be of use, that's all. . . . If people are in trouble, they'd go to you, Scobie, not to me. They ask me to dinner to hear the gossip. And if you were in trouble where would you

go?' And Scobie was again aware of those bleary and appealing eyes, waiting through the dry seasons and through the rains, for something that never happened. Could I shift my burden there, he wondered: Could I tell him that I love two women: that I don't know what to do? What would be the use? I know the answers as well as he does. One should look after one's own soul at whatever cost to another, and that's what I can't do, what I shall never be able to do".[21]

Scobie, the layman, has gone beyond his priest. He is aware of a depth and of a complexity in the moral situation of humanity to which "the answers" of the Church are not relevant. It is because of this that "if people are in trouble, they'd go to you". It is because of this that he in his turn cannot shift his moral burden on to the priest who is stranded upon a shore from which the tide has ebbed away.

This is the profound and silent revolution of our time which the Church in all its forms seems most reluctant to face. Even if the Church should decide that this is "a fall", the fall is irreversible. There is no road back from knowledge to *naïveté*, from experience to innocence. The traffic is all one-way. Adam cannot re-enter Eden. Catholic phrases like "the Church teaches" and Protestant equivalents like "the Bible says" respresent a dead language. They cannot any more be spoken with power. And this is not simply because they have, within the experience of man since the Renaissance been grossly abused; nor is it simply that our knowledge of Church history and Biblical criticism have armed us against ecclesiastical and literary dogmatism. The revolution has taken place within the moral consciousness of man. Man accepts a responsibility never before imagined. He has grown beyond the power of dogma as surely as our

adolescent children outgrow the authoritarian world of childhood, and if the Church continues to talk as if to children, the consequences can only be disastrous, both for her and for humanity.

This may appear to be contradicted by the authoritarianism of the age in which we live. But a closer look at the forms of that authoritarianism reinforces the point. The authoritarianism of our time is not innocent. In Tillich's sense of the word it is demonic, and its demonism is the psychological evidence of its suppressed and guilty knowledge. Behind the apparent *naïveté* of the mass rally lies the dark unconscious of the concentration camp. Even a mile up-wind of Auschwitz, Rudolf Hoess tells us, the burning flesh in his crematoriums could be smelled.

There is one reality here for Church as for State since they deal with the same humanity. The Church can only re-establish her "authority" in the old sense of that word by exercising a spiritual fascism which would destroy if it could both the intellectual freedom and the moral responsibility which man has increasingly experienced.

The nostalgic desire expressed by some Catholic writers for "a peasant society", the longing commonly heard among Anglicans for "a country parish", the prayer of many Nonconformists for "an old-fashioned revival", are differing forms of one fundamental longing, a longing for the day when the Church possessed authority. Of course, this nostalgia may be as innocent as the pleasure we derive from looking at snapshots taken when the children were small, when the family was united, and when we were, in memory at least, blissfully happy. It remains innocent just so far as we indulge it in the full knowledge that that day has gone

for ever, because now the children have grown up and gone out into the world. But it is difficult for any Church to do that. Both because of its eternal dimension and because of its dynamic structure religion seeks the fulfilment of its dream, seeks to impose the peasant society or to engineer the revival, and one does not need to look far round the world today to find men smarting under the sense that in their struggle for class or national or racial dignity they have been opposed in the name of Christ. The temptation to be Antichrist is the one to which the Church most easily succumbs.

The vast awakening of millions in Asia, in India, and in Africa; the revolt of humanity everywhere against the caste and hierarchical systems which have endured for centuries; the economic aspirations of the working masses in the West; the assertion of the moral and intellectual freedom of man throughout the universe of knowledge; how are these great movements of our time judged within the Church? Isolating out certain factors like their materialism, their scepticism, or their irreverence, we tend to use these by-products as a reason for opposing, so far as we can discern it, the very tide of history. On this two comments would seem to be relevant, the first humanist, though voiced by a great Catholic thinker, and the second biblical.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, in *The Phenomenon of Man*, calls us to a reinterpretation of our age in these words:

"Merely from looking at these external signs we can hardly fail to suspect that the great unrest which has pervaded our life in the West since the French Revolution springs from a nobler and deeper cause than the difficulties of a world seeking to recover some ancient equilibrium that it has lost. There is no question of

shipwreck. What we are up against is the heavy swell of an unknown sea which we are just entering from behind the cape that protected us. What is troubling us intellectually, politically and even spiritually is something quite simple. With his customary acute intuition, Henri Breuil said to me one day: 'We have only just cast off the last moorings which held us to the Neolithic age'. The formula is paradoxical but illuminating. In fact the more I have thought over these words, the more inclined I have been to think that Breuil was right".[22]

The biblical comment cuts even deeper. This elemental tide, which is lifting the whole of humanity in our time, whence is it? "If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found to fight against God".[23]

[1] *Cards of Identity*, Nigel Dennis (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1956), p. 112.
[2] *Brighton Rock* (Heinemann, 1947), p. 114.
[3] *Brighton Rock*, pp. 70–4.
[4] *Brighton Rock*, p. 185.
[5] *Brighton Rock*, p. 220.
[6] *Brighton Rock*, p. 66.
[7] *Brighton Rock*, p. 251.
[8] *Brighton Rock*, pp. 260–1.
[9] *Brighton Rock*, p. 267.
[10] *Brighton Rock*, p. 236.
[11] *St. Mark*, Chapter 1, verse 24.
[12] *Eyeless in Gaza*, Aldous Huxley, p. 496.
[13] *The Power and the Glory* (Heinemann, 1949), p. 31.
[14] *The Power and the Glory*, p. 147.
[15] *The Power and the Glory*, pp. 161 and 163.
[16] *Romans*, Chapter 5, verses 7 and 8.
[17] *Jeremiah*, Chapter 8, verse 11.
[18] *St. Matthew*, Chapter 23, verse 15.
[19] *Streetwalker* (Bodley Head, 1959), pp. 132–3.
[20] *Murder in the Cathedral*, T. S. Eliot, p. 44.
[21] *The Heart of the Matter* (Heinemann, 1948), p. 195.
[22] *The Phenomenon of Man*, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (Collins, 1959), p. 214.
[23] *Acts*, Chapter 5, verses 38–39.

LECTURE 4

ROSE MACAULAY - ANGLICANISM

ROSE MACAULAY took the wise precaution in 1936 of writing what she called an "auto-obituary". After her death in 1958, *The Listener*, which had published the original document, reprinted this extract from it:

"She wrote from her earliest infancy, with the greatest zest, and began to publish the sprouts of her fancy at a young age. Descended on both sides from long lines of eloquent and well-informed clergymen, few of whom had denied themselves the indulgence of breaking into print, she busily wrote down from her earliest days those little thoughts that occurred to her childish fancy. Her novels and essays, if not widely read, appealed to certain thoughtful and well-regulated minds. They were written in pure and elegant English, almost devoid of that vulgarity which degraded so much of the literature of her period, and inculcated always the highest moral lessons. Those who called her a flippant writer failed to understand the deep earnestness which underlay her sometimes facetious style and the sober piety which she had inherited from her ecclesiastical forebears. She was much interested in religions; the voluminous calf-bound theological works of past centuries were among her reading, and no curious heresy, or antique doctrinal squabble, failed to intrigue her fancy".[1]

It is interesting to see how the passing of the years, and in particular the publication in 1956 of *The Towers of Trebizond*, bears out the truth of that semi-satirical self-portrait.

Written, if not in the contemporary style which Rose Macaulay deprecates, at any rate in what we must now recognize as the contemporary method of Christian apologetic, the hero of *The Towers of Trebizond* is really the Church of England towards which all the characters are orientated in varying attitudes of loyalty, disloyalty, hostility or ignorant indifference, and that hero, Anglicanism, is seen, and this is the unique character of the book and of Rose Macaulay's mind, both from outside and from inside, both critically and compassionately. It is a powerful *apologia* for the Anglican position.

That may appear a strong statement to make about a book apparently so lightly written but we must not ignore Rose Macaulay's own plea about "the deep earnestness which underlay her facetious style", nor must we fall into the critical error of imagining that wit can only be a vehicle for triviality, and that humourless solemnity is an invariable sign of deep religious feeling, the *sine qua non* of serious purpose. The trouble lies perhaps in the kind of wit which Rose Macaulay possessed. It is both satirical and farcical and neither of these seems (except in her) to accord well with ecclesiastical devotion. One might dare to prophesy that Rose Macaulay will take her permanent place among the English satirists of the gentler sort and in *The Towers of Trebizond* she gives full rein to her gift. Billy Graham, preaching about Immorality, "He said it happened continually everywhere, in the streets and in the fields and on the beaches", the Seventh Day Adventists going to Mount Ararat to await the Second Coming and collecting pieces of Noah's Ark while waiting, the jealousies and dishonesties of writers, the idiosyncrasies of the Sunday newspapers, the

strange things appearing in foreign language phrase-books, Americans abroad, the B.B.C. and especially its religious department, "it's a popish plot to reclaim England for Rome", are all reviewed with delightful irony without deflecting the author in the least from her main target which is the Anglo-Catholic branch of the Church of England. We are listening to an erudite and witty woman thinking aloud, meditating on the immense oddity of existence, human and animal, ancient and modern, secular and sacred. This satire is only possible to someone who has a visionary detachment from, as well as a charitable attachment to, this world. It is the counterpoise of that other striking element in the book, the element of vision.

She described one of her early novels, *Potterism*, as "a tragi-farcical tract" and perhaps the farcical element in her writing is even more off-putting, and not only to the solemn, than the satirical. Many will conclude from the opening sentence of *The Towers of Trebizond* that this cannot be a serious work at all. " 'Take my camel, dear,' said my Aunt Dot as she climbed down from this animal on her return from High Mass".[2] As we are in Oxfordshire, and as High Anglicans in Oxfordshire do not attend Mass, nor indeed anything else, riding on camels, this would seem to be a camel which not even the Pharisees of New Testament times could swallow. And yet swallow it we must for, next to the Church of England, the camel is one of the main characters in the book. And when we do we discover that, like the gargoyles on a medieval cathedral, the camel too is contributing to the splendour of the whole, evoking in the Oxfordshire countryside the strangeness, the incongruity, of the Christian Church in that setting where we normally,

and mistakenly, accept it as a part of nature, and in Turkey and the Levant providing Aunt Dot and the Hon. the Rev. Father Hugh Chantry-Pigg with a visa, a right of belonging in that world where their English High Church upper-classness would seem so singularly out of place.

A further objection to taking *The Towers of Trebizond* too seriously might appear to be the declared religious position of its author. Like the Scottish professor who, during the debate for or against bishops in the Church of Scotland, declared himself "an atheist, but a Presbyterian atheist", Rose Macaulay described herself as "an Anglo-agnostic". How can any kind of agnostic—even an Anglo-agnostic—produce an *apologia* for the Anglican communion?

The classical conception of Christian apologetic would rule this out, but we must now examine what has been happening in our time. Evelyn Waugh, Graham Greene, Rose Macaulay, and Joyce Cary have all been practising a new kind of apologetic, an apologetic not of the schools but of the stage, the screen, the novel. In the forefront they have set not dogmas, not documents, but human beings, and the argument has been carried on not in terms of reason, but in terms of life.

This is in no sense a criticism of the classical type of apologetics carried on in the theological schools. Never was that type of apologetic more necessary than today. Assailed as the Church has been in the last 150 years from so many sides, science, history, literary criticism, archaeology, the soberer forms of apologetic are essential to her life and being. She must not lose contact with the thought-world of modern man if she would speak to his condition in a saving way. Yet it remains true that the classical apologetic is

wide rather than deep. It engages the reason rather than the emotions and the will. In a world grown weary of theological argument, in a world almost passionately agnostic, how can we engage with men in a personal way? It is here that these novelists have come to the rescue. They do not argue dogmatically. They do not down the opposition as experts always do. They set their priests, regular and hedge, their shaky believers, their doubters, their haters of religion before us and argue out in terms of persons the deep truth of religion.

There is one field in which the traditional type of apologetic—the appeal to reason and scholarship—has most signally failed and that is the field of interchurch relationships. For more than 400 years, since 1517 when Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the door of the Parish Church in Wittemburg, Protestants have sought to convince Catholics, and Catholics Protestants, of the error of their ways. When one considers the time and energy expended, the greatness of the minds engaged on both sides, the comparative narrowness of the issues involved, one must be surprised by the negligible result. The religious map of Europe is scarcely altered and conversions still have the news value of rarity. Although each of the main parties to the dispute has changed greatly with the passing of the centuries—so that sixteenth-century Catholics, Lutherans, or Calvinists would all find themselves aliens in their respective communions today—the divisions between them have not contracted. Like the scars left from deep wounds received in childhood, they have grown with the growth of the body. They are now as historic as the churches themselves and we carry them forward with us into the future.

There could be no more striking evidence of some essential flaw in our apologetic method. Why can men of equal scholarship, equal goodwill, working on the same documents, the same history, remain, generation after generation, so deeply estranged?

Perhaps the last reasoned appeal, written in the traditional manner, and really bouyed up by the hope of convincing those to whom it is addressed, is John Henry Newman's *Difficulties of Anglicans*. It was written a hundred years ago, and the Anglicans still have their difficulties and still succeed, despite Newman, in living with them. Re-read now something else emerges from that book, something of whose significance Newman was unconscious and which is yet the real difficulty—for Anglican, Roman and Nonconformist. Newman uses the word "Protestant" emotionally. There must have been a time at the very onset of the Reformation when men on both sides were emotionally unified by their common medieval past. But war, persecution and martyrdom soon obliterated that underlying unity and substituted for it in the consciousness of Catholics and Protestants alike a dark image of each other. The word "Protestant" evoked in Newman's breast the dark image. For Protestants it is evoked by the word "Catholic" (or, since the valiant counter-offensive of Newman's erstwhile friends, by the word "Roman"). This dark image stands between us and no amount of rational demonstration can dispel it.

Each side in the theological debate tends to be amazed by the intransigence of the other, and to interpret this as intellectual dishonesty or bad faith. But the real resistance lies beneath the level of reason, it is resistance to the mythological image of the other. The unity of Christendom is im-

possible without the demythologizing of the Church. Somehow we must achieve an act of exorcism.

"When Father Chantry-Pigg said 'Italian Mission', a look of particular malevolence slightly distorted his finely arranged features: the same look, only worse, that was apt to disturb and distort the fleshier and more good-humoured Irish countenance of Father Murphy, the priest of St. Brigid's, when St. Gregory's clergy and choir filed in chanting, incense-swinging, saint-bearing processions out of their church door and round the square which both churches served. Father Chantry-Pigg took the view that it was emissaries from St. Brigid's who had made a habit of defacing his church notices, and sometimes entered his church in order to make disagreeable remarks, and scatter spiteful leaflets, though some of this was done from a very Low church in a neighbouring street, and some of the leaflets had 'Catholic Commandos' printed on them, and others 'Protestant Storm Troopers', and Father Chantry-Pigg did not know which of these two bands of warriors he disliked most. When he put a notice on his church door containing the words Eucharist, or Mass, or even Priest (particularly if the priest was going to hear confessions), these words would be struck out by ardent representatives of one or another of these guerrilla armies, or perhaps by both, and the Catholic Commandos would write over it, 'You have no Mass', (or Eucharist, or priests, as the case might be), and, referring to confession, 'Why? He has no power to absolve', and the Storm Troopers would correct Mass to the Lord's Supper, and alter the bit about confession to 'The Minister will be in the church to give counsel', and cross out Benediction, so that, after both sets of workers had been busy with the notices, there was not much of them left and they had to be rewritten. As Father Chantry-Pigg said, the Commandos belonged to the Catholic underworld and the Storm Troopers to the Protestant, and underworlds everywhere are pretty much like

one another in manners, even when they hold differing views. Anyhow these underworlds, he said, were two minds (if minds they could be called) with but a single thought (if thought it could be called) about the section of the Anglican Church to which he belonged, and that thought was one of powerful hostility".[3]

How does one deal with an underworld? How can we set about dispelling the dark shadow cast upon the minds of men by all the Churches? For these forces which operate so strongly to hold Christians apart, operate also in the minds of those who have long ago given up the faith, since men retain their hatreds long after their loves have died. It is here that the new type of *apologia* becomes relevant. Graham Greene, Evelyn Waugh, Rose Macaulay and Joyce Cary, despite their divergences of style, of vision, and of Christian allegiance, have adopted a common method of apologetic. They all ignore the familiar dogmatic arguments and go out of their way as it seems to evoke the dark image instead. Following almost a psycho-analytical technique they insist that the underworld must first emerge into the light of day.

We have already seen that Graham Greene sometimes reads like a Protestant travesty of Catholic doctrine. It is as though he were writing against his Church and not in its defence. Notice how many dark Protestant suspicions are given life in his books, the whisky priest, the immoral believer, the oppression of the poor, the encouragement of superstition, the impossible relics, the doubtful miracles. Many devout Catholics hate Graham Greene; to them it appears blasphemous that such a picture of Catholic life should be published, and that a professing Catholic should

publish it only adds to the offence. Even James Joyce in his apostasy never described the Church as Graham Greene does. And yet Graham Greene is a penetrating apologist just because he encounters the dark image in the mind of the hostile reader and wrestles with it. His admissions have a psychological force absent from official denials. He is at grips, whether successfully or unsuccessfully, with the real enemy.

Similarly the religious characters created by Joyce Cary ("the Protestant answer to Graham Greene"[4] is how Walter Allen has described him) speak to the fear and dislike of Catholics and Anglicans. They have all the characteristics of those whom we should describe generically as pentecostalists. They are subjective and blown about by the winds of their own emotion. They are individualists pursuing a personal vision. They have broken not only from the Catholic Church and the English establishment but also from brethren of their own ilk. They quarrel continually among themselves and yet each maintains that he alone holds the key to truth and life. Their personal morals at times match those of Graham Greene's clerics but they believe that they can accurately foretell the date of the Second Coming or cure mortal illness by the power of faith. This is, in one sense, a travesty of Protestantism, and yet it approximates to the dark image of nonconformity which exists in many Catholic minds both Anglo- and Roman.

This evocation in Greene and Cary is not made satirically but sympathetically. They speak from faith and charity. Graham Greene is saying, "Catholics are like this, and yet——" Joyce Cary is saying, "Nonconformists are like this, and yet——" And in *The Towers of Trebizond* Rose Macaulay is saying, "Anglicans are like this, and yet——"

It might seem that hers is the hardest task. It is very much more difficult to say what the Church of England is than to describe the Roman or the Calvinist. A Church claiming to possess an unbroken tradition stands in a strong position logically whatever be its difficulties historically. A Church claiming to reproduce the primitive *koinonia*, the New Testament Church, and refusing to admit any document in evidence except the New Testament, has similarly simplified the problem of description and defence whatever further difficulties it has thereby created. But a Church which insists that it is both Catholic (although it has broken from Roman allegiance) and Protestant (although it has never accepted the rigor of reformation according to the Word of God) is clearly in a much more difficult position. Not only will it inevitably be shot at from both sides but it will also and continuously be troubled internally by its own rigorists and logicians on both sides.

The force of this may not be fully felt in the English village, where indeed it seems reasonable to suppose that the parish church is the Church of all the ages, but when Rose Macaulay informs us that Aunt Dot, her niece Laurie, who narrates the story, and Father Chantry-Pigg, "an ancient bigot", are leaving these shores (with the camel) to investigate the possibility of establishing the Anglican communion in Turkey, the full absurdity of the Church of England would seem to be exposed.

Arrived at Istanbul they are joined by a Turkish woman, Dr. Halide Tanpinar, who had studied medicine in London and joined the Anglican communion. But is she a fully Catholic Anglican? This is the question which disturbs the mind of Father Chantry-Pigg.

"He wanted to know what churches she had been used to attending when in London. Dr. Halide, who was experimental, said she had tried many, such as All Saints Margaret Street, St. Mary's Grarm Street, St. Stephen's Gloucester Road, St. Augustine's Kilburn, St. Paul's Knightsbridge, St. Magnus the Martyr, St. Thomas's Regent Street, St. John's Holland Road, Grosvenor Chapel, the Annunciation Bryanston Street. St. Michael and All Angels off Portobello Road, All Souls Portland Place. . . .

"When she got to All Souls Portland Place, Father Chantry-Pigg, who had passed the other churches with approval, as if they would do very well for the Turkish women, looked cold, and as if anything that Dr. Halide might have got from there would be as well kept from the Turkish women. But I thought a Low church like that might suit Moslems better than the High ones, which are so set about with images.

"It seemed to me a mistake to think, as Father Chantry-Pigg thought, that all Anglican churches ought to have the same type of service, and that type some approximation to what went on in St. Gregory's, for by no means all Anglicans like scenes of that nature. Some Commander (R.N.) in the Church Assembly or some such gathering, once complained that one of the worst scandals in the Church of England was the variety of worship that occurred in its different churches and parishes, and this scandal, said the Commander, kept many people from going to church at all, though one does not quite see that it should have this effect, one would suppose that variety would induce more types of person to go, since there will always be something for this Commander, and something for Aunt Dot and me, and something wonderfully extreme for Father Chantry-Pigg, who had made for himself a church so excessively high that churches such as All Saints Margaret Street seemed to him practically Kensitite. So our Church is very wonderful and comprehensive, and no

other Church, it is said, is quite like it, and this variety that it has is one of its glories, and not one of its scandals at all, though there are plenty of these, such as new incumbents having to recite things so strange that they do not even want to believe them, like some of the Thirty-Nine Articles, and such as the Church being forbidden to revise its own Prayer Book by a non-Anglican parliament, so that Anglicans have to use a revised order quietly and illegally without further reference to the House of Commons. And when one considers such scandals as these, one sees that variety in worship is nothing but a merit".[5]

The ease with which Rose Macaulay leaps that fence makes us suspect that we have in some way been cheated. Can Anglican disunity be so lightly dismissed? In one sense of course, it cannot, since the Commander and Father Chantry-Pigg are still with us. But in a deeper sense it becomes increasingly clear that the idea of unity which we have inherited from the past is outmoded. Under the influence of the ecumenical movement the conception of the Church and of church unity which is emerging is not that of a vast, close-knit, authoritarian institution dictating the last word in dogma and the last syllable of liturgy. Slowly and painfully we are recognizing that even the wrath of man is turned to the praise of God, and that our very divisions have been fruitful in both faith and worship. The Church of South India (*pace* Father Chantry-Pigg) is a new fact in the experience of Christendom in that it seeks not to destroy but to preserve the richer life of the Church discovered in the isolation of the Churches. The struggle which the Church of England has made to remain both Catholic and Protestant is one which more and more involves all communions and the precarious unity of Angli-

canism may be nearer to the path of true unity than the extremer logicians imagine.

What is true of church order is true also of doctrine. The apparent dogmatic weakness of Anglicanism may turn out to be the weakness of the mammal against the armour-plated reptile, a weakness which has survival value in a dynamic situation because of the resilience and flexibility which accompany it. Rose Macaulay is acutely sensitive on her agnostic side to the world in which we live, and she is clearly aware—as Mr. Greene is incoherently aware—that the day of ecclesiastical authority in the grand manner is over. It is not by calling up ghosts from the past that the renewal of the Church in the twentieth century can be achieved. Here again the contrast with Newman is striking. Newman claimed to have found in the Roman communion *certainty*. That claim measures his distance in time from us. What can it mean beyond a psychological experience? For man's spiritual situation is, as Newman's contemporary, Kierkegaard, saw, akin to floating in a kayak borne up by "seventy thousand fathoms" of water.

As lightly as she dismisses the scandal of variety and outward disunity Rose Macaulay disposes of the question of certainty.

"It must be odd to believe, as some people do, that one's Church has all the truth and no errors, for how could this possibly be? Nothing in the world, for instance, could be as true as the Roman Catholic Church thinks it is, and as some Anglicans and Calvinists and Moslems think their Churches are, having the faith once delivered to the saints. I suppose this must be comfortable and reassuring. But most of us know that nothing is as true as all that, and that no faith can be delivered once for all without

change, for new things are being discovered all the time, and old things dropped, like the whole Bible being true, and we have to grope our way through a mist that keeps being lit by shafts of light, so that exploration tends to be patchy, and we can never sit back and say, we have the Truth, this is it, for discovering the truth, if it ever is discovered, means a long journey through a difficult jungle, with clearings every now and then, and paths that have to be hacked out as one walks, and dark lanterns swinging from the trees, and these lanterns are the light that has lighted every man, which can only come through the dark lanterns of our minds".[6]

One apparently insuperable Anglican difficulty lies in the conjunction of Church and State. How far is the Church of England held together, despite its inner theological tensions, despite is doctrinal contradictions, by the secular facts of power, prestige and patronage? And how can a Church depending even in a very small measure on these, and so tied to the relativity of English history, mediate the universal nature of the gospel of Christ "in whom there is neither Jew nor Greek"?

Without suggesting that these questions are in any sense answered in *The Towers of Trebizond*, Rose Macaulay does indirectly suggest one or two mitigating factors. The mere fact of removing the main action of the story from England to Turkey is in itself a facing to the problem, for here is Anglicanism out from under its State unbrella. The Hon. the Rev. Hugh Chantry-Pigg is, as his style and name suggest, the epitome of upper-class England and yet, significantly, he is at home in the Levant as the American tourists, and even the Turks themselves, are not. He is at home because he is aware of the human past. He visits the

ruins of Troy; he searches in Troas for the house where St. Paul preached and Eutychus fell from the window; Trebizond is not simply to him a Turkish port, it is also the last capital of the Byzantine Empire. The Turks living on these sites are indifferent to this element of cultural and historic depth so that they, rather than he, are the foreigners. As they sail along the Turkish Black Sea coast, he gets out his Xenophon.

"So we voyaged on, and Father Chantry-Pigg looked up the places on the coast in the Anabasis by Xenophon; he had spotted which was Heraclea, and next day we passed, between Zonguldak and Inebolu, the beach where Jason moored the *Argo*, and we saw the mouths of the Parthenius, the Halys, the Iris, and the Thermodon, and passed the country of the Paphlagonians, who had feasted and danced with Xenophon's soldiers, and then we came to Sinope, where Diogenes had lived, and Father Chantry-Pigg knew about it all, which made the Van Damms and the Turkish students admire him very much, and we thought it did the Church of England a great deal of good with them, though none of them knew who these people were he kept mentioning, or when they had done these things or why, for it was all a long time pre-Turkey, and even longer pre-America, and it was not Hittite; still, they saw he was a very learned man. I liked myself to think about Jason and the other Argonauts sailing along this coast, anchoring here and there, tossed about by the high waves, on the way to Colchis and the Golden Fleece".[7]

The nationalism of which the English are doubtless guilty is certainly not that type of nationalism which removes a people from the broad stream of history and blinds them to all save their own culture, and the Church of England has

in fact retained a sense of history more adequate than that of any other non-Roman Church. Many Protestants appear to imagine that Church history can be faded out around A.D. 120, or whatever may become the agreed date for the last New Testament writings, and then faded up again in A.D. 1520 for a close-up of Martin Luther. The tenacity with which Anglicanism has clung to its sense of the wholeness of the life of the Church throughout the ages reflects an insight into the nature of the Church as a living reality. Life is never discontinuous, and even if periods of Church history are dark and shameful we cannot repudiate them any more than we can repudiate the shameful episodes in our personal lives.

"Many people are troubled by the quarrels and the wars and the rivalries that raged for centuries around the Holy Sepulchre, between different sets of Christians; my mother, for instance, thought all this was a dreadful pity and disgrace, and that the whole history of the Christian Church was pretty shocking, and she liked to think that this was partly why she had left the Vicarage and my father, but really it was not this at all, but that she had grown bored and met someone else and preferred to rove about the world with him. Of course, from one point of view she was right about the Church, which grew so far, almost at once, from anything which can have been intended, and became so blood-stained and persecuting and cruel and warlike and made small and trivial things so important, and tried to exclude everything not done in a certain way and by certain people, and stamped out heresies with such cruelty and rage. And this failure of the Christian Church, of every branch of it in every country, is one of the saddest things that has happened in all the world. But it is what happens when a magnificent idea has to be worked out by human beings who do not understand much of it but in-

terpret it in their own way and think they are guided by God, whom they have not yet grasped. And yet they have grasped something, so that the Church has always had great magnificence and much courage, and people have died for it in agony, which is supposed to balance all the other people who have had to die in agony because they did not accept it, and it has flowered up in learning and culture and beauty and art, to set against its darkness and incivility and obscurantism and barbarity and nonsense, and it has produced saints and martyrs and kindness and goodness, though these have also occurred freely outside it, and it is a wonderful and most extraordinary pageant of contradictions, and I, at least, want to be inside it, though it is foolishness to most of my friends".[8]

Gibbon's condemnation of the French Revolution stands as a monumental warning that historical scholarship is no guarantee of a genuine insight into history as a dynamic process. There is a knowledge of the past which is mere archaism, a silent museum where death reigns and from which the noise of contemporary life is excluded. Left to himself one suspects that Father Chantry-Pigg's historical sense might be of this sort, open to all ages except his own. He is, fortunately, not left to himself but unequally yoked to Aunt Dot who incarnates what Paul Tillich calls "the Protestant spirit". Much as Aunt Dot might resent that title, it remains true that the dynamic element in history, and not the static, is what sweeps through her and galvanizes the whole party including Father Hugh, as it has galvanized the historic order of the twentieth century including the Asiatic peoples who have for long been resisting it. This is the spirit which refuses essentially to accept the past as the boundary over which man must not step. Beginning with the great

voyages of discovery, it now looks beyond the Earth into the vaster geography of space. Politically it has destroyed in a complicated series of revolutions all the ancient orders of human society and created the expansive economy of the modern world. Through scientific discovery and technology it has undermined human resignation and created the expectation that evils can be conquered. Morally and religiously it has induced a shift in human consciousness which enables Aunt Dot to campaign against the servitude of Moslem women. If their social order and their religion teach submission let them change them. Let them join the Church of England.

Dr. Halide, herself something of a revolutionary, says, "Dot is mad", but that is an over-simplification. This is now a world-wide madness and there is a method in it. Why should man accept boundaries until he is quite certain that they are in truth ultimate? The Atlantic curtain, the Pacific curtain, the African and Asiatic curtains, the atomic curtain, the space curtain, have all been crashed and Aunt Dot demonstrates in her little way that the Iron Curtain which inhibits everyone else is a psychological illusion which can with a little determination be dispelled.

What in the end is the significance of Troy, of Troas, or of Trebizond? Is it not that they are a part of a living whole which is still unfolding? Just as the present loses its meaning without the past, so does the past lose its meaning without the present. Conservative and revolutionary are necessary to each other. Together they make history and the true Church must be catholic and protestant. Finally Rose Macaulay's vision of the Church is one which transcends past and present and sees that neither then nor now is the

reality given to us in its fullness but that both then and now we must look beyond the historic reality to its eternal fulfilment.

"I would go to High Mass in some church or other, and the Christian Church would build itself up before me and round me, with its structure of liturgical words and music which was like fine architecture being reared up into the sky, while the priests moved to and from the altar in their glittering coloured robes and crosses, and the rows of tall candles lifted their flames like yellow tulips, and the incense flowed about us. Here was the structure, I would think, in which the kingdom was enshrined, or whose doors opened on the kingdom, and sometimes the doors would swing ajar, and there the kingdom was, clear and terrible and bright, and no Church is able for it, or can do more than grope. Churches are wonderful and beautiful, and they are vehicles for religion, but no Church can have more than a very little of the truth".[9]

Scholars have had some difficulty over the inscription on the title-page of *The Towers of Trebizond* and no one seems able to find the *Dialogues of Mortality* from which allegedly it comes. This is not surprising since the whole was composed by Rose Macaulay herself and gives expression to her ultimate vision of the Church.

" 'The sheening of that strange bright city of the hill, barred by its high gates . . .'

" 'Barred from all, Phrastus?'

" 'From all, Eroton, who do not desire to enter it more strongly than they desire all other cities.'

" 'Then it is barred indeed, and most men must let it go.'

" 'Those who have once desired it cannot let it go for its light flickers always on the roads they tread, to plague them like marsh

fires. Even though they flee from it, it may drag them towards it as a magnet drags steel, and, though they may never enter its gates, its light will burn them as with fire, for that is its nature.'

" 'Who then were the builders of this dangerous city?'

" 'Gods and men, Eroton; men seeking after gods, and gods who seek after men. Does it not appear to you that such a fabrics part artifact and part deifact, reared out of divine intimations and demands, and out of mortal longings and imaginings that climb to meet these, must perpetually haunt the minds of men, wielding over them a strange wild power, intermittent indeed, but without end? So, anyhow, it has always proved' ".[10]

If Father Chantry-Pigg stands as the bastion of catholicism within the Anglican Church and Aunt Dot as the dynamic protestant spirit which has kept Anglicanism within the main stream of modern history, Laurie confronts us with the point of conflict between that Church and the social order. Because of the sexual irregularity of her life Laurie is estranged from the Church which, nevertheless, she loves. Here is a problem raised by Joyce, by Huxley, by Greene, by Cary, against all of whom the Church has taken the offensive. Each has been accused of exerting a demoralizing influence upon the sexual habits of society, and they certainly, in their various ways, mirror the rebellion of society at large against the official attitude of the Church to sexual sins. We must ask why the Church's stand, in many ways so obviously right and reasonable, has not won to itself the allegiance of the creative minds of the age.

We have deferred discussion of this crucial question until now because, unlike the other four writers we are studying, Rose Macaulay has never been regarded as an indecent writer, because *The Towers of Trebizond* is deeply sympa-

thetic towards the Church, and because Anglicanism itself has not, historically, always adopted the rigorist position it now officially occupies. Here is Laurie's dilemma and the Church's answer.

"We were due to reach Trebizond on the afternoon of Whit Sunday. That morning Father Chantry-Pigg celebrated Mass as usual at eight o'clock in a quiet corner of the top deck, and Aunt Dot and Dr. Halide and the Americans and I attended it, and the Greek priest and several Turks looked on. The Greek priest made his communion, and, as he did not know English, he was not disturbed by the references to Whit Sunday, which of course for him had not arrived. The Van Damms rather worried Father Chantry-Pigg when they came forward too, as he did not suppose that they had ever been confirmed, but he let it pass.

"Later in the morning, when I was on deck looking through glasses for the first sight of Trebizond, he came and stood by me and said, 'How much longer are you going on like this, shutting the door against God? . . . '

" 'I don't know,' I said.

" 'It's your business to know. There is no question. You must decide at once. Do you mean to drag on for years more in deliberate sin, refusing grace, denying the Holy Spirit? . . . You may leave this world without grace, go on into the next stage in the chains you won't break now. Do you ever think of that, or have you put yourself beyond caring?'

"Not quite, never quite. I had tried, but never quite. From time to time I knew what I had lost. But nearly all the time God was a bad second, enough to hurt but not to cure, to hide from but not to seek.

"I was an agnostic through school and university, then, at twenty-three, took up with the Church again; but the Church met its Waterloo a few years later when I took up with adultery; —and this adultery lasted on and on, and I was still in it now,

steaming down the Black Sea to Trebizond, and I saw no prospect of its ending except with death—the death of one of three people, and perhaps it would be my own".[11]

At no point in the book does Rose Macaulay suggest that the Church is wrong in the principles for which it stands and yet she succeeds in elucidating something which lies at the very heart of the problem. One cannot read the book without feeling sympathy for Laurie who so deeply condemns herself and one cannot but wish that the Church which cries Amen to the condemnation could enter as fervently into sympathy with her suffering.

The main argument now seemingly advanced in the Church of England is an oddly un-Anglican one, since it is to the effect that Our Lord has spoken once for all on this matter, that His words are recorded in St. Matthew, chapter 5, verse 32, and in St. Mark, chapter 10, verses 11 and 12, and that therefore the question is closed and "hard cases make bad laws". But this argument breaks down in three separate ways. Firstly, it is inadmissible in scholarship to translate "bill of divorce" as though it were synonymous with "decree *nisi*". Secondly, it shows a complete lack of historical sensitivity to apply a word spoken in the context of Jewish social life in the first century to the changed social conditions of the mixed and complex societies of the twentieth century. Thirdly, and this is the ultimate argument, the Christian ethic springs from a living encounter between God and man. It cannot be codified and applied as a legal system to any human situation because it is the will of the living God meeting the wills of sinful men in judgement and in mercy at every moment of time. Even the ten commandments are misconstrued when they are read as a code,

out of the context of the miracle of the exodus, and the divine confrontation which is the heart of the covenant relationship. *A fortiori*, the divine-human encounter in Christ is utterly falsified when it is reduced to a set of moral rules, a neo-Pharisaism. Before the complexity of the human situation, all legal systems are inadequate and break down. It is the glory of Christianity that it possesses a living ethic to meet the living human situation. It is for the Church, under the guidance of the Spirit, to discover the will of God, to speak His judgement and mercy, for each generation. Does the Church seriously maintain that it is seeking that understanding in depth of the world in which we live to which alone the guidance of the Spirit can be given?

In *The Pattern of Love*, William P. Wylie outlines three profound changes which have taken place within the last millennium and which have created between them a revolution in sexual relationships. He suggests that the Church as a whole, and despite shining exceptions, has scarcely begun to think about them.

There is first the discovery of romantic love. This is as real and objective as any discovery of science, it is experienced by multitudes of simple people, and it separates present from past as decisively as the technological revolution. "As C. S. Lewis says, St. Thomas Aquinas does not deal with romantic love any more than he deals with the steam-engine; for the very good reason that he had never heard of either".[12] This is not to say that the modern conception of romantic love is something to be accepted uncritically, or that the flood of sentimental music, films, plays, magazines and novels is a social phenomenon which the Church should bless uncritically. It is to say that behind all this there is a

human experience which ordinary men and women know to be apocalyptic, and which its corruption or its commercial exploitation cannot destroy any more than drunken parties and commercial cashing-in can destroy the ultimate miracle of Christmas. The moral theologians of other ages were dealing with less personalized human beings and their pronouncements bear the marks of that fact. The heightening of personal consciousness, which may be the cause of the world-wide outburst of romantic love, is in itself surely a Christian fact, a sign that the leaven of the kingdom is working in the dough, leading men to a more Christian experience of sexuality. Where is this truth reflected in the official pronouncements of the Church which abound in condemnations of modern laxity?

The second major change in the situation is one which is much more recent and which has not yet, as Aunt Dot observed with indignation, spread through all societies. It is the new status of women. And here the Church has, of all institutions, been the most resistant. On what Christian ground do we maintain that there is a second-class human race which should in perpetuity be subject to the dominant one? Texts from St. Paul are singularly inappropriate since he wrote that "in Christ there is neither male nor female". The Church has on this matter her own private and particular problem over ordination—and one has heard it argued publicly that it is no use trying to ordain women because it wouldn't "take"—but are we meantime to pretend that societies in which women have a "chattel" status are morally superior to our own, or that the admittedly grave problems introduced by feminine emancipation are a sign of "demoralization"? Here again it is a heightening

of personal consciousness that has taken place, and Aunt Dot is perfectly right in assuming that this is one of the fruits of the gospel, and that if Turkey were Christian her women would be emancipated.

The third change to which Wylie draws attention is in our conception of the ends of marriage. One of the classical ends of marriage, succinctly summed up in the phrase, "it is better to marry than to burn", does not now evoke much moral enthusiasm. Procreation, the second classical end of marriage, has greatly changed its form. Modern people do not glorify procreation in the form of producing immensely large families; but in the form of a deep sense of responsibility for the welfare of their offspring they still accept this as one of the chief ends of marriage. But the real revolution at this point is to be seen in the emergence of an end in marriage which scarcely came above the horizon in other ages. Leaning on Dante, on Charles Williams and on Sherwin Bailey, Wylie suggests that in a true marriage a third personality is created which is neither the husband nor the wife but at once the discovery and the creation of them both. Romantic love like "a corn of wheat" must die, but if it die it brings forth this fruit. Here, Wylie suggests, and not in man's or woman's separateness, is the image of God reformed in a fallen world, so close does the romantic experience come to the religious. Whatever one thinks of this theological excursion the fact of the third, the mystical, personality, is for countless happily married men and women their joy and crown.

Just as a free society encounters difficulties which never arise under a dictatorship, and is even threatened with anarchy and chaos, so each of these new factors in the

sexual situation has brought its problems and contributed to the apparent anarchy and chaos of sexual behaviour in the modern world. To this situation we may react negatively, striving to reimpose the authority and the sanctions both civil and ecclesiastical which once governed society, or we may react positively, accepting romantic love, female emancipation and a more profoundly spiritual conception of the ends of marriage, with all their difficulties, and seeking in this new situation to make the gospel effective.

The writers we are studying, in company with almost every creative artist of our time, react positively. They accept the evil as part of a larger good, and this is what makes them essentially "modern" writers. How does the Church react? The Church is deeply divided on the whole issue, but we may assert that "the public image" created by the Church of England, as by the Church of Rome, is one of negation and hostility, and archiepiscopal pronouncements to the effect that adultery should be declared a crime punishable by imprisonment serve to harden this image in the public mind. Men no longer expect understanding and help from the Church in their moral difficulties and her pastoral duties are more and more being taken over by psychiatrists, doctors and marriage guidance counsellors, who may indeed be Christians but who operate in the secular and not in the ecclesiastical order. A grudging admission that times have changed is not enough. We must come to a glad recognition that, thank God!, common men and women stand in a new personal dignity and freedom, that this is the fruit of the Spirit in our time, and that we are called to give them guidance and help in Christ's name.

The crucial issue is, of course, divorce and re-marriage,

and here we should especially consider Wylie's third point about the ends of marriage. The Church has consistently taught that the marriage ceremony is not enough and that a marriage which is not physically consummated is null. There are neurotic illnesses, unsuspected beforehand, which in the event make physical consummation impossible. The Church, both mercifully and sensibly, allows that in such cases there is no marriage and frees the partners to begin again. It is an extension of the same principle into the new field to say that there are illnesses of the personality which do not prevent physical consummation but which block spiritual consummation. The mystical third person, the restored image of God, cannot be created. For the Church to insist, mercilessly and insensitively, that these partners are metaphysically bound to one another for life is to act unchristianly and to add to the moral chaos she professes to be curing.

The Church is commissioned to mediate the judgement and the mercy of God and it may seem that the word "judgement" is her justification for rigorism. But it is "the judgement of God", and it may be presumed that God knows as much about human nature as did Freud. Human personality has heights and depths to it vaguely surmised in simpler ages and only partially revealed to us now. But to that partial revelation we stand responsibly. How sinful is adultery? The question has no meaning because every act of adultery is part of a complex of human personalities and human situations unfathomable by our minds, and no two acts of adultery are the same. Patiently, the psychiatrist or the marriage guidance counsellor, or the sinners themselves, set themselves to find a way through this dark wood

while the Church stands aloof. Every case is a special case and must be so treated by the psychiatrist and the counsellor. In that respect they approximate to the judgement-seat of Christ. General condemnations and general rules may make good laws but they do nothing to mediate the mind of Christ, and the law which safeguards the standards of society while crushing the human individual cannot in the end save society in any Christian sense of that word. Who are the criminals against whom the thunders are unleashed?

"I went away and unhitched the camel and rode down across the ravine to Hagia Sophia, which stands a mile to the west, looking down at the shore from its hill. It is the nicest of the Byzantine Churches.—The frescoes were once very glorious and beautiful, and there are some good carvings. But the really beautiful thing about Hagia Sophia now is its outside, which is cruciform and clustered with tiled gables and apses, and the south façade has rounded arched windows and moulding and carving, and a long frieze running right across under the windows, with carved flowers and trees and even figures not too much mutilated to see what they are, and the Comnenus eagle spreads its wings on the keystone of the great arch. And above the frieze there runs an inscription which says:

> Ελέησον με, σῶσόν με ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν μου, ὦ ἁζίε Κύριε ἀντίλαβου μου

"It took me some time to make out the Greek inscription, which was about saving me from my sins, and I hesitated to say this prayer, as I did not really want to be saved from my sins, not for the time being, it would make things too difficult and too sad. I was getting into a stage when I was not quite sure what sin was, I was in a kind of fog, drifting about without clues, and this is liable to happen when you go on and on doing something, it makes a confused sort of twilight in which everything is blurred,

and the next thing you know you might be stealing or anything because right and wrong have become things you do not look at, you are afraid to, and it seems better to live in a blur. Then come the times when you wake suddenly up, and the fog breaks, and right and wrong loom through it, sharp and clear like peaks of rock, and you are on the wrong peak and know that, unless you can manage to leave it now, you may be marooned there for life and ever after. Then, as you don't leave it, the mist swirls round again, and hides the other peak, and you turn your back on it and try to forget it and succeed".[13]

As in the case of Henry Scobie we are confronted here with a moral consciousness not less but more sensitive than that of the priest, and in Laurie's case there is a scrupulous refusal of self-justification. Is it really impossible for the Church to pay the price and enter this world? The price is quite clear. The Church must abandon its claim to know, in advance of the evidence, what its sentence is going to be, and must be willing to hear each case and seek a Christian solution to it. If the attitude adopted towards sexual sins were extended to apply to all sins the human race would be eternally excluded from the means of grace. If the attitude adopted towards other sins were extended to apply to sexual sins this controversy would be closed.

Perhaps, to divert her attention from the mote in the eye of modern man, the Church might consider first the beam in her own. Her attitude to sex might change profoundly could she accept the fact that there is no gift of nature or of grace which may not, in the providence of God, be bestowed on women as on men. Certainly Rose Macaulay would have made a most distinguished addition to the Anglican bench of bishops.

[1] *The Listener*, November 6th 1958.
[2] *The Towers of Trebizond* (Collins, 1956), p. 9.
[3] *The Towers of Trebizond*, pp. 23–4.
[4] *Joyce Cary*, Walter Allen (Longmans, Green, 1953), p. 29.
[5] *The Towers of Trebizond*, pp. 53–4.
[6] *The Towers of Trebizond*, p. 236.
[7] *The Towers of Trebizond*, p. 70.
[8] *The Towers of Trebizond*, pp. 205–6.
[9] *The Towers of Trebizond*, p. 236 ff.
[10] *The Towers of Trebizond*, title-page.
[11] *The Towers of Trebizond*, pp. 71–4.
[12] *The Pattern of Love*, William P. Wylie (Longmans, Green, 1958), p. 25.
[13] *The Towers of Trebizond*, pp. 158–9.

LECTURE 5

JOYCE CARY – PROTESTANTISM

"PICASSO's 'Guernica' is a great Protestant painting". That surprising judgement is the opening sentence of Paul Tillich's essay on *Protestantism and Artistic Style*,[1] and it is important that we should understand it because it is in a similar sense that Joyce Cary is a great Protestant novelist. Tillich's judgement sounds surprising to us because Picasso's "Guernica" has none of the conventional marks by means of which we are accustomed to identify a picture as religious. We can identify the Calvin memorial in Geneva, with its figures of Beza and Knox, of Oliver Cromwell and William the Silent standing to right and left of the reformer, as a Protestant work of art which uses these figures to assert the causal connection between the Calvinist reformation and the free governments of the modern world, but Picasso's "Guernica" depicts the destruction of a Spanish town by Fascist aeroplanes. Is that not a secular painting, about a secular subject, and is Picasso himself not a Left-wing political idealist? In what sense is it religious, let alone Protestant?

To understand this we must first understand Tillich's use of the word "religion". "Religion is not," he says, "a special function of the human spirit!"[2] and he contrasts it with reason, with moral judgement, with aesthetic intuition which are "special functions" of man, our human attributes so to speak. Religion is not yet another attribute so

that as man is rational (and sometimes irrational) as man is moral (and sometimes immoral) as man is artistic (and sometimes inartistic) so man is religious (and sometimes irreligious). Religion is not a human attribute at all but rather a dimension of the spirit which contains all our attributes as the nebulae are contained within the depth of space. "Religion is the aspect of depth in the totality of the human spirit . . . Religion, in the largest and most basic sense of the word, is ultimate concern".[3]

Apply this to Picasso's "Guernica". Picasso may call himself a secular man painting a picture of a historic event, the bombing of Guernica in the Spanish Civil War, but, of course, that is not an adequate description of his picture or of himself. It omits the passion of his soul, the outraged pity, which caused him to paint it. As Tillich says of the painting, it is a great Protestant picture because, "The question of man in a world of guilt, anxiety, and despair is put before us with tremendous power".[4] This is Picasso's "ultimate concern" which gives religious depth to his painting.

Tillich is careful to qualify his opening judgement by classifying Picasso as "negative-Protestant", meaning that while the painter is profoundly aware of the tragic situation of man, he has no corresponding awareness of any possible resolution of the human tragedy. He appears indeed to look for a resolution at a more superficial level, through political action, which is a different form of the same basic dichotomy which we traced in Aldous Huxley. The diagnosis has religious depth but not the attempted cure.

All this may help us to understand and to classify Joyce Cary. Using Tillich's categories Cary is "positive-Protestant". That is to say that he too has a vision of man "in a

world of guilt, anxiety, and despair", but for him this negative and tragic vision is transcended and resolved in his vaster sense of man redeemed through deathless hope and eternal love. We have already noted Walter Allen's quip about Cary being "the Protestant answer to Graham Greene", but Cary is much more than that: he is the Christian answer to James Joyce, and, as Walter Allen has also pointed out, to the Existentialist writers of the Continent.[5] Accepting fully the tragedy of modern man he goes in Niebuhr's phrase "beyond tragedy", conceiving a world redeemed by love.

This may appear far-fetched to those who, having borrowed, say, *The Horse's Mouth* from the public library, have decided that Cary is simply a flippant humorist, completely secular and verging on the indecent. But such a judgement misses the element of depth, the "ultimate concern", the profound religious tide which bears all Cary's characters on its bosom; it is to make the mistake of the sister in the ambulance at the end of that book who sees that Gully is dying and is perturbed by the levity with which he approaches his end,

" 'It's dangerous for you to talk, you're very seriously ill.' 'Not so seriously as you're well. How don't you enjoy life, mother. I should laugh all round my neck at this minute if my shirt wasn't a bit on the tight side.' 'It would be better for you to pray.' 'Same thing, mother.' "[6]

To laugh is to pray. To laugh is to affirm the ultimate goodness of life. To laugh is to triumph over death and disaster.

There is, however, a difference in style between Cary and the other writers we have been studying, which calls for a

change of focus in the reader. In *A Portrait of the Artist*[7] James Joyce distinguishes three forms of writing on a basis of the relationship existing between the writer and his work. He calls the three styles lyrical, epical and dramatic. In the first, the lyrical, the artist speaks directly to us in his own person.

"I wandered lonely as a cloud".

The work of art remains associated with the personality of the artist. In the second style, the epical, the artist and his creation stand independently of one another; we are aware of both story-teller and story, and the latter, with its developing characters and situations, has achieved independence of the former. Graham Greene humorously complains of those characters in his books who won't get a move on and live and talk for themselves without his assistance. In the third style, the dramatic, the author has disappeared completely and we are aware only of his characters. As the lyric is inside the lyricist and lives with his life, so, in reverse, the dramatist is inside his drama and lives there completely without residual existence. In Joyce's words, "The (dramatic) artist, like the God of creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence . . ."[7]

The supreme example of dramatic style is Shakespeare. He only lives in his plays. The immense efforts made to recreate Shakespeare's personal existence have proved quite futile, and they are balanced by the equally great and equally futile efforts made to prove that he never existed and that the plays were written by someone else, perhaps Francis Bacon, who has an identifiable historic personality.

Shakespeare's mastery of the dramatic style is demonstrated by the paradoxical fact that the residual man, "like the God of creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible".

Each of the novelists we have so far studied belongs to Joyce's epical category. As we read, that is to say, we are aware both of the writer and of his work. The novels are elliptical in shape revolving about these two foci. James Joyce himself (although this may not have been his aim), Aldous Huxley, Graham Greene, and Rose Macaulay all have strong and individual personalities which impress themselves upon us while we are reading their books. We can say that Joyce is an atheist, that Aldous Huxley is an agnostic, that Graham Greene is a convert to Rome, that Rose Macaulay remained faithful to the Anglican Church because these personal facts emerge in their writing. By contrast, Joyce Cary is a dramatic writer. He has indeed a biography and an interesting one since he was a man of action until he began writing at the relatively late age of forty-four, but, as a writer, he sinks his personality in his art; he seldom stands apart from it to address us in his own voice. Compared with Graham Greene or Rose Macaulay he at first appears to have no creed, no message. But this is deceptive. His power and vision are flowing to us entirely through his characters, and it is through them that we must receive his personal message and not in his own voice. His creed is the spirit which breathes through all the books and all the characters, and as their creator has sunk his identity in them, so we, the readers, must surrender ourselves to them also. We must not seek for truths or for principles, but we must share in the passionate, imaginative life of Mister Johnson, of

Charlie Brown, of Sara Monday, of Mr. Wilcher, in order that we may experience, as they do, the joy, the wonder, the magnificence and the terror of a human existence.

James Joyce has described the artist as a "vital sea" and no modern writer better fits that description than Joyce Cary. His immense creative vitality is what first strikes the reader, as though we were standing on his own Devon coast on a day of bright sunshine with a high wind and racing clouds, looking upon a dazzling sea, whose waves are never still, and in whose depths a myriad living creatures, some beautiful and some monstrous, but all alert and swift and fierce, struggle and proliferate endlessly. This is an elemental existentialism. But whereas we are accustomed to an existentialism whose foundation is despair, Cary's vision of creation is of one at which "the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy"[8]. His creatures are full of hope and this hope is not a theological concept laboriously reasoned out by the intellect and artificially applied to life's wounds, it springs up spontaneously from the very centre of life itself as part of man's being.

The Horse's Mouth ends with the laughter of Gully Jimson after his great wall painting of the Creation has collapsed and killed him. Compare that with the ending of *A Fearful Joy*. That novel covers the life of Tabitha Baskett from her mid-Victorian childhood down to the inter-war years and is one of Cary's vast social canvasses tracing the revolutionary changes in English society during that period. At the end Tabitha is an old woman who has turned pious. She has forgotten her elopement with Bonser and her teenage seduction. She does not choose to remember that she was for years kept by Sturge, the aesthete, as his mistress. Both her

husbands are dead. Her son is dead. The granddaughter whom she loves has gone off to New Zealand and sends her no news. She has nothing now to look forward to but death and indeed she suffers from a serious heart disease. On a fine summer afternoon she goes out into Kensington Gardens and watches the children playing at the Round Pond.

"And some mysterious warmth rises in Tabitha to meet the warmth of the sun. It is like a sap, which diffuses through her nerves a sensitivity, so that they respond not only to the sun's warmth, but to all the life about in its complex of feeling; to the middle-aged leaves, still strong under the sentence of death; the parched grass; the flowers in the beds, watered that morning, but already running to seed and soon for the rubbish heap; the children in their absorbed animal existence, their passionate ambitions and fears, their brutal angers, only not dangerous because of their weakness; and she tries to protest, 'No, no, I'm too old, too lonely.' She is frightened by this agitation of sympathy. She turns to go home; seeking the peace of despair.

"But right in her path there stands a small square girl, a child so square that Tabitha's eyes are instantly caught by the spectacle. She is very fair, and her hair, clipped round, makes square edges upon her projecting scarlet ears. Her body is square, her arms are square, her plump hands are square, her thick, absurdly short legs are two oblongs, her freckled eyebrowless face, with its insignificant nose and two dirty tears hung mysteriously upon its square, brick-red cheeks, is completely square, and she has in the middle of it a square hole, astonishingly large and square, for a mouth. And now from this hole issues a tremendous ear-splitting yell of misery and protest against the whole world, the very universe; a yell so powerful that it causes the child itself to reel sideways, in one block.

"Tabitha is seized with laughter. She can't help laughing, an

irresistible passion of laughter shakes her whole body, and at once a tearing pain shoots through her heart. She thinks, 'Stop—stop—it's killing me—I'm dying,' and sinks breathless upon a seat.

"She is protesting with all her might against this laughter, this life which has taken hold of her, which is threatening to kill her, but still she is full of laughter. Her very agony is amused at itself. She presses her hand to her heart as if to grasp that frightful pain in her fingers and squeeze it back, crush it out of existence. She is terrified that it will kill her, and never has she wished so ardently to live. Her whole being prays to be reprieved this once . . .

"And the prayer that is torn from her is not to the father or the son or the spirit. It is the primitive cry of the living soul to the master of life, the creator, the eternal".[9]

Man is created in the image of God. This Biblical truth which in our mouths has become a cliché is seen with vivid awareness by Joyce Cary. His vision is of man as "a living soul", a centre of unresting creativity, a fountain of spiritual energy, whose problem and whose glory is that creative imagination which dominates his conscious and his unconscious being, waking and sleeping, from childhood to old age. The small child, over probably some quite trivial event which she conceives as an injustice, cries out passionately against the universe, and the old woman vibrating in sympathy with that passion feels the elemental life within herself, the life which is killing her, the life which is one with the master of life, the creator, the eternal. In a mechanistic age when others begin to wonder whether man himself is not an electronic machine, Joyce Cary would compel us to see man as free and creative. Tabitha longs for the peace of despair but no Cary character can achieve either

peace or despair. They experience sorrow, frustration, loneliness, injustice (which Cary sees to be endemic in human life), boredom, suffering, tragedy, but these engender within them, in one of Cary's favourite words, by means of which he transcends the fashionable despair of our time, desperation. Desperation is not despair. It is active, not passive. It is the soul's rebellion, its urgent defiance, as natural and powerful as the angry crying of a child, to the situation which calls for despair.

It is necessary to refer again to Tillich's conception of the word "religion", and, indeed, to one of the great insights of the Reformation which we are in danger of losing. Religion is not one aspect of life set over against others so that we can divide human experience into the sacred and the secular. The sacred and the secular completely interpenetrate each other. The reformers taught that every house should be a house of God, every table the Lord's table, and every father a priest mediating the love of God to his children. But modern Protestantism has repeated in a new form the error of the medieval church, making religion a special function carried on in a special way by special people. We have lost the sense of the universality of the image of God in man. It is, in the Genesis story, not certain men, special men, religious men who are made in God's image, but all men.

And Cary sees that this is the only explanation of man. It is the only key to the mystery of human existence, and it is a key which fits every lock. All his novels are variations on this theme, demonstrations that human life at every conceivable level is, despite its enormous outward differences and savage conflicts, a single phenomenon. In every human

being the creative imagination is ceaselessly at work and this is the common ground between the savage, and the child, and the artist, and the saint, and the politician, and the criminal, and the lunatic.

Joyce Cary spent some years as a government official in West Africa and four of his early novels reflect that experience. But they are unlike the majority of books written by Europeans with an African background. In Cary's stories the Africans themselves are not "background". They are human beings palpitating with life, dynamic personalities who are not the passive recipients of European civilization, culture and religion. Rather the white administrator or missionary is an interruption in the vital flow of life which, like the great African rivers, was there long before his coming and which does not change its course because he calls it savage or heathen. The humour of these African stories lies in their fundamental situation, the utter failure of the European to understand the imaginative life of the African, and the equal failure of the African to grasp the inwardness of European culture and religion. The European copies the African's outward life, glorying in roughing it in the bush, without, in fact, ever making contact with the deep springs of African experience, and, similarly, the African copies the outward trappings of civilization without penetrating to its heart. The mutual misunderstandings engendered, and their tragic consequences, are an exposé of a fundamental human situation of incalculable contemporary importance. No civil servant, business executive or missionary should embark for Africa without having read *Aissa Saved* and *Mister Johnson*.

Here is a description taken from *The African Witch* of

an African who has for the first time put on a suit of clothes:

"When Akande Tom had put on over a naked skin linen coat, trousers, cloth cap, and black goggles, he felt as near a white man as it was possible for him to be, and enjoyed an exaltation which might possibly be compared with that of a risen soul on his first morning in paradise. Because, for Akande Tom, the change was not only one of appearance, but of being and power. Akande's reasoning was not logical or definitive. It was part of his feelings. The whole process was one of thought-feeling carried on by every part of his nervous system, from the ends of his crinkled hair to the tips of his long, thick-jointed toes; and now, when he took his usual turn on the town road, walking by himself and for himself, he felt to the end of his toes and hair the quality not merely of a white man, but all that belongs to him—the power of his engines and guns, the magic of his telegraphs, gramophones, radios, motors, ships, and his mysterious being. By wearing white man's clothes, it seemed to Tom's bodily and natural logic, that he became one with the white *ju-ju*".[10]

Tom translated civilization into the only language he knew, the language of animism. The outer symbol was imaginatively invested with an inward and spiritual power. By means of a suit of clothes Tom acquired all the power of the white man's civilization. In a society based on magic, science is inevitably interpreted as a more powerful kind of magic, and science as the destruction of magic is incomprehensible.

Aissa Saved teaches exactly the same lesson in terms of religion. The Christian missionary is baffled by the act of translation inevitably made by his converts. He vaguely senses that these people are not yet Christian, and yet they

sing his hymns with a fervour which puts him to shame and are apparently prepared to die for their faith. He does not understand them deeply enough to know how dangerously they have mistranslated his gospel. The language of profound religion is metaphorical. No metaphor can be truly understood out of the context of the history and culture in which we find it. In another context it means something quite different. The missionary says, for example, that the Bible is the word of God. The animist thereupon hangs pages from the Bible round his neck and rushes into battle believing that no bullet can wound him, and he may indeed seem to demonstrate the truth of his interpretation if his enemy holds a similar belief, because then the enemy won't even bother to fire. How can a man who is illiterate, who cannot know what a book is, who lives in a society where books are utterly unknown, make anything else of the statement that the Bible is the word of God, and since literate British soldiers with a thousand years of Christian tradition behind them were clamouring in Italy in 1944 for Bibles for exactly the same reason (they believed they would stop bullets), what ground have we for racial superiority? Science is not magic but the destruction of magic. Christianity is not religion in the popular sense of that word, but the destruction of religion. The Old Testament describes the age-long war against religion, against idolatry, a war sometimes conducted with a savagery easier to understand in modern Africa than in modern Europe. How would you deal with Crocker the hot gospeller who unites American revivalist technique with the crocodile *ju-ju*? In New Testament times the Christians were known in the Roman world as the atheists. Missionaries accus-

tomed to the secular agnosticism of Europe are singularly ill-equipped to grapple with the seething, imaginative, religious life of less sophisticated peoples. It is not faith these peoples lack, but scepticism.

In *Mister Johnson*, European and African approach most closely. Johnson is a mission-educated African who has passed out of tribal society and into government service, and, on the European side, Rudbeck is an administrator with imaginative ideas. They exert a gravitational pull on each other, which is to say that each is a temptation to the other. Johnson tempts Rudbeck into falsifying his accounts in order to drive his new road through the bush, and love and admiration for Rudbeck in the end drive Johnson to his death. Johnson is one of the typical Cary heroes. He is a poet, a singer, an African Homer, dynamic, creative, who shapes the society around him. He does not understand the inwardness of civilization but he blindly serves the cause whose outer manifestations engage his imagination. In this book we have the first clear emergence of one of Cary's main themes, the necessity and the impossibility of justice in human affairs. The dynamic creativity of man imposes upon society the necessity for justice—order must be maintained. Yet justice and order cannot but be unjust and restrictive to the living spirit of man.

The end of *Mister Johnson* is poignant. Rudbeck dismisses Johnson for peculation. This is no ordinary sacking; it is a religious deprivation, for Rudbeck stands to Johnson in place of God. Johnson in despair kills a white man and is tried and condemned to death by Rudbeck. But all through Rudbeck, the agent of justice, is obscurely aware that he is implicated in Johnson's crime, that he also is guilty. And

there emerges here also the Cary solution, which is profoundly Christian. Justice is done. Rudbeck himself executes Johnson. Yet at the end the two men are mysteriously reconciled. Johnson is happy to be with Rudbeck again and in his happiness makes his strangely innocent and poignant prayer of thanksgiving for the goodness of his life. And Rudbeck, tempted by Johnson, again breaks the law and shoots his prisoner instead of hanging him. They thus stand finally beyond justice and beyond tragedy.

Joyce Cary's second group of novels is about children and if *Aissa Saved* should be prescribed reading for missionaries, *Charley is my Darling* should be prescribed reading for probation officers. Like the African the child lives in his tribal society which is always in contact with, yet quite separate from, the administrative and missionary society of grown-ups. The child, too, lives by his imagination, using any suitable materials from the adult world which come his way, translating them to suit his own ends, without understanding their adult significance.

Charley is a boy of imagination. Evacuated from the rich life of the London slums to the quiet of the Devon countryside, he sets about reclaiming that desert by the sheer force of his creative vitality. Artist and novelist, he needs an audience and so he is soon the centre of a gang. Urged on by his followers whose life he mysteriously enriches, his romances lead to action. They make war on other gangs, they steal cars and rove about the countryside, breaking into houses and committing senseless robberies which baffle the police. Charley is himself surprised by the crime wave which has engulfed them and when he stands before the magistrates, he cannot comprehend how it all happened.

He is not anti-social—quite the reverse. He was not badly treated—everyone was kind to him. He is not acquisitive—his burglaries have brought him nothing. He is not himself aware of the depth of his boredom in the country or of the urgency of imaginative life within him which, like a river, becomes dangerous when its stream is blocked.

The magistrates are particularly hard on Charley because he has seduced a village girl called Liz. And how can Charley explain to them his new and complicated feelings for Liz? Here again Cary confronts us with the dilemma of justice. Charley is a dangerous character who must be brought to justice. Yet Charley the juvenile delinquent has already passed away before Charley the lover of Liz stands before the magistrates. The new Charley, the grown-up Charley, is outraged to see Liz beaten by her father, and is outraged again by the magistrates' attitude to himself. They are punishing him for what Charley now sees to be the one redeeming good in his career of crime, his love for Liz.

Charley is himself surprised by his crimes. *Herself Surprised*, the autobiography of Sara Monday written in prison, is the first of a trilogy of which the other two novels are *To be a Pilgrim* and *The Horse's Mouth*. Cary has written two such trilogies which give the old-fashioned three-decker novel a new lease of life in a form peculiarly suited to his genius. The three books form a continuous story, they are all written in the first person, but in each the narrator is different. *Herself Surprised* begins the story from Sara's point of view, *To be a Pilgrim* continues it through the eyes of Mr. Wilcher, and *The Horse's Mouth* ends it with Gully Jimson speaking the last word both literally and metaphorically. In the prefatory essay to *Herself Surprised* Cary

wrote, "The object was to get a three-dimensional depth and force of character. One character was to speak in each book and describe the other two as seen by that person".[11] Thus we have three pictures of Sara "as she sees herself (in this first book) the victim of mysterious events and her own soft heart; as Wilcher sees her (in *To be a Pilgrim*), the devoted and unselfish servant and mistress; as Jimson sees her (in *The Horse's Mouth*), cunning, vain, lecherous, self-deceiving, a man-catcher, whose devotion is a cloak for her secret instinctive and everlasting design to build herself a nest somewhere in the world, even if she has to murder a man's soul to christen the foundations".[11]

This is the structure of life itself. Each of us lives a secret inward life compounded of self-knowledge and self-deception, of self-criticism and self-approbation, of self-defence and self-assertion. Each of us is at the same time in contact with others whose view of us is different from our own, but whose judgement is conditioned in every case by the inward life of the judge. While Wilcher and Jimson are judging Sara they are revealing themselves, and the relativity of human judgement itself contributes to Cary's theological conception of man. The image of God, the person, has a transcendent quality not to be comprehended any more than God Himself is comprehensible.

Sara is a woman, and whereas the divine image tends to reveal itself in specific form in Cary's men, as in Jimson who paints, or Nimmo the politician, or Preedy who preaches, Sara (and Tabitha also in *A Fearful Joy*) has no specific means of expression. She does not paint, nor argue, nor write, nor sing, nor agitate politically, nor evangelize. She lives. All her creative force is expressed in her living, and she

is as great a force as any of Cary's masculine heroes. As a young girl the completeness of her being is felt by poor Matt. Monday who seeks in marriage with her a deliverance from the unbearable frustration of his own thwarted manhood, and half a life-time later, when Monday is dead and Sara is estranged from Jimson, Mr. Wilcher from an even deeper circle in hell sees in Sara his hope of salvation. These two (and we can perhaps add Mr. Hickman to the list) are uncreative men, conscious of their spiritual failure for which material success is no compensation. They view Sara as men drifting in an open boat in mid-Atlantic view a liner coming up over the horizon towards them.

Gully Jimson is different. His material poverty is an irrelevance because of his spiritual riches. He is Sara's spiritual equal, who strives to dominate her, to subject her, as he has subjected himself, to the overriding demand of the creative demon within him. From their first meeting until their last when Gully kills Sara, they are locked together in mortal conflict, complete man against complete woman. And Sara knows Gully for what he is, she recognizes the divine fire within him, so that, even when she hates him most, she yet loves him more deeply than she can love the lesser men whose lives she saves.

These two, Sara and Gully, are Joyce Cary's greatest characters. All his creative verve has gone into them. *The Horse's Mouth*, Gully's autobiography, is a *tour de force*. We live in a world transfigured by the painter's vision.

"I was walking by the Thames. Half-past morning on an autumn day. Sun in a mist. Like an orange in a fried fish shop. All bright below. Low tide, dusty water and a crooked bar of straw, chicken-boxes, dirt and oil from mud to mud. Like a viper

swimming in skim milk. The old serpent, symbol of nature and love.

'Five windows light the caverned man; through
one he breathes the air
Through one hears music of the spheres; through
one can look
And see small portions of the eternal world.'

"Such as Thames mud turned into a bank of nine-carat gold rough from the fire. They say a chap just out of prison runs into the nearest cover; into some dark little room, like a rabbit put up by a stoat. The sky feels too big for him. But I liked it. I swam in it. I couldn't take my eyes off the clouds, the water, the mud. And I must have been hopping up and down Greenbank Hard for half an hour grinning like a gargoyle, until the wind began to get up my trousers and down my back, and to bring me to myself, as they say. Meaning my liver and lights.

"And I perceived that I hadn't time to waste on pleasure. A man of my age has to get on with the job".[12]

Gully has just come out of prison where he has been serving a sentence for uttering menaces against Mr. Hickman. Hickman is a rich man, a patron of the arts, who owns many of Gully's earlier paintings, and who is for Gully a symbol of the injustice of life, for why should he, the artist, be starving and studioless while uncreative men are millionaires (for Gully every rich man is a millionaire)? Gully is in this situation because he is the complete artist, obsessed by his passion for painting and utterly careless of material comfort, of the economic facts of life, and of what we would call elementary morality. He is living in a shed beside the river struggling with a vast canvas on which he is painting, The Fall of Man. Having no money he lives on charity

and steals paint and brushes as opportunity offers. One of his creditors, a barmaid called Coker, insists on taking him to see Mr. Hickman and Gully lands up in jail again. Coker and her mother then move into the shed and Gully comes out to find his studio gone and The Fall of Man cut up, tarred over, and used to patch holes in the shed roof. Gully then fraudulently insinuates himself into the flat of another "millionaire" who has gone abroad. There he lives well by pawning the silver and the furniture and starts to paint a great wall picture of The Raising of Lazarus. Interrupted by the return of the "millionaire", he finds a disused chapel scheduled for demolition and moves in. This is his last and greatest chance and he plans out an immense picture covering the whole of one wall on The Creation. The Council men arrive to demolish the chapel and Gully goes down with the ship, laughing to the end.

The Horse's Mouth is a hymn to the deathless spirit of man, the spirit which laughs at adversity, at poverty, at misfortune, at injustice, at death, because all these things are side-issues. It is absorbed by its own life, its own vision. Gully's Bible is *The Poems and Prophecies of William Blake* from which he continually quotes and, like that erratic man of genius, Gully is tormented by ultimate things, by The Fall of Man, by The Raising of Lazarus, and by The Creation of the World. This is an outwardly secular book which is through and through religious. In it secular and sacred have lost their meaning because each completely interpenetrates the other.

The middle book in this trilogy, *To be a Pilgrim*, is interesting in a different way. Mr. Wilcher is not a creative spirit. He is *bourgeois* man, the pettifogging lawyer, the conserver of the family estate, the money-maker, the moralist,

the churchwarden, the backbone of the country, who holds the nation together and preserves society against the anarchy of characters like Gully. With it all, Mr. Wilcher is utterly frustrated and envious of the free spirits around him. And this frustration takes the form, most unfortunate for a man in his position, of an over-mastering compulsion to expose himself before girls in the park. Cary shows here deep and compassionate insight into the moral aberrations of the elderly. Tom Wilcher has all his life been envious of his brilliant elder brother Edward, the successful politician and man of letters; in a lesser degree he has been envious also of his brother Bill, the soldier, and of his successful marriage, but supremely he suffers because of his sister, Lucy. Lucy is the family disgrace. She has eloped with the leader of an extreme evangelical sect, the Benjamites, and she roves the country with him in acute discomfort and insecurity. Yet Tom Wilcher knows in his heart that Lucy's choice is right and that his own safe existence is a denial of his soul. The theme-song of the Benjamites is Bunyan's great hymn and Wilcher knows that here we have no abiding city and that man is created "to be a pilgrim". His life has been a denial of the heavenly vision.

This opens up the final Cary theme, his deep understanding of the spiritual heart of Nonconformity, of its place in English life, and of its existential validity for the religious life of man. Tom Wilcher as an undergraduate accidentally hears Brown, the leader of the Benjamites, preaching at an open-air meeting.

"He was preaching on Tolbrook Green, from the tail of one of our own waggons, which apparently he had commandeered from our horseman, by right of a prophet.

"His short, squat figure stood black against the crimson sign of the 'Wilcher Arms', hanging behind him. Its gilt lettering, sparkling in the sun, made a kind of glory round his head and shoulders; the shoulders of a giant, or a dwarf; and the face of a prize fighter, pug nose, jutting brows, thick swollen lips, roaring over all the noise of bullocks and sheep.

'No foes shall stay his might,
Though he with giants fight;
He will make good his right
To be a pilgrim.'

"At these words I felt my heart turn over, and I drove away as fast as I could. I had meant to claim the waggon. But I was afraid of Brown; I thought he could convert me, and I was enjoying life then, as never before, in my first year at Oxford. Why was I afraid of Brown? I was a clever young man who was reading Kant. Brown had no arguments that did not fill me with contempt. But when he sang those verses from Bunyan, his favourite hymn and the battle-cry of his ridiculous little sect, then something swelled in my heart as if it would choke me, unless I, too, opened my own mouth and sang. I might have been a bell tuned to that note, and perhaps I was. For the Wilchers are as deep English as Bunyan himself. A Protestant people with the revolution in their bones. Who said that?—Cromwell, Wycliffe, and Stiggins. Our grandfather was a Plymouth brother; he was converted by one of the Wallops, and there are Quakers, Shakers, fifth monarchy men, even Anabaptists, on the maternal side. I did not know it then because I knew nothing and nobody real, only knowledge about things.—At that time my own English spirit, like Lucy's, was a mystery to me. I fled from Brown because I felt that if I did not run, he would get me".[13]

Cary sees that justice is necessary but impossible in human societies. Necessary because of the chaos and anarchy

created by the free spirit of men; impossible because the law, the institution, cannot really grasp the spiritual reality. He sees further that this is an ecclesiastical as well as a sociological problem. The Church, like the law, is both necessary and impossible. The life of the spirit must be expressed in some kind of institution if it is to be effective in the world, yet any conceivable institution becomes a prison from which the spirit urgently demands to escape. Rose Macaulay distinguishes between the Kingdom which is eternal and the Church which tries, and fails, to embody it on earth. From quite a different stand-point, the stand-point of the spontaneous action of the spirit ("the wind bloweth where it listeth—so is everyone that is born of the spirit") Cary also sees the inadequacy of the ecclesiastical institution. Two theologians, Ronald Knox and Emile Brunner have, from opposite sides, wrestled with this intractable dilemma. Opting for the ordered strength of the Roman Church, Knox sees the spiritual enthusiasts as heretics, yet only a superficial reading of *Enthusiasm* could suggest that for Knox himself this is a satisfactory solution. The manifestation of the spirit beyond the walls of Rome is on too great a scale, too various, too profound, to be dismissed so easily. Conversely, Brunner, in *The Misunderstanding of the Church*, condemns not simply the Roman but all the Churches as being men-made institutions choking the spiritual spontaneity characteristic of the New Testament *ecclesia*. But Brunner suggests no solution for the anarchy of sectarian enthusiasm.

This theme Joyce Cary wrestled with until the end of his life, and particularly in two novels, *Except the Lord*, and the posthumously published *The Captive and the Free*. *Except the Lord* is the first volume of his second trilogy, its com-

panions being *Prisoner of Grace* and *Not Honour More*. The central figure in these books, corresponding to Gully Jimson in the first trilogy, is Chester Nimmo, son of a farm labourer, who becomes a Liberal Cabinet Minister and they are a study of the mind of the politician as the first trilogy is a study of the mind of the artist. *Except the Lord* covers Chester Nimmo's childhood spent in poverty on a farm on the Devon moors, and in particular it describes the religious enthusiasm of the small group of people to whom his father acted as lay pastor. They were second adventists engaged in the study of biblical prophecy with the aim of determining exactly the date of the second coming. One of the most moving passages in contemporary literature describes them going out at dawn on the appointed date to meet their Lord.

"All the various lanterns now began to ascend the hill from their different quarters, and when at last, after a long and most wearisome climb, we stood at the top, we saw that other lanterns were approaching from the far side. And I remember that this silent gathering of the lanterns, roused in my mind, still heavy with sleep and resentful of early waking, some idea of the importance of the occasion.

"We had been used for years to hearing the end of the world discussed and calculated. My father and the Major, with their papers and pencils, brought to the calculations the same matter of fact attention that I associated with the sale of crops and the stable accounts with their long tale of straw, oats, hay and liniment.

"And even now, so strong was custom, so easily does familiar wont dull even the quick imagination of a child, this march of lights, as of a new army of Gideon, converging to the assault, brought me only heightened excitement and curiosity, fed by the

gradual arrival of climbers at the summit, and the paling dark, which allowed us to recognize, in this new setting, such well-known figures as the Tarbiton minister and his family, Mr. Simons, head keeper at Slapton, two neighbouring families of poor labourers, with eleven children between them, one a baby in arms, and a gentleman from Dollyford, whom we knew as the Professor.

"There were in the end between forty and fifty persons gathered on the little plateau of rock at the summit of the Tor, and a large proportion of these was dressed in white. Some of those poor neighbours I spoke of, the Doans, perhaps the poorest of our village, a family always half-starved, had yet contrived white clothes for the smallest of the children. Even as a boy of eleven I was impressed by the grave and anxious looks on the faces of the poor father and mother as they stood there waiting in confidence to be translated into paradise from a world which had treated them so cruelly. Those who deride our folly and credulity might ask why that poor mother among her hunger-wasted children should not believe that if Christ truly loved the poor and outcasts He would come again to rescue them from misery.

"The marvel is that millions deny all hope and boast themselves wise. Men who for some reason of fear or vanity take care to ask no questions that cannot be answered with a slide rule, who learn nothing, state nothing, but numbers, who, carefully withdrawing their dignity from the arena where men struggle and suffer so foolishly, take their padded seats in the stalls and raise critical eyebrows at the circus which is the agony of the world.

"Dawn broke at last, the dawn so tremendous in significance for such as the Doans. And as the first pale light made perceptible the wild broken horizon of the mountains about us, and the lanterns began to burn dim, I too felt for the first time with

terrifying suddenness the meaning of the phrase, 'an awful expectation'.

"I stood, as it were, abashed to an infinite smallness and humbleness—a small, ignorant boy waiting upon the doorstep of an imperial palace might know something of my feelings—but my palace was eternity, my emperor was unimaginable in power, and his threshold was the everlasting hills.

"Now, as the light strengthened and the mists fell back, drawing down their heads among the combes like spirits of the night descending sullenly into their narrow graves, I was aware of our isolation in space, a physical exaltation above the daily utilitarian levels of plough and pasture. I felt the distinction of our cause and my own lot—the glory of those who are bound in a private cause, especially one despised of the multitude.

"The little poor boy trembling upon the doorstep of the imperial palace knew also the pride of one invited—and the measure of his humbleness was the same with the stature of his honour.

"The minister now advanced and called us together for prayer and psalm. We prayed to be forgiven our sins—believe me, at such a moment one utters such a request with fervour, never does one have so vivid a sense of daily, hourly evil-doing in word and act, in doing and not-doing.

"As colour crept up into the light, we rose and sang Wesley's hymn:

'Lo, He comes with clouds descending,
Once for favour'd sinners slain.
Thousand thousand saints attending
Swell the triumph of His train:
Alleluia.
Christ appears on earth again.'

The last white head of mist had now disappeared—we stood on the topmost island of a scattered archipelago. The morning was

all round us, clear and cold. Only a few very high clouds, small and thin, like the frosty breathing of some genius of the moors, floated through the immense sky opening now before us at speed, as if enormous energies, released below, were gathering power to split the universe apart.

"And suddenly, I do not know for what reason, but possibly by some chance ordering of the small clouds huddling upon the horizon, a great sword of fiery light pierced through the hollow air.

"The effect upon our congregation was incredible. I can still remember that sensation of mingled terror and elation which seemed, as they say, to turn my bones to water, or rather to abolish altogether the sensation of flesh. I was a mere quivering sensation while I stood there faltering the words of the hymn without the least consciousness of what I was saying. Several of our party fell on their knees, and one woman gave a loud sob. As that great sword flashed still higher to the very dome of the sky, our hymn ceased of itself and the minister shouted, 'On our knees.' But we were already on our knees—our legs had failed beneath us.

"The minister had started again to pray, but even I, as I knelt there, knew that what stood before us was not the end of the world but a fine sunrise not uncommon at that season on the high moor. Within a few minutes the sun itself appeared upon the edge of the moor like a row of sparks on a half-quenched brand. The sword-like rays faded from the air and the clouds turned from ruby, amethyst and opal to pale gold".[14]

This shattering disappointment is too great for the Nimmo children and Chester gives up his religion and plunges into political life. But, writing as an old man, he comes again to see that the fact that his father could not calculate the date of the second advent was a superficial circumstance, almost

an irrelevance, compared with the sense of the living Christ which sustained him throughout his life.

"Trace now the record of another, a modest and unconsidered force, an influence little more noticed by the learned and the propagandists, the word-wielders, than the play of the English weather—the daily, weekly, ministrations of fifty thousand servants of the Lord. I speak not here of the mighty Wesley but of those humble and poor men who gave their lives to oblivion. Yea, and among them not only the so-called dissenting pastors, but many a vicar and curate of the English church, as poor and as ungratefully forgotten; above all, that great anonymous crowd of witnesses, teachers of children, speakers in the way, lay preachers and readers, men like my father, who went among their neighbours speaking mercy, truth, kindness towards all men." [15]

In our conflicts over Church order the two words used most authoritatively are "Apostolic" and "Biblical". Compared with these the word "Pentecostal" comes a bad third. But if it be true that the Apostolic community preceded the New Testament, and indeed created it, it is also true that the Pentecostal experience preceded the Apostolic community, and indeed created it. To stress the book in isolation from the community is to distort the very truth given us in the New Testament, and to stress the community in isolation from the experience of the spirit is to divorce the Church from its *raison d'être*. Each of these elements, biblical, traditional, and inspirational becomes distorted apart from the other two and these distortions are manifest in the three main expressions of Christianity to be found in the world today and which, using the words generically, we might call Catholic, Reformed and Anabaptist.

In particular the established Churches reposing upon

tradition or upon the Bible (or both) have not seriously sought to come to terms with the pentecostalists, who, living in isolation have necessarily been open to wild ideas and have often appeared more than slightly mad. The establishment in religion changes little from age to age and it is easier to "build the tombs of the prophets", to honour Bunyan and Wesley two centuries late, than to make any attempt to solve the ecclesiological problem which they pose, namely, how, within an ordered system, can room be left for the living spirit of the living God. The problem is not solved by ignoring it and, as Ronald Knox has demonstrated, it is as old as Christianity itself. The Church in all her forms should consider his words, "How nearly we thought we could do without St. Francis, without St. Ignatius! Men will not live without vision; that moral we do well to carry away with us from contemplating, in so many strange forms, the records of the visionaries."[16]

"Men will not live without vision". That might be the text of Joyce Cary's posthumous novel, *The Captive and the Free*. He died before he could complete it but even in its incomplete state the theme is clear enough. The vicar and the curate in a London suburban parish are confronted by a movement calling itself "The Pant's Road Mission of Faith and Regeneration" whose missioner, Preedy, practises faith healing. The vicar counsels caution, pointing out sagely that such movements always die a natural death when left alone. The curate, Syson, cannot leave mission or missioner alone, however. He feels Preedy as a challenge which he must take up and he forces Preedy, by calling him a hypocrite, to sue him for libel. He calculates that in the witness-box Preedy will be exposed. In the event it is Syson

who breaks down under cross-examination. His attitude to New Testament miracles, to the Creed, to the Articles he has signed, will not bear examination, and he goes out from the court a man whose faith is shattered. Gradually he discovers that his antagonism to the mission is the outer sign of his deeper awareness that the faith of which Preedy speaks is the only true faith. In prison he, too, is led to a living faith in a living God.

"I was suddenly moved to understand the thing that had stood before my eyes all my life, as wide as the world, as high as the sky, the thing I had repeated a thousand times in prayers and in sermons, without understanding, the miracle of God's love in the world".[17]

These words of Syson are as near to a credal statement as Joyce Cary ever comes and it is in their light that we must examine the final question arising from his work. In all the multitude of characters who crowd his pages one traditional character is missing—the villain. These novels are full of crime and of violence and yet, even when they write from prison, Syson and Sara are not, in the conventional use of the word, criminals; they are certainly not villains. A comparison between Charley Brown, gang-leader and juvenile delinquent in *Charley is my Darling*, and Pinkie Brown, Graham Greene's child of hell in *Brighton Rock*, strikingly illustrates this. And that comparison forces us to ask, is Joyce Cary really without moral earnestness, is he a kind of neo-Pelagian, picturing human nature as essentially good but trapped by circumstances into seeming evil?

This is the ultimate misunderstanding not simply of Cary but of the gospel itself. What we have in these books is

indeed a gospel vision of humanity. All the characters are seen through a charity, a compassion, which is vaster than their sin. It is a Christ's-eye view we are sharing of Aissa and Akande Tom and Mr. Johnson, of Rudbeck and Charley Brown, of Sara, Gully, Wilcher, Chester Nimmo, Jim Latter, of the whole race of types and characters who crowd these pages. If hope springs eternal from their human breasts, love and compassion flow to comprehend and redeem them from the breast of their human creator and his compassion makes him not simply the great Protestant, but the great Christian novelist of our time. Beginning with Genesis, seeing man made in the image of God, Joyce Cary ends with St. Paul, "And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love".

[1] *Theology and Culture*, Paul Tillich (Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 68.
[2] *Theology and Culture*, p. 6.
[3] *Theology and Culture*, pp. 7 and 8.
[4] *Theology and Culture*, p. 69.
[5] *Joyce Cary*, Walter Allen (Longmans, 1953), p. 29.
[6] *The Horse's Mouth*, Joyce Cary (Michael Joseph, Carfax Edition, 1951), p. 297.
[7] *A Portrait of the Artist*, James Joyce, p. 244.
[8] *Job*, Chapter 38, verse 7.
[9] *A Fearful Joy*, Joyce Cary (Michael Joseph, Carfax Edition, 1952), p. 388.
[10] *The African Witch*, Joyce Cary (Michael Joseph, Carfax Edition, 1951), p. 149.
[11] *Herself Surprised*, Joyce Cary (Michael Joseph, Carfax Edition, 1953), pp. 7 and 8.
[12] *The Horse's Mouth*, p. 11.
[13] *To Be a Pilgrim*, Joyce Cary (Michael Joseph, Carfax Edition, 1951), pp. 20–21.
[14] *Except the Lord*, Joyce Cary (Michael Joseph, 1953), pp. 115–120.
[15] *Except the Lord*, pp. 274–5.
[16] *Enthusiasm*, Ronald Knox (Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 591.
[17] *The Captive and the Free*, Joyce Cary (Michael Joseph, April 1959), p. 284.