

**THE LAST MODERNIST?
THE SPIRITUAL VISION OF
MAUDE DOMINICA PETRE**

A Dissertation

Submitted to

**The College of Arts and Science
UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON**

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

The Degree

Doctor of Philosophy in Theology

by

Joseph Harry Jacobs

UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

Dayton, Ohio

December, 2003

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ABSTRACT

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In 1907 the Roman Catholic Church condemned Modernism as “the synthesis of all heresies.” This dissertation focuses on one of the principal characters in the Modernist controversy - Maude D. Petre. Most scholars have investigated Petre in terms of her relationship to the other principal characters of Modernism, George Tyrrell, Alfred Loisy, and Friedrich von Hügel. As a result she has been characterized as the historian/biographer of Modernism. While this description is true, I maintain that Petre can only be understood in terms of the total scope of her writing. In addition to her works on Modernism, she produced books and essays on asceticism, history, literary criticism, and social thought, including her comments on war, democracy, totalitarianism, and international relations. Furthermore, she spent a significant portion of her later life involved with the intellectual community at Pontigny, in France, which attracted some of the greatest intellectuals of Europe.

I believe that this dissertation provides sufficient evidence to consider Petre as one of, if not the first, significant English, Catholic, female, public intellectuals of the twentieth century.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

9LP	<u>The Ninth Lord Petre</u>
ADAR	"Advantages and Disadvantages of Authority in Religion"
Add. MS.	Additional Manuscript {British Library designation}
AL	<u>Alfred Loisy: his Religious Significance</u>
AS	<u>Aethiopum Servus</u>
BL	British Library
C & I	<u>Catholicism and Independence: Being Studies in Spiritual Liberty</u>
CF	<u>The Church and the Future</u>
DAC	<u>Democracy at the Crossroads</u>
DHM	Daughters of the Heart of Mary [<i>Filles de Marie</i>]
FvH	Friedrich von Hügel
GT	George Tyrrell
MDP	Maude Dominica Petre
MFF	<u>Modernism: Its Failure and Fruits</u>
MWF	<u>My Way of Faith</u>
PDDP1	<u>Paul Desjardins et les Décades de Pontigny</u> [François Chaubet]
PP	Petre Papers
SA	" <i>Sacrorum Antistitum</i> "
SPH	"Shades of the Prison House"
"V"	<i>vescovano</i> [bishop]
vHT	<u>Von Hügel and Tyrrell: The Story of a Friendship</u>

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

In the last decade of the 19th century and first decade of the 20th, a group of Catholic scholars in England, France, and Italy began to apply the methods of historical criticism to Scriptural exegesis in an attempt to develop a new apologetic and to bring Scripture scholarship up to date with the scientific discoveries of the time. Their intent was to claim that the modern mind is entitled to judge what is true or right in accordance with its own experience, regardless of whether or not its conclusions run counter to tradition or custom.¹ Some of this group later became known as Modernists, and they and their ideas were condemned by Pope Pius X in his encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*.² As a working definition for my purposes in this research, I will define a Modernist as someone whose work was perceived by the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church as falling within the scope of the papal encyclical *Pascendi* and the Congregation of the Holy Office condemnation *Lamentabile Sane Exitu*.³

The most prominent figures in the Modernist tableau were the French

¹ Bernard M.G. Reardon, Roman Catholic Modernism (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1970), 9.

² Pope Pius X. Pascendi Dominici Gregis, September 8, 1907. As quoted in R. Joseph Hoffman, ed, The Gospel and the Church (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1988), 217-268.

³ Congregation of the Holy Office, Lamentabile Sane Exitu. July 3, 1907. As quoted in Reardon. Roman Catholic Modernism, 242ff.

priests, Alfred F. Loisy and Henri Bremond, S.J., the English Jesuit George Tyrrell, and the Austro-Scottish theologian Baron Friedrich von Hügel. Other theologians and philosophers were involved to a greater or lesser degree, such as Maurice Blondel and Lucien Laberthonnière, in France, Ernesto Buonaiuti in Italy, and Joseph McSorley in the United States. However, most of the controversy, in both the religious hierarchy and the secular press, revolved around the primary characters mentioned above.

In addition, there was another person who became deeply involved in the Modernism controversy, Maude Dominica Petre.⁴ She was a member of the minor British aristocracy, granddaughter of the Thirteenth Lord Petre, and of the Earl of Wicklow. In her early adult life, she was a member of the *Filles de Marie*, a non-cloistered religious order that allowed its members to live a secular life.⁵ This order will be discussed further in Chapter II.

In the overall picture of the controversy over Modernism, Petre has been primarily characterized by most researchers, such as Ellen Leonard and Clyde Crews, as the biographer/confidant/correspondent of Loisy, Bremond, Tyrrell, and von Hügel, and as the historian/biographer of the controversy. Those who have written specifically about her, Leonard and Crews, have focused more on her involvement with the Modernist movement and principal characters, rather

⁴ Maude Petre often referred to herself as Petre or M.D. Petre in her writings, possibly in order to disguise the fact that she was a woman,

⁵ The order was founded in France in the 18th century, and is known in English speaking countries as the Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary (DHM). I will refer to the order hereafter as the DHM.

than her intellectual achievements outside Modernism.⁶ However, in the course of my research, I determined that she had her own interests and foci outside the scope of Modernism.

Because of her association with the Modernists, she came to the attention of the Curia, and was put under pressure by the members of the hierarchy to sign the anti-Modernist oath. Her refusal to do so gained her a certain amount of notoriety, in both the religious and secular press,⁷ and the whole controversy linked her primarily with Modernism.

Although never formally excommunicated, as were Tyrrell⁸ and Loisy, she was forbidden by the bishop of Southwark, Peter Amigo, to receive the sacraments in his diocese.⁹ The notoriety and association with Modernism placed the primary emphasis on Petre as a quasi-associate member of the Modernist group, in a supporting role to the principals. The effect being that her other writings, outside of the world of Modernism, have been relatively ignored.¹⁰ As a result her status as a Catholic, Victorian, female, intellectual has been subordinated to her relationship to Modernism.

⁶ Ellen Leonard, Unresting Transformation: The Theology and Spirituality of Maude Petre (New York: University Press of America, 1991). Hereafter Transformation. Clyde F. Crews, English Catholic Modernism (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984). Hereafter Modernism.

⁷ She explains her position in letters to the editors of the London Times (November 2, 1910), and the London Tablet (November 12, 1910).

⁸ Tyrrell was not excommunicated in the same sense as Loisy. He was deprived of the sacraments, with the case reserved to the Holy See. Amigo made a point of notifying the press that Tyrrell was not excommunicated. The distinction seems somewhat moot. M.D. Petre, Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell, 2 vols. (London: Edward Arnold, 1912), Vol. II, 341ff. Hereafter Life I and Life II.

⁹ She was a daily communicant in the neighboring diocese of Kensington.

¹⁰ Clyde Crews makes two comments to this effect. He states that Petre is listed near the top echelon of British Modernists, but that she is not studied in her own right, and that many of the standard references on Modernism (Houtin, Lilley, Reardon, Rivière) only refer to her role as friend and biographer of Tyrrell. Crews, Modernism, 109, n.1, 2.

However, in her lifetime she wrote numerous essays, articles, letters, and a significant number of religious studies of her own, many of which fall outside the scope of the areas generally associated with Modernism. The scope of her writings is extremely diverse. Her first essay, in 1885, was on the life and writings of Victor Hugo; her next work, also in 1885, was an essay commenting on Thomas Carlyle writing on religious ceremonies.¹¹ Her first book, in 1896, was a study of the life of Peter Claver; in 1906 she published a 6 part study criticizing the anti-Christian philosophy of Friederich Nietzsche, and laying out her own ideas on eschatology.¹² In 1923, she translated and wrote an *Introduction* to a book on Italian Fascism, with a preface by Benito Mussolini; in 1942, she wrote an essay on the Anglo-Russian alliance.¹³ Her other religious writings outside of the realm of Modernism covered asceticism, mysticism, religious authority, the priesthood, Christology, ecclesiology, and a variety of other intellectual topics that touched her eclectic interests. However, other than a few biographical works, she is relatively unknown outside of her association with Modernism.

On December 16, 1942, Petre died, at the age of 79, and was buried in an Anglican cemetery in Storrington next to George Tyrrell. She had seen the beginning and the end of the Age of Victorian England, and was the last survivor

¹¹ M. D. Petre, "Victor Hugo," *Month* 54, July 1885, 318-30. M. D. Petre, "Carlyle on Religious Ceremonies," *Month* 55, November 1885, 314-21.

¹² M. D. Petre, *Aethiopum Servus: A Study in Christian Altruism* (London: Osgood, McIlvane, 1896). Hereafter *AS*. M. D. Petre, "Studies on Friedrich Nietzsche." *Catholic World*. A six part series running from December 1905 through June 1906. Crews states that her ideas on eschatology were in an area seldom covered by the other Modernists. Crews, *Modernism*, 35.

of the controversy over Roman Catholic Modernism - a controversy which, for a while, turned the Catholic Church into an organization with some of the characteristics of Communist Russia under Stalin, with networks of informers, secret committees, and attempts at mind control. She died unrepentant, because she saw nothing for which she had to repent. She refused to take the oath rejecting Modernism because she could never gain the assurance from the Church authorities that it did not require her to abandon her fundamental beliefs in the Apostle's Creed and the basic tenets of Catholicism. Who was this woman, and what was her role in the whole controversy?

The Nature of Modernism

Before going further, it is necessary to define what we are discussing, namely, the nature of Modernism. Defining Modernism is not a simple task. The term is an essentially contested concept, and means different things to different people. It was certainly not the "synthesis of all heresies" as set forth in *Pascendi*. It was certainly not the unified and organized subversive movement intended to overthrow the Church as depicted in the Vatican condemnations. The sixty-five anathemas laid out in *Lamentabili* were in many cases taken out of context when compared to the original writings of the Modernists.¹⁴ In reality,

¹³ Pietro Gorgolini, *The Fascist Movement in Italian Life*, Trans. Maude D. Petre (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1923), 9-20. Maude D.M. Petre, "What Russia Can Teach Us", *Hibbert Journal* 40 (January 1942): 113-24.

¹⁴ Gerald P. Fogarty, S.J., *American Catholic Biblical Scholarship* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1989), 164.

Modernism was more of a liberal and anti-scholastic attitude on the part of a variety of individuals.¹⁵

For purposes of this investigation, perhaps the best way to approach a definition is to use Petre's own descriptions of what she considered as Modernism. Obviously, she found no reason to define the term prior to the condemnations of 1907, since that was the first time it was applied. Nothing in her articles, letters, or journals during the period between *Pascendi* and 1914 can be taken as a firm definition. The first place that she provided a discussion of Modernism is in "The Advantages and Disadvantages of Authority in Religion," written in early 1914.¹⁶ Even here she was reluctant to define Modernism as anything more than a movement made up of a number of disparate entities. "The 'modernism' that includes all those aimed at in the *Pascendi* has no collective *Credo* and no collective *Programme*."¹⁷ In 1918, when she wrote Modernism: Its Failure and its Fruits, she became more specific, when she said that "the modernist becomes one who believes not only in the possibility of a synthesis between modernity and religions, but also in the possibility of a synthesis between modern religion and the Church."¹⁸ It is not until 1926, in her eulogy for von Hügel, that she set down a comprehensive definition:

Catholic Modernism was an effort to combine the latest claims of science and history and democracy with the spiritual teaching of the Church, and to obtain right of citizenship for the scholar, whose sole aim

¹⁵ Joseph A. Komonchak, Ed., The New Dictionary of Theology (Collegeville, MD: The Liturgical Press), 2000.

¹⁶ M.D. Petre, "The Advantages and Disadvantages of Authority in Religion," Hibbert Journal 12, January 1914, 295 - 305. Hereafter "ADAR."

¹⁷ Petre, "ADAR," 296.

¹⁸ M.D. Petre, Modernism: Its Failure and its Fruits (London: T.C. & E.C. Jack. Ltd., 1918), 2. Hereafter MFF.

quâ scholar was scientific or historic truth, in the Church to which he submitted his religious life and conduct.¹⁹

She followed again in 1937, with a slightly different version:

Modernism, in the Roman Catholic Church, was a movement, at the end of the last and beginning of the present century, among certain members thereof, in favor of a fuller recognition, on the part of the Church, of the social, historical, and scientific demands of the modern mind.²⁰

The common factors are those of repression of knowledge and refusal to accept modern advances in various intellectual fields.

Later, in Von Hügel and Tyrrell she distinguished between Modernism as a movement and a Modernist as an individual: "... there was no such thing as a Modernist. Modernism - yes; Modernist - no! Modernism was a movement, and a movement is not a sect."²¹

The word Modernism itself may, or may not, be regarded as an apt term for the description of the movement in question, but the term Modernist was from the very first, misleading and inaccurate. And this for the simple reason that it has a sectarian flavour, while sectarianism is the very opposite of movement.²²

Statement of the Problem

Most scholars generally view Petre in the context of her relationship to Modernism rather than as an intellectual in her own right. However, looking at the quantity and variety of her literary work, I believe that she is a much broader and more interesting character than as portrayed, and that her intellectual and

¹⁹ M.D. Petre, "Friedrich von Hügel. Personal Thoughts and Reminiscences," Hibbert Journal 24, October 1925 - July 1926, 83-4. Hereafter "FvH."

²⁰ M.D. Petre, Von Hügel and Tyrrell (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1937), 1-2. As time has passed, her definitions took on more specificity.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

²² *Ibid.*, 2.

scholarly achievements far exceeded the bounds of this single controversy.

What I have done is to analyze her work in terms of its intellectual content across a variety of disciplines. I will show that, in addition to her work as an historian of Modernism, she was a significant intellectual in her own right - possibly the first English Catholic woman intellectual of the 20th century.

My thesis is that the intellectual work of Petre was minimized both during her life and since her death, because she has been seen only in relationship to her involvement with Modernism, and that because of her support role for Tyrrell, as well as her correspondence with the other Modernists, attention has been diverted from her other work. The fact that the Curia and the British Catholic hierarchy saw her as a "Modernist" also focused attention only on that aspect of her writings.

My argument is that she should be considered as a significant intellectual in her own right, even outside the sphere of Modernism. Petre was seen by Church authorities and by the press, both secular and religious, as a Modernist. Her works such as Catholicism and Independence were seen as liberal and anti-authority in religious circles, while her defense of Tyrrell in the press put her firmly in the Modernist camp in the eyes of the media. However, I believe that analysis from a different perspective, i.e. the total scope of her writing, moves her away from the restrictions of Modernism and into her own world of achievement.

The overall scholarly perception of Petre's role can be summed up by a paragraph in the International Catholic University treatment of Modernism:

Maude Petre was an English woman who for a time belonged to a rather obscure religious order. She contributed nothing of substance to

Modernist ideas, but she was a close friend of Tyrrell and, like von Hügel, served as a point of contact for the various members of the movement.²³

Petre did, in fact, write the Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell, and a biography of Loisy.²⁴ She also maintained an extensive correspondence with other well-known Modernists.²⁵ However, she wrote extensively on her own, both before meeting Tyrrell, and after the demise of the Modernist controversy. Although most of her work was published in England, she had both articles and books published in the United States, even as early as 1896.²⁶ However, after the condemnation of Modernism, she did not publish again in the U.S. until 1937.²⁷

Another factor that contributes to understanding Petre and her work is recognizing her status as an aristocratic woman in Victorian England. The society of the time, not only in the Victorian era, but probably as late as World War I, culturally rejected the idea that women could produce any worthwhile intellectual work.²⁸ Society of the period would have accepted Petre in a supporting role - women of her class could provide support for religious and academic causes with no social stigma. They could write novels and poetry, e.g. Mary Shelley or Elizabeth Barrett Browning, but certainly not commentaries on religion or theology. Her Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell, and the

²³ America on Line. <http://icu.catholicity.com/c03408.htm>. Queried 22 August 2003.

²⁴ Petre, Life. M. D. Petre, Alfred Loisy: His Religious Significance. With an Introduction "Maude Petre", by James A. Walker (Cambridge: University Press, 1944).

²⁵ Her correspondence was voluminous. She was in regular contact with Tyrrell, Loisy, von Hügel, and Brémond, as well as with Italians such as Fogazzaro and Buonaiuti and possibly with Joseph McSorley in the United States.

²⁶ Review, "Life of Peter Claver and Work with Slaves," Catholic World 62, March 1896, 846.

²⁷ She had published as late as 1907 in the both the Catholic World and the New York Review.

²⁸ Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own (London: Penguin Books, 1928), comments on the contrast between male and female authors during this period.

biography of Loisy would also have been acceptable, although borderline, as suitable for a woman, since on the surface these were perceived as requiring no significant scholarship.

In such a world, at the turn of the century, for a woman to write for publication was considered to be eccentric, at best, and for one to write serious scholarly works was passed off as inappropriate and therefore not worth serious consideration. Given this social context, it would be expected that Petre would have written with a style and content consistent with her education and upbringing; she might have written articles decrying mistreatment of the poor, or advocating support for widows, or advocating some form of social reform that was accepted as "safe" for a woman of her class and time. She would not have been expected to write scholarly works on such topics as asceticism or spirituality. Petre defied this stereotype and produced significant, meaningful work of her own choosing.

However, some of the works written during the Modernist period of her life, such as Devotional Essays (1902), Where Saints Have Trod: A Study in Christian Asceticism (1903), or The Soul's Orbit or Man's Journey to God (1904), fall outside the conventional topic areas for a Victorian woman.²⁹ It is evident that she not only transcended the intellectual boundaries set by conventional Victorian wisdom, but also produced significant theological works that deserve to

²⁹ M.D. Petre, Devotional Essays (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1902). M.D. Petre, Where Saints Have Trod: Some Studies in Christian Asceticism (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1903). Hereafter Saints. M.D. Petre, The Soul's Orbit or Man's Journey to God (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1904). Although Tyrrell tried to destroy this work, Petre did her best to restore it.

be evaluated on their own merits. The primary thrust of this research is to identify those ideas that fall outside the themes of Modernism.

There is another factor that is directly related to her status as a Victorian aristocrat, that of her upbringing as one of the old English Catholics. She describes her father as "the last of the Cisalpines," although she herself might qualify.³⁰ For now I will describe the Cisalpines as English Catholic aristocrats who believed that the clergy, of whatever level, had no business in secular affairs, nor did those in the secular world have any right to try and influence the religious governance of the Church. The Cisalpines will be discussed in more detail in Chapters II and VIII.

There are at least two common threads that run through much of Petre's work. The first is that of her very deep spirituality – her conviction that God is immanently involved in human existence; this appears even in some of her political and sociological writings, e.g. "Bolshevik Mentality," a critique of the state of religion in Russia.³¹ The second area is her pastoral concern for people, particularly those she saw as the "unlearned", the "common" people. This is the most prevalent theme in the majority of her writing. I believe that Petre, in addition to her role as the biographer/historian of Modernism, pursued her own intellectual growth and development in subject areas that were neither associated with the Modernist controversy nor within the condemnations of 1907. Of the variety of themes that occur in her writings, only the concept of abuse of

³⁰ Research on this point would require investigation into English noble and aristocratic Catholic families which is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

³¹ M. D. Petre, "Bolshevik Mentality," Letter to the Editor, The Dublin Review, Vol. 188, #s 376 & 377, Jan – Jun 1931.

Church authority is clearly connected to the Modernists.³² She was particularly interested in the relationship of the Catholic Church to modern culture. She was very familiar with the work of Blondel, and appears to have followed his overall approach in dealing with the question of divine immanence and transcendence, balancing her discussions of immanence with a total awareness of transcendence.³³ This particular approach would have been horrifying to von Hügel, who, by the end of his life, developed a deep distrust for any ideas that he perceived as overly stressing the concept of God's immanence.³⁴

As Petre moved through the phases of her life, her identity and sense of self shifted from that of a conventional Victorian woman into the realm of spiritual awareness and growth, modified by her association with the Modernists, but continuing to change and grow after the papal condemnation, and even after the controversy had died down. Certainly, a large part of her work was associated with the Modernists, and therefore, their attitudes and theological positions should be reflected in her writings; however, are there facets that reveal her own thought processes and theology? I will argue that rather than her being completely shaped and molded by her association with the Modernists, that association, building on her own unique ideas, allowed her to move in her own, independent, spiritual directions. I will argue that there are ideas and concepts in

³² Tyrrell was constantly in conflict with Church authority, e.g. A Much Abused Letter (1906). However, Petre's own position in this area is derivative from her upbringing as an old English Catholic, rather than derivative from Modernism. See further discussions in Chapter II and VII.

³³ Crews, Modernism, 17.

³⁴ Gabriel Daly, O.S.A., Transcendence and Immanence (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 118.

her writing that indicate Petre's independent thinking, not derivative from Modernism but unique to her. In this dissertation, I will show that Maude Petre was a significant woman intellectual, in the beginning of the twentieth century, comparable to Edith Stein, Evelyn Underhill, or Simone Weil. Her original work, both within and outside Modernism, has either been ignored, or seen as derivative from men like von Hügel and Tyrrell. As an example, in 1918, she wrote Modernism: Its Failure and Its Fruits. In the *Introduction*, she describes Modernism as "not so much an intellectual aberration as a pastoral response to a widely felt human need."³⁵ This observation applies to Tyrrell's pastoral attitude, as well as the priests in the U.S. who originally espoused Modernism,³⁶ but the comment is her own original thought, not one that appears in the writing of others.

Approach

The analytical process was to analyze Petre's work in comparison with that of other Modernists, looking for either significant differences or fundamental agreements, as well as investigation of her own unique publications. The investigation was based primarily on four periods of her life: pre-Modernist, from roughly 1885 to 1900, her early Modernist period, from 1900 to 1906, the period from the publication of *Pascendi* in 1907 through the end of the First World War, and finally, post-Modernist, from 1918 until her death in 1942. In addition, I

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

³⁶ Tyrrell was well known for his pastoral concern during the time he was a retreat director, and in the U.S., at least Joseph McSorley endorsed the priority of spiritual development over apologetic argument. See MFF, 11, 12.

include a biographical chapter, investigating the relationship between Petre and Tyrrell, and devote a chapter to Modernism: Its Failure and Its Fruits, that she wrote in 1918.

The overall goal was to establish the content of Petre's original thought, in comparison to that of her Modernist associates, that might have served as building blocks for her later ideas. In her pre-Modernist period, it is important to understand those ideas and concepts that were unique to her before becoming involved with Modernism. In the early Modernist phase, the focus was to compare and contrast her work with those of the other writers, investigating those areas where she either was influenced by or herself influenced the Modernist writings. In addition, during this period, the research investigated her non-Modernist writings, such as her 1903 work on asceticism,³⁷ for either unique or derivative concepts. In her post-Modernist period, I analyzed her works from perspective of the effects of Tyrrell's death, the Vatican condemnations, and World War I. In this case we can see a division of her interests between ideas that continue and build on Modernist concepts, and those that are primarily unique to Petre.

This investigation is partly based on a comparison of Petre's writing with those of the other Modernists, comparing and contrasting selected major theological, historical, and social themes. The specific areas that are relevant to Modernism include biblical exegesis, church authority, revelation, tradition, and doctrine. However, it also analyzes her work to show how Petre demonstrated

³⁷ Petre, Saints.

her own unique intellectual characteristics outside of any of the areas developed by the Modernists with whom she was in contact. A longitudinal study of Petre's life and work over the entire writing period of her life, using the time periods previously mentioned, demonstrates this.

In each of these periods, her works are grouped into broad categories, then into sub-categories or themes according to the following topical breakdown:

History: Defined as concerned with the past actions of people or organizations. This category will include both biographical works and descriptions of the Modernist movement.

Religion: Defined as those works pertaining to human relationship with a Supreme Being. This category will include ascetics, mysticism, systematic theology, scriptural exegesis, ecclesiology (to include Church structure and religious authority), pastoral works, and spirituality.

Social Thought: Defined as those works concerned with the present behavior of people or organizations. This category includes works on government, international relations (to include war), politics, and social reforms.

Literary Criticism: Defined as works primarily intended to convey Petre's evaluation of the writing of a particular person.

Apologetics: Defined as explaining or defending either a concept or a person.

These categories and themes are not ironclad, and there certainly is overlap and excursions where a work does not totally fit into one of the above categories or themes, but they serve as a framework for the analysis.

One of the problems in this research was determining if there is an overall topical category that fits Petre. Was she an historian? Yes. Was she a theologian? Yes. Was she a sociologist? Possibly. Was she a mystic? Probably not. Was she a deeply spiritual woman, deeply devoted to the Catholic

Church? Yes. The extent of her involvement in each category has been a significant part of this research.

Research Design

This research was primarily qualitative, based on historical analysis of Petre's writings, as well as those of the other Modernist principals. In the first phase, primary attention was placed on establishing a baseline of her thought. In the second phase, the approach was to compare and contrast her work with the individual Modernists, looking for instances of either her original thought or where she may have moderated the others, and finally, to see if she added to the Modernist ideas, or how she expanded outside of that field. Most of her books and essays are readily available within the United States, and I was able to obtain almost all of her articles and essays in English, as well as copies of all her books. However, her journals, as well as some of her letters, are held within the Petre Collection in the British Library, and required research in the British Library in London.

Using the original texts has the advantage of working mainly from primary sources, although the Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary in Dun Laoghaire, Ireland, was unwilling to provide information on Petre's life in the *Filles de Marie*, or a copy of the Rule at that time; therefore, information on that period of her life is taken from other, secondary sources.³⁸ The goal of this

³⁸ Crews and Leonard both have comments obtained from now deceased members of the order.

aspect of the research was to develop a picture of Petre herself - her thought processes, interests, opinions, and prejudices.

Method of Analysis

Once the intellectual range of Petre herself was established, it was necessary to compare her work with that of the other Modernists.³⁹ In order to limit the scope of the research somewhat, the primary comparisons were with Tyrrell and von Hügel, with Bremond and Loisy in secondary roles.⁴⁰ Petre was Tyrrell's literary executor, and most closely associated with him and his writings during the Modernist period, and von Hügel is a constant factor in her life, from her childhood.

My original thesis was that Petre influenced the work of the other Modernists. However, based on my research, this becomes a less significant factor in her intellectual growth than I had originally thought. The quantity and diversity of her work outside Modernism leads to the conclusion that Modernism and her friends within it, were more of a re-direction of Petre's own capabilities, and that she was a consumer of Modernist ideas, not a producer.

The research on the first phase established a baseline. Before she became involved with Modernism, all of her writings were original. Subject areas

³⁹ I had originally planned to investigate Evelyn Underhill, in order to determine if she and Petre had any correspondence on mysticism, but there is no evidence of any direct contact, although Underhill had read both Petre and Tyrrell, and considered herself a Modernist. Dana Greene, *Evelyn Underhill: Artist of the Infinite Life* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1990, 29). Underhill was in correspondence with von Hügel, who was probably the source of her interest in Modernism. Grace A. Brame, "Evelyn Underhill: The Integrity of Personal intellect and Individual Religious experience," *Papers of the Working Group on Roman Catholic Modernism* (Mobile, AL: Spring Hill College, November 1992), 41 and n.6.

⁴⁰ This approach fits with Petre's own assessment of the importance of Tyrrell and von Hügel to theology. M.D.Petre, *Von Hügel and Tyrrell* (NY: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1937), vi.

appearing here can be traced throughout the other two phases and compared to ideas of other Modernists. Three themes appear during this earlier period, all in the category of religion: spirituality (in this case asceticism), the morality of Christian doubt, and authority within the Church. The specific issues that were investigated for comparison with the other Modernists in the later phases are:

- a. What is the role of historical discoveries in Scriptural exegesis?
- b. What is and should be the nature of religious authority within the Roman Catholic Church?
- c. What is the nature of Revelation and does it change over time?
- d. How are Divine immanence and transcendence perceived in relation to human experience?
- e. What is the relation of science to faith?
- f. What is the nature of human spiritual doubt?

Even though all of these fall under the general category of religion, these issues are directly related to the condemnations of 1907, and often overlap into other categories and themes.

Although the focus here was on the last three phases of her life, any of these topics appearing in the first phase, for example, her position on the nature of spiritual doubt,⁴¹ provides a basis for my argument that a significant portion of her work was original and not derivative.

These topics form a basis for comparison of Petre with the others. Her

⁴¹ The questions of doubt and authority do not appear in her writings of this period, however, in My Way of Faith and The Ninth Lord Petre she attributes them to her childhood. See Chapter VIII.

writings were compared not only for content, but also chronologically to determine who wrote what first.

As a member of the English aristocracy, particularly of one of the old Catholic families, the social world in which she was raised shaped her attitudes and values both in her relationship with others of her class, and with her intellectual companions. Her life as a member of the *Filles de Marie* prior to involvement with Modernism is also relevant in establishing some baseline description of her spirituality. The fact of her deep love for Tyrrell cannot be excluded in any investigation of the content of her writings. Her journals reflect a constant struggle with that love, and her attempts to maintain it on a spiritual level. These struggles certainly affected all of her writings in the area of spirituality.

Early Life

Her writings in this first period include one book, one review, and 5 essays, as well as the first of her journals. She published essays in The Month, a Jesuit periodical, beginning in 1885, well before she met George Tyrrell or any of the other Modernists except for von Hügel. Her journals did not begin until 1900, at the suggestion of Tyrrell. My intent was to try to understand why she was writing, and what was her basic thought content in this period. Again, any evidence of Modernist ideas in this period would have added to the credibility of her originality apart from Modernism, although, as I expected, most of her work

from this time was her own thoughts, focused on personal spirituality and mysticism.

Modernist Phase

In this section, I analyzed her Devotional Essays (1902), Catholicism and Independence (1907), her introduction to Tyrrell's Christianity at the Crossroads (1909), Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell (1912), the various essays she published in The Month, and her journals. These works established a baseline of her thought and style, her overall approach to theology in the context of her understanding of the work of the Modernists, and provided indicators for her interest in other areas. These areas are covered in more detail in the appropriate chapters.

The next step in this phase was the comparison of Petre's works with selected writings of Tyrrell, von Hügel, and Loisy, looking for comparisons and contrasts between them and Petre, comparing content and the time when they were written. Of particular interest were any areas where she takes positions that differ from Tyrrell, von Hügel, or Loisy either factually or conceptually. Again there was very little material that showed Petre as presenting her own original ideas concerning Modernism.

Another example of possible contrast in style and content between Petre and Tyrrell is her two volume Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell, which was placed on the Index in 1913, indicating that the Congregation of the Index considered it as a source of potential harm to the faithful. In the first volume,

Tyrrell's autobiography, which she edited, Tyrrell comes across as somewhat sardonic, dabbling in religion as something of an adventure, and extremely critical of authority. In the second volume, his biography, which picks up where the autobiography leaves off, Petre portrays Tyrrell as more of a martyr, suffering because of the unfairness of his Jesuit superiors and the Roman Curia. The investigation here centers, first of all, on how accurately Petre reported Tyrrell's theological positions in comparison to his actual letters to others, such as von Hügel, and whether she has interjected any significant ideas or perspective of her own. Although the placing of this work on the Index was probably the result of her reporting of Tyrrell, who was already on the Index, the analysis will look for any indications of her own positions in Vol. II.

The same type investigation was applied to her biography of Loisy, although the level of her involvement with him was initially much more on the intellectual rather than personal level. Her friendship with Loisy did not really develop until after the death of von Hügel in 1925, and continued until Loisy's death in 1940.

In the case of von Hügel, the research covered her entire life. Von Hügel was an old family friend of the Petres, moving in the same aristocratic social circles, and corresponding with Petre until his death in 1925; however, she continued to write and lecture about him throughout her life. One area of interest here was whether her relationship with von Hügel may have had more of an intellectual impact on her than that with Tyrrell. Certainly, von Hügel's work on

asceticism and mysticism affected Petre, particularly in her early work and outside of the area of Modernism.

Later Years

The final step, and probably most significant step, was to analyze her work after the Modernism controversy had died down. She lived until 1942, and continued to produce a variety of work until her death. Since, other than Loisy, most of the Modernist principals had died by 1925, anything she wrote after that must have been to some degree outside the influence of Modernism - the question being how much and with what content. Was her writing derivative of the ideas of Modernism, or was it original? How much of her writing reflects her own original thinking in whatever field she chose to investigate? How did the thoughts and ideas of the Modernists continue into her later life, and how did her own original ideas continue or expand? She also wrote extensively on historical and social topics outside the realm of Modernist concerns, which gives further indications of her character and opinions, as well as providing independent sources for comparison.

The research is intended to answer the question of how Petre's intellectual position developed over time. Was her own intellectual thought shaped by the Modernist ideas? Did these ideas change her thought processes, or did she, in fact, create her own identity that included the ideas of Modernism, and which continued to develop after the Modernist controversy faded? How do her

attitudes in her later life differ from her earlier positions, and if they do, can these changes be attributed to her association with Modernists and their ideas.

I will argue that this dissertation shows three major points. First of all, that Petre was in fact a biographer/historian of Modernism. However, she did so from the point of view that she felt it was her mission in life to carry on what she perceived as Tyrrell's work. Although she may have contributed to the development of Tyrrell's thought, her main value to him was as an intellectual sounding board. Her effect on von Hügel is problematic, based on his personality.⁴² Her effect on Loisy was also minimal, given that his main area of interest was historical criticism, which she seldom entered. Secondly, Petre developed and published a significant body of intellectual work in her own right, not only in areas related to Modernism, but also in ecclesiology, spirituality, and social thought. This second point is the main thrust of my position that she should be considered as one of the first significant female, English, Catholic, intellectuals of the twentieth century. Finally, I will demonstrate that Petre developed her own unique theology of the nature of doubt and its relationship to faith.

There were several areas I discovered in my research that were not evident at the beginning. First of all, my original assumption was that Petre had a significant theological impact on the writings of her fellow Modernists. This turned out to be far from the case. I had expected that there would be extensive

⁴² Von Hügel was uncomfortable with opinions that differed from his own. See M.D. Petre, "Friedrich von Hügel. Personal Thoughts and Reminiscences," *Hibbert Journal*, Vol. XXIV, October 1925-July 1926, 88.

comments in her journals as to her theological opinions, discussions with Tyrrell, von Hügel, and Loisy. In reality, the great majority of the entries in her journals were concerned with her travels, meetings with family and friends, and her own personal relationship with Tyrrell. She met often with von Hügel and her sisters, Adela and Margaret, traveled often to France, meeting with Brémond and Loisy, and occupied much of her life before 1908 with her duties in the DHM. Descriptions of these kinds of events are the main stuff of her journals.⁴³

Another upset hypothesis was that Petre was a theologian, in the context of academic theology. She was not. Most of her writing in theology was as an apologetic for her friends. She was comfortable reading and discussing theology, even in some cases critiquing the writings of Tyrrell or Loisy, e.g. her review of Loisy's biography, but she herself produced no major ideas in academic theology. The only significant exception was contained in her belief that doubt was an inherent component of true faith.

There were three significant areas that developed that I had not expected. The first was the distinct influence of her Cisalpine heritage on her writings, particularly on those dealing with abuses of Church authority. The second area is directly related to her heritage, even inseparable from it - her position as a member of the aristocracy. As a member of the upper class, particularly one with roots in the old Catholic aristocracy, her mind was firmly set in the mold of class distinction. Even though her work in the DHM had led her to develop great care

⁴³ As an aside, her handwriting is extremely difficult to decipher; in several cases, even the staff of the Manuscript section of the British Library was unable to interpret words.

and compassion for the marginalized, there was still the element of *noblesse oblige* in her value system. Finally, I was totally unaware of the importance of her time at Pontigny on her intellectual pursuits. Her association with the broad spectrum of European intelligentsia, as an accepted equal, says a great deal for her abilities, and I believe, further supports my claim that she may have been one of the first significant English, Catholic, female intellectuals of the twentieth century.

CHAPTER II
BIOGRAPHICAL
Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate Petre's life in order to assess the factors that may have had an impact on her writings and attitudes, and to establish a framework within which to analyze her various writings. These analyses will be located in the following Chapters and in some of the Appendices. With a few exceptions, most of the information in this chapter, particularly about her childhood, is taken from her book, My Way of Faith, which she began in 1932, and published in 1937.¹ Her location within the Cisalpine community is of particular importance because it is a defining factor in her attitude towards authority within the Church. As Ellen Leonard says:

Von Hügel and Petre both recognized the importance of the pope and Rome as the center of the universal Church, but they objected to the exaggerated devotion to the person of the pope and to the centralized control that Rome was exercising over national churches.²

Although biographical in nature, her intent in writing this book was to document her faith journey and the factors that influenced it. In using this book as a primary source, the question arises as to how accurate and objective she

¹ Maude D. Petre, My Way of Faith (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1937). Hereafter MWF.

² Ellen Leonard, C.S.J. "English Catholicism and Modernism," in Catholicism Contending with Modernity, ed. Darrell Jodock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 272.

can be when writing about events that occurred decades earlier in a culture, that of the Victorian aristocracy, that had almost totally vanished by the 1930s. Not only had the social culture of her time changed, the Church itself in England had changed, particularly in regards to its relationship to the State. By the 1930s, Petre had lived through the First Vatican Council, and the reigns of five popes,³ and would live to see a sixth, Pius XII, before her death in 1942. The Council and each of the popes made a mark on the Church. From her perspective, it seems safe to say that she would have seen Pius X as having the major impact on her life because of the condemnation of Modernism. However, regardless of any possible inaccuracies or distortions which might have entered her writing over time, MWF provides us with the best record of her early life and attitudes, and even considering the time lapse involved, appears to be the most credible source, given that her diaries did not begin until 1900, and not all of her letters have been preserved.

Early Life (1863 - 1876)

Petre was born on the 4th of August 1863, in the County of Essex, England. As she tells the story, her mother was at Mass and communion at 8:30 that morning, and reading a French novel by 11:00. Between those two events, Maude Dominica Mary arrived.⁴ She was the seventh of eleven children, with two older brothers and three older sisters, and three brothers and one sister

³ Pius IX, Leo XIII, Pius X, Benedict XV, and Pius XI.

⁴ Petre, MWF, 29.

younger than herself.⁵ Her home was at Coptfold Hall, about a mile from the village of Magarett, in Essex. The whole area was filled with different branches of the Petre family, many of whom were content to remain in a rural life, without yielding to the lures of London society, some 10 miles away.

Her parents were members of the minor British aristocracy. Her father, Arthur Petre,⁶ was the younger son of the 13th Lord Petre, and her mother, Lady Catherine Howard,⁷ the fifth daughter of the Earl of Wicklow.⁸ Her father was a member of one of the Old English Catholic families, which had maintained their faith through repression and persecution since the time of Henry VIII. Her mother was a convert to Catholicism before her marriage to Arthur.

Petre has an extensive discussion of her childhood, and particularly her religious environment in MWF. She emphasizes several aspects of her personality as a child – her temper, “. . . I probably inherited from my father a disposition to fits of most violent temper.”⁹ - her stubbornness, her independence: “. . . I had, especially as a little child, strange fits of obstinacy, unreasoning obstinacy, when my will seemed to take on an independent life of its own”¹⁰ but most of all, her faith as the bedrock of her existence. Speaking about her

⁵ One child had died at birth. The remainder were: Ralph William (Rodolph): b. 1857 d. 19 April 1884; Stillborn child: b.1858; Beatrice (Bee): b.1859 d. ?; Cecil: b. 1860 d. ? at school; Adela: b.1861 d. ?; Emma: b. February 1862 d. ? (Sister of St. Vincent de Paul); Maude Dominica Mary: b. 4 August 1863 d. December 16, 1942; Lawrence: b. October 1864 d. ?; Vincent (Vinnie): b. 1865 d. ? at Woburn College; Louis: b. 1867 d. April 1884 at Benedictine College; Margaret: b. ? d. ?

⁶ Born 1829, died December 1883.

⁷ Born August 1831, died February 1884.

⁸ The other daughters were Isabella (died young), Eleanor (Lady Eleanor Ellenborough), Jane (Lady Jane Milford), Frances (Lady Frances Lindsay), Maria (died young). Petre, MWF, 5,6.

⁹ Petre, MWF, 48.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.

childhood, she says: "Throughout all our *joie de vivre* religion remained the supreme factor; not an interfering factor, but an abiding one."¹¹

It is worthwhile to review her childhood, since many of the factors in her upbringing affected her later life and her later spirituality. Looking back at life in Victorian England from the perspective of a 21st century American is more than just culture shock, it is almost incomprehensible. A recent PBS series¹² followed the life of a middle class British family who had agreed to live for three months exactly as a family would have in the 19th century. In their case, most of the disparities were in the routine household tasks – shopping, cooking, laundry, etc. In the case of Petre, the situation is much more complicated. Both her parents were wealthy; her mother more so than her father,¹³ and the family estate at Coptfold Hall, which still exists, was a large, rambling English country house, which would have been staffed with a large number of servants. The nursery, where the younger children lived, and the schoolroom, which was the next step when the children were older, were well removed from the normal living areas of the house. Upper class Victorian children were definitely meant to be seen and not heard. Their upbringing was in the hands of nurses and governesses, with daily visits in the evening with their parents. Petre and her nearest siblings were apparently close through necessity, since there was very little contact with other children. As she puts it:

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹² Public Broadcasting System's *19th Century House*. Presented July 2002.

¹³ Petre, *MWF*, 5, 12.

It was an austere upbringing! Our home was in the depths of the country, and we were surrounded by woods. As children we lived almost entirely to ourselves, no parties, no outside distractions. . . . Ye gods! How dull it was! . . . One of my earliest remembrances is a feeling of *ennui* – and as it has been a familiar and odious spectre all through my life I sometimes wonder if the dullness of my early life has been in any measure the cause of it.¹⁴

Her father refused to become involved in the social life of the court, and as a result, the family remained effectively isolated from the society of the time. They had no house in London, and other than an occasional visit from relatives, lived their own life as country aristocracy. Although the Relief Bill of 1791 had generally removed the legal penalties against English Catholics,¹⁵ many of the Old Catholic recusants preferred to stay out of the more obvious social circles.

Petre presents a very balanced picture of her family life as a child. Her descriptions of her parents and siblings, even though tempered by some 60 years, are both critical and loving. She comments: "What I feel and felt with regard to my parents is that they were contented with nothing but the highest in our regard. They gave us few luxuries, but were ambitious on our behalf in the bigger things."¹⁶ It is interesting to note that she takes for granted nurses, governesses, and tutors, people that were generally only available in the upper classes.

Her father is portrayed as a somewhat distant figure, concerned with running the estate, fulfilling his duties, both secular and religious, and providing as best he could for his family. This portrait would have applied to any number of

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹⁵ The penalties against Catholics were not totally removed until 1926. M.D. Petre, *The Ninth Lord Petre* (London: SPCW, 1928), 226 ff. 279, n.1. Hereafter 9LP.

¹⁶ Petre, MWF, 36.

English upper class fathers of the time, but the aspect of religious duties deserves more discussion later. Her mother, as the granddaughter of the Earl of Wicklow, grew up in an atmosphere of privilege and the social life of the nobility. "My mother's family was wealthy, and she was brought up in considerable state, but I do not think she had a particularly happy childhood."¹⁷

Her mother had become a convert to Catholicism at the age of 19,¹⁸ over the strong objections of her father, the Earl. She was well educated, and spoke fluent French, German, and Italian, as well as Latin, and was an accomplished musician. She was unquestionably an aristocrat, but as Petre says:

This aristocratic aloofness is . . . something not to be confounded with snobbery. . . . It was, in fact, a very intense class-consciousness, with a corresponding sense of the traditions, the obligations, the privileges of that class. That consciousness was in one's very blood and bones; and since I must admit to have been infected with it I may say at once that it took me a considerable time to outgrow it, if I have ever quite done so.¹⁹

One facet of her mother's character is worth noting – her aristocratic temper. Petre says: "My mother was certainly endowed – or afflicted – with this aristocratic temper; and it was from her that I must have inherited it, for it was lacking in my father, in spite of his family descent."²⁰

Interestingly enough, Petre refers to her mother as ". . . for those days, what we would now call a feminist... In fact, she was one of the earliest

¹⁷ Ibid., 5. Her mother did not inherit the title or substantial funds. Under English law, since there was no male heir, both went to a cousin.

¹⁸ Petre, 9LP, 16, n.1.

¹⁹ Petre, MWF, 9.

²⁰ Ibid., 10. Possibly a reference to an ancestor, Sir William Petre, who was Cromwell's vicar-general in suppression of the religious houses. Petre, 9LP, 28. It should also be noted that she contradicts herself later, when she describes having cold water thrown on him as a child to curb his temper. Ibid., 48.

advocates of 'women's rights'.²¹ She also says that "it was my mother, and only my mother who influenced me and even interested me in my early life;"²² However, her opinion of her father changed with time, as in 1928 she dedicated her book on the Ninth Lord Petre to "My Father: Loyal, Charitable, Just."²³

Her relations with her brothers and sisters seem to be typical for a large family of her class at the time. They were cared for by a series of nurses and governesses, and from her descriptions of the nursery and schoolroom, the younger children had to rely mostly on themselves for entertainment and companionship. She refers to them as "a boisterous, uncouth tribe."²⁴ A point that she consistently makes is that growing up in a large family makes for an element of competition, and development of individuality, or as she puts it "independence."²⁵ Her brothers, as was customary, all went to college, while with the exception of her oldest sister, Beatrice, who was "sent to school," Petre and her sisters were schooled at home by a succession of governesses. One of Petre's comments on authority needs to be mentioned here; it will be relevant in a later discussion on authority. In discussing the children's relationship with their various governesses, Petre says: ". . . there was a sacrosanct tradition of respect for parental authority; something akin to the Law of the Old Testament. To disobey a parent was to sin; to disobey a governess was not. . . ." ²⁶

²¹ Ibid., 11. I will discuss this topic later in Chapter III, but her understanding of the term "feminist" is not the same as any of those held today.

²² Ibid., 13.

²³ Petre, 9LP, "Dedication."

²⁴ Petre, MWF, 58.

²⁵ Ibid., 59.

²⁶ Ibid., 60.

Now we return to Petre's parents, from the aspect of their religious practices, and their effect on Petre's upbringing. Looking first at her father, it is necessary to understand the situation of the Old English Catholic families, who were almost exclusively members of the nobility or aristocracy. From the time of Henry VIII, repressive laws had been enacted against Roman Catholics, or to use the derogatory term - "Papists". Even excluding the outright persecutions, the suppression and confiscation of religious houses, and the banning of the Mass, Catholics could not hold public office, could not be officers in the Army or Navy, paid double land taxes, could not inherit land,²⁷ etc. These restrictions began to be relaxed by the Relief Bill of 1778, and were further relaxed by the Act of Relief of 1791.²⁸ (Petre's ancestor, Robert Edward, the Ninth Lord Petre, was a major factor in the Catholic emancipation of the late 18th century).²⁹ The Old Catholic families, or recusants, held to their religion in spite of the difficulties, and survived by not drawing attention to themselves, and whenever possible, actively supporting the monarch.³⁰ However, their loyalty to their faith was equally strong, and became a part of their very existence. Petre comments at some length on her father's attitude toward his faith. He was unabashedly a Cisalpine Catholic.³¹

²⁷ In the event of the death of a Catholic landowner, the land could only be inherited by a Protestant relative. It was not uncommon for families to agree on a "designated Protestant" to protect an inheritance.

²⁸ Petre, *9LP*, 98, 239. As previously noted, final relief did not occur until 1926.

²⁹ See Chapter VIII for further analysis.

³⁰ Petre, *9LP*, 97 ff, describes a petition from the Catholic Committee to King George III in 1778 making these points.

³¹ The Cisalpines believed that papal authority should be limited to spiritual matters, and that Church authorities should not interfere in secular matters. See Chapter VIII.

For Arthur Petre, the relationship between an individual and his or her faith was a question of the proper order of things. Religion was the foundation of his life, but once he had built the foundation, it was unnecessary to constantly be concerned about it. In his mind, once he had given the day and the day's activities to God, he had made a contract, and the whole thing was settled. God would keep His end of the deal, just as he would. As Petre says: "An intention was a promise to God, and needed to be repeated no more than a promise to man. My father would have been disgusted if a friend had required of him continual assurances once his word was given."³²

Petre's mother, Lady Catherine, as previously mentioned, was a convert to Catholicism. Whereas her father took his faith for granted as the foundation of his life, her mother "rejoiced in her religion and everything that pertained to it."³³ Lady Catherine took her religion seriously, with intense piety, and made it a "golden thread that twined itself in and out of all her other interests."³⁴

Petre, then, grew up in a family for whom religion was totally pervasive in their daily life. As she says: "As to the Church, there was no question about it. She contained for us all that we needed. We were *inside*, totally inside, without the least notion of there being any rightfully habitable place outside."³⁵

³² Petre, *MWF*, 17.

³³ *Ibid.*, 15.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 61. Original italics.

Later she says: "Her teaching was sacrosanct; her sacraments were the life of our soul; her priests and bishops were our trustworthy and our holy guides – *almost impeccable in our eyes.*"³⁶

She is writing here as she remembered her early childhood, not as she later came to believe, since she comments shortly after:

. . . Just as it would have been a blow to us to go behind the scene in a theatre and see how it was made up, so it would have been a scandal to us to go behind the scenery of the Church - to see the seamy side - to learn that all our teachers were not holy, and all they taught was not final.³⁷

This theme of Petre's attitude toward authority will be discussed in more detail in Chapters VII and VIII.

In describing her childhood faith, the major characteristics that stand out are those of joy and piety, the first instilled by her mother, and the second by both parents. She describes feastsdays with almost a sense of ecstasy: "- our *holidays our holy days.*"³⁸ She talks about her religious goals as a child. "I had a threefold ambition – to be (a) a philosopher; (b) a saint; (c) a martyr."³⁹ Her earliest reading progressed quickly from Grimm's Fairy Tales to a book called Early Martyrs, at the age of 6, and a variety of lives of the saints.⁴⁰

However, all was not sunshine and piety in Petre's spiritual world. As she says: "Very early I felt the stirring of the snake beneath my foot. . ."⁴¹, referring to what she would grapple with for years – spiritual doubt, leading to an advanced

³⁶ Ibid. Italics added.

³⁷ Ibid., 62.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., 64. Original italics.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 50.

⁴¹ Ibid., 66.

case of scrupulosity. The question of spiritual doubt is another topic area that will be addressed in Chapter VI; it stands out as a major theological topic in which Petre differed from her associates within Modernism and from other Victorians.

Another area on which she dwells at some length is that of suffering. Here she specifically contrasts her present thoughts with those of her childhood: "I think this question of suffering is one of those on which I find the greatest difference between the present generation and that of my childhood."⁴²

In her childhood, suffering was seen as character building – as "an element of sanctification that we accepted and revered."⁴³ However, judging by her position in 1937, her earlier ideas changed. Much of her later position is based on suffering as an element of love, both human and divine. She says in MWF: ". . . we knew that we could not care deeply for any one without some corresponding pain; and that the love of God was beset with trial and pain."⁴⁴

It is likely that she refers to both her love for Tyrrell and her difficulties with the Church authorities after 1900; however, as she discusses her childhood, it takes on more of the heroic fantasizing of an adolescent child, i.e. her desire to be a martyr.

Her religious instruction as a child was primarily from her governesses, loosely supervised by the parish priest, Father Batt, from the nearby parish of Chelmsford. She learned her catechism, and a child's overview of the Old Testament, probably similar to the "Bible History" texts that were used in this

⁴² *Ibid.*, 71.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 72.

country prior to World War II. All of her efforts as a child seem to have been bound up somehow with religion. She says:

My ruling passion, in youth, was ambition, while, at the same time, religion was, from first to last, the chief interest, almost the sole great interest of my life. Hence I could not desire worldly success for its own sake alone; it had to be associated with some religious value to which it was subordinate.⁴⁵

This attitude led her to two conditions - one a slightly positive factor in her life, and one a distinct negative. The positive factor was the doctrine of merit, which led her to seek worldly success in order to achieve glory in the next life. The negative was an obsessive fear of eternal punishment; which led to her problem with excessive scrupulosity, which she discusses at some length.

For English Catholics of that time, sin was an important consideration in their upbringing. "It was a world of law; natural law, moral law, spiritual law."⁴⁶ Sin was divided into mortal and venial sin, basically that which had been taught since the Middle Ages. She describes mortal sin as a deliberate turning away from God, leading to the death of the soul to Divine grace, while venial sin was a weakness not destructive of grace.⁴⁷ For Petre, obedience to the moral law was a matter of second nature, very similar to her father's idea of his relationship to God being in the nature of an agreement. To sin was to break the agreement, and sin was an offence against God. She saw the sacrament of penance in much the same light as it is now practiced - that of reconciliation, rather than the legalistic "crime and punishment" attitude of the time. For her it was a chance to

⁴⁵ Ibid., 75.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 78.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 80.

restore the balance in her relationship with God, and to be rid of whatever sins she may have confessed.

Her attitude toward sin is also reminiscent of the post-Vatican II Catholic mentality that has led to the vast decline in the use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. She says:

. . . I cannot help thinking that sin, real quintessential sin, demands a capacity for evil that is beyond the reach of ordinary mortal beings, compounded of spirit and matter, in whom there is an admixture of weakness that qualifies the character of their every action.⁴⁸

From the context in which she is discussing this, she is developing this idea from a position of later life rather than her childhood.⁴⁹

Her next discussion continues on the subject of eternal punishment, and moves into her major problem with scrupulosity.

And now I come to speak of a doctrine which was the haunting terror of my childhood, my youth, and a portion of my adult life; and which, along with the above mentioned theological distinction between mortal and venial sin, was responsible for that horrible disease of scruples. . . .⁵⁰

Later she says:

We were told that this life was but the prelude of eternity - that our soul would never die - but that its unending future depended on our conduct during a short period of mortality. And not even on the totality of that short period, but really and finally on the last action of that short life.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Ibid., 84.

⁴⁹ The previous and subsequent passages obviously refer to her life as an adult.

⁵⁰ Petre, *MWF*, 86.

⁵¹ Ibid., 87.

Thus, in her mind as a child, if she were to die with an unconfessed mortal sin, God, being all just, was required to condemn her to hell for all eternity.⁵² She became so obsessed with the fear of mortal sin and eternal punishment that she went to extremes. She relates one story: "I remember walking about, on a blazing summer day, in hot, heavy clothes, because I feared that if I took them off I might catch a cold, die, and be guilty of self-destruction."⁵³

This problem lasted as a major concern for about three years, from when she was 10 until about 13. Finally, a wise (or possibly exasperated) confessor, Fr. Humphrey, S.J., forbade any examination of conscience, or even a thought of sin, for a year, which enabled Petre to cope with further attacks.⁵⁴

She relates how she finally came to grips with the question of evil and eternal punishment in the world by reading the works of Julian of Norwich,⁵⁵ and accepting the idea that God would always keep His word, but that there was some mysterious method, known only to God, by which everything would eventually turn out satisfactorily.

At this point, Petre is quite definite about her position on the doctrine of hell. She says:

. . . it is the one doctrine of the Church, as explained to me in my childhood, that I really do deny - the only one. Other dogmas may be bewildering, but they can possess symbolic value - this one is literal and

⁵² Apparently the Tridentine teaching on imperfect contrition did not receive the same emphasis as that on mortal and venial sins. Petre never seems to have considered that there was any alternative to the Sacrament of Penance or an heroic act of perfect contrition.

⁵³ Petre, *MWF*, 94.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁵⁵ She is referring to the 13th Revelation of Julian of Norwich. *Shewings* [or Revelations], written in 1373, and variously translated into modern English over the centuries.

definite, and totally contrary to the code of justice and charity as conceived by humanity at its best.⁵⁶

Adolescence (1876 - 1882)

Petre's discussion of her adolescence is relatively sketchy. The overall tone is one of repression, by her mother and by the society of the time. In speaking of her mother she says:

My mother was so jealous, or, rather, so anxious, in regard to all alien influence that we were kept almost entirely to ourselves; we hardly had any parties and most of the girls never went to school. We were not encouraged to care for our personal appearance; we were taught extreme reserve in our social relations. . . .⁵⁷

Her discussion of her attitude toward sexual matters leaves the impression that she and her sisters were held to a standard even beyond the conventions of what is now perceived as Victorian prudery,⁵⁸ with the end result being that Petre had little social life, and almost no experience in what I will call, for lack of a better term, the Victorian marriage market. She mentions one non-reciprocal romance at 17, but with the death of her parents when she was 19, she was effectively left on her own as far as life choices. However, as she says, she was rather plain, did not know how to dress, had not been introduced at court, and was uncomfortable with the casual small talk that would have been expected in a social environment. As the granddaughter of both an earl and a baron, with a

⁵⁶ Petre, *MWF*, 96.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 121.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 22 ff.

substantial inheritance,⁵⁹ she would have been considered as a reasonably good prospect for marriage,⁶⁰ had she chosen to take that path. However, as she says:

I am glad that I did not marry when I was young, as I probably should have done if my mother had not died at the time when such opportunities would have occurred. . . . on the whole, I am happy to have lived my own life, and shared the life of others in a measure which I could not have done as a married woman.⁶¹

Thus, at the end of her early life, we see Petre as a plain woman, well educated by the standards of the day, socially repressed, and totally devoted to her religion. She was intellectually advanced enough to have begun to form her own opinions, and to question doctrines that were taken as a given by most Catholics of the time. I have already mentioned her questions on the morality of spiritual doubt, and she is experiencing trouble with what she calls "spiritual ennui," that she calls a form of waking sleep or conscious death;⁶² she also questions specific doctrines, e.g. what she refers to as "Mariolatry,"⁶³ and takes issue with the interpretation of the virtue of humility.⁶⁴ Although she

⁵⁹ Although she never mentions the source of her income or the size of her bank account, she does indicate in several ways that she was quite independently wealthy, e.g. her frequent travels, buying Mulberry House, settling an annuity of £100 a year on Tyrrell, various charities, etc. In 1898 she contributed £1000 for the building of Westminster Cathedral. It was not until 1931, when England went off the gold standard, that she had to be concerned with money.

⁶⁰ Had her mother lived, she would probably have made some effort to introduce Petre to socially acceptable suitors.

⁶¹ Petre, *MWF*, 129.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 111ff. Not quite as intense as St. John of the Cross and the "dark night of the soul", or St. Teresa of Avila's "dryness of the soul", but as she calls it, "a kind of solitary confinement in the spiritual order."

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 115. She refers here to her later life. Her position is that Mary is not any closer to her than God, and is not a necessary intermediary.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

acknowledges the value of humility, when it is used as a way of becoming closer to God, she condemns any attempt to use humility to diminish self-worth.

To my mind some sense of one's personal importance is as essential to both one's spiritual and one's earthly life as the air we breathe; and I have, in the course of my experience, seen how the character weakens and the soul dwindles when the person in question has been brought up in an atmosphere of his or her own unimportance.⁶⁵

Later she says:

In fact, the lesson of humility should not be that we are little, but that we are great, not that God is all and we are nothing, but that we have in us that divine kinship in virtue of which He is our only true End.⁶⁶

When her parents died Petre began the next phase of her life. She saw herself as:

. . . not well fashioned for social success, but we were extremely well prepared for difficulties and hardships. . . . We were proud in the bearing of pain and reserved in our sorrows. We were most of us religious, and some of us pious.⁶⁷

Finally, she makes a comment that seems to be a capsule summary of her attitude toward life: ". . . I am prepared to face any moral problem, however startling."⁶⁸

Pre-Modernist Years: (1883 - 1900)

As Petre considered her choices in her future life, she was faced with the conventions of Victorian society, that upper class women were not expected to work. However, as a Roman Catholic, the religious life was open to her. This

⁶⁵ Ibid., 116.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 117.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 145.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 147.

vocation fit well with her own belief that whatever she did should be to the glory of God, and that she should follow whatever path would best carry her to her eternal end.⁶⁹ In her mind, her choices were marriage⁷⁰ or the religious life, but first she had to deal with her recurring problems of doubt and scrupulosity. Her feelings of doubt are extremely important to any analysis of her theology, and deserve an extensive treatment.⁷¹

Petre faced and dealt with her problems of doubt in her early childhood, but now as she faces her decision as to what path to take in her future life, the question of moral doubt becomes an overriding issue.

And what can I doubt? Why, everything; God, Christ, my own soul, and every religious doctrine. I know Newman's celebrated dictum, that no number of difficulties make one doubt. But like so many celebrated dicta, there is a grain of sophistication in this remark - a kind of sophisticated optimism.⁷²

Later she says: "Now let me say that this skeptical tendency of mine shows itself in everything else as well as religion. I am insubmissive in science as in faith, a disbeliever in the expert as well as the religious teacher."⁷³ Next she gives an indication of what will occupy her interest in later life: "Thus science staggered me when I was young - history when I was middle-aged - and now it is the prevailing sociological conception of humanity sufficient to itself."⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Ibid., 151.

⁷⁰ It should be noted that a significant percentage of upper class women in Victorian society never married. I am indebted to Dr. Carol M. Engelhardt, of the Wright State University History Department, for her insight into the life and status of Victorian women.

⁷¹ See Chapter VI.

⁷² Petre, *MWF*, 161.

⁷³ Ibid., 162.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 163.

It is at this time Petre began to develop her pastoral concern for others that would remain with her for the rest of her life.

For I have never been able to detach myself from the rest of humanity - the doubts of others invade my soul, . . . - my terrible susceptibility to the doubts and pains and passions of others renders me sensitive to the force and arguments of even the most repellent materialism.⁷⁵

Her spiritual directors often contributed to the problem. She mentions a Father Gallwey, "the most terrible of my spiritual doctors,"⁷⁶ who assured her that it was a mortal sin to question any of the Church dogmas once they had been published by Rome. Using the Vatican I definition: "Si quis dixerit, Deum unum et verum, creatorem et Dominum nostrum, per ea quae facta sunt naturali rationis humanae lumine certo cognosci non posse; anathema sit."⁷⁷

Gallwey convinced Petre that she could remedy her problems with doubt by going to Rome to study St. Thomas Aquinas. According to him, this study would immunize her from doubt for the rest of her life. Therefore, at the age of 22, with no formal theological or philosophical education, she presented herself with a letter of introduction to Father Cardella, S.J. in Rome, who effectively scoffed at the idea of a woman studying Thomas.⁷⁸ He passed her off to a Father Armenelli, who became her confessor, took her more seriously, and arranged for her to study with Professor Binzecher "a dull, commonplace man, a

⁷⁵ Ibid., 164. She is here referring to her interest in Communism.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 168. Although she does not give a time period, Gallwey succeeded Humphrey who had helped her cope with her scrupulosity in her early teens. Her late teens seems a logical time.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 168. Crews translates this as "If anyone says(sic) that the one and true God, our creator and Lord, cannot be known with certainty with the natural light of human reason by means of the things that have been made let him be anathema."

⁷⁸ Ibid., 172.

teacher at the College of Propaganda" with whom she studied Thomas and "that terrible, dry-as-dust Liberatore."⁷⁹

Petre enjoyed her study of Thomism, but she makes no secret of her attitude toward neo-Thomism, with particular reference to that version held by von Hügel.

Her comment is worth quoting in its entirety:

For St. Thomas did indeed aim at rendering religious truth impregnable according to human reason. His building was sound - good bricks, good mortar, good beams - but then you must come inside it, and this is what the anti-scholastic refuses to do. He maintains that a rationally constructed system of belief denotes a method of spiritual compulsion; that it is a forcible imposition of faith from without, whereas faith should be a free and spontaneous act of adhesion.

And his resentment is the stronger because of the ecclesiastical sanction of Thomism, for thus it seems to him that Thomism becomes the property of a certain school, who administer it in their own intellectual interests.⁸⁰

She provides an extensive discussion on the differences between Maritain and Laberthonnière, and then moves into a direct statement of her differences with the other Modernists. She says that:

Men like Laberthonnière, men like Tyrrell, and von Hügel was not without the same tendency, were ever inclined to make men more responsible for the happenings in which they took part than, to my mind, they ever actually are. . . . It was on this point that I sometimes had sharp differences with Father Tyrrell; he blamed *men* when I put things down to a congeries of causes, in which men had part and responsibility, but not whole responsibility, because each human action becomes qualified by its setting in the midst of countless other human actions.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Ibid., 173. Matteo Liberatore was a leading Jesuit advocate for the restoration of Thomism. She later was able to study with a Monsignor Guidi, who was apparently more enlightened.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 175.

⁸¹ Ibid., 176. Original italics.

Although she finds great value in Thomism: "Again, the Thomist doctrine of abstraction appealed to my innate sense of independence."⁸² she also says that:

. . . I feel that I belong to neither school - that I have roots in both - and with all my love and admiration for St. Thomas I am a born Platonist. Mentally I rejoice in scholasticism - even though it fails to give me that certainty for which mere reason craves; morally I am with the great thinkers from St. Augustine to Pascal and his modern followers.⁸³

Her ideas on faith and reason will be discussed in more detail in Chapter VIII, however, her fundamental position is:

. . . the certainty of faith is not a certainty of reason, but a certainty begotten of an entire adhesion to the whole being of God and spiritual reality. Such faith excludes doubt, and yet it cannot furnish irrefragable reasoned proof.⁸⁴

For Petre the scholastic process is "spiritually exhilarating and full of the possibilities of prayer."⁸⁵ However, her old problems of doubt are still with her, and she cannot accept that God can be known with certainty through reason alone. She insists that the core question is the difference between certainty and faith. She longs with all her heart for God, but still cannot bring herself to accept that reason alone can get her there. This religious skepticism is a fundamental hallmark of Petre's faith. The fact that she stays a Catholic in spite of her doubts is a unique characteristic of her spiritual life, and indicates that she sees the freedom to doubt as part of the essence of her Catholic faith.

⁸² Ibid., 185.

⁸³ Ibid., 187.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 178.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 184.

Sometime in 1887 Petre returned to England from Rome.⁸⁶ The period between 1885 and March of 1890, when she entered the novitiate of the Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary (DHM),⁸⁷ is somewhat obscure, but evidently she had resolved her questions about a vocation enough to decide on a religious order as her future.

The DHM is an unusual order, and fits with Petre's emphasis on her independence. A brief description of the order will allow some insight into Petre's spirituality during her pre-Modernist years.⁸⁸

The *Filles de Marie* was co-founded by Adelaïde Marie Champion de Cisé, a Breton noblewoman, and Fr. Pierre Joseph de Clorvière, S.J. in 1790. During this time in France, the government had ordered the suppression of all religious orders, and Fr. Clorvière, assisted by Mlle. De Cisé, conceived the idea of establishing an order which would be able to serve in society and especially among the poor without the traditional distinctions of a habit or religious names, and thereby minimizing the possibility of attracting government attention. The concept was based on the words of St. Vincent de Paul: "They will have for cloister the city streets, for convent cell a rented room, for chapel the parish

⁸⁶ In *MWF* she says that she went to Rome at the age of 22 (171), and that she spent "years in Rome" (173). This would put her in Rome from at least late 1885 to 1887. Interestingly enough, her first two essays "Victor Hugo" and "Carlyle on Religious Ceremonies" were published during this time. In the "Introduction" to her book, *Alfred Loisy*, James A. Walker, her literary executor, implies that she may have spent more time in Rome, joining the DHM relatively soon after returning.

⁸⁷ The order had been founded in France, and referred to as the *Filles de Marie*. In English speaking countries, it was known as the Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary, which I will refer to as DHM.

⁸⁸ Unless otherwise indicated, information on the DHM is taken from undated and unreferenced vocational literature provided to the author by the DHM in May 2002.

church."⁸⁹ Pope Pius VII verbally approved the order in 1801. The spiritual life of the DHM is based on a combination of Marian devotions and the Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

The unique character of the Order allows its members to work in all aspects of society. Although they are attached to a community, they do not necessarily live in community, and their vow of poverty is based on necessity rather than total surrender of worldly possessions. Members of the DHM may take temporary or permanent vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. In Petre's case, she never took permanent vows in the DHM, and in 1907 she was refused permission to renew her temporary vows because of her unauthorized publication of Catholicism and Independence.⁹⁰

Little information is available about her time in the DHM; we know that she took temporary (5 year) vows in February 1896, and shortly thereafter was promoted to local and then provincial superior of the community in England and Ireland.⁹¹ She was deeply involved in promoting orphanages, settlements among the poor, and instruction of converts. She makes a statement in her diaries about her feeling toward religious life: "Work among the poor delights me, but

⁸⁹ "A Double Spiritual Legacy". Signum, 28 October 1990, Vol 18, No 18, 137.

⁹⁰ Crews, Modernism, 112, n.24. Crews seems more negative in his treatment of this situation than James Walker in his "Introduction" to Alfred Loisy where he refers to her as holding the position with "distinction". According to Leonard, she resigned as local superior in London in 1900, although she remained as provincial until 1905, and provincial councillor until 1908. (Leonard, Transformation, 39)

⁹¹ Ibid., 9.

'communities' drive me out of my senses."⁹² This is in keeping with her demonstrated pastoral concern for the marginalized.

This attitude seems to fit with her decision to join the DHM. Their ability to be part of the world would have suited her need for independence. Her selection as local superior and provincial must have severely taxed her need for freedom of action. However, it seems likely that she would have accepted her role both in the sense of her duty to God, and that of a British aristocrat being required to lead whenever necessary. She probably lived in the London community during her novitiate, but it seems that between 1902 and 1904 she lived separate from the other DHM at 24 Newbiggin in Richmond, North Yorkshire, although she would certainly have been available for supervisory duties as provincial councillor. Richmond is about 200 miles North of London.

Pre-World War I (1900 - 1914)

The critical moment in Petre's life came in July of 1900, when George Tyrrell gave a retreat to the local London community of the DHM. Although she had apparently known and corresponded casually with Tyrrell before this, it was during this retreat that her affection developed. She went for a rest in Switzerland in the late summer of 1900, possibly to try to deal with her emotions, and also to exchange letters with Tyrrell about her feelings. Although her letter has not survived, she quotes at length from Tyrrell's response:

⁹² PP. Add. MS. 52372 (London: BL, January 7, 1901).

We must simply help one another in this matter never to deviate from the highest standard of what such a relationship should be. Conventions will seem hard and cruel at times, but in respecting them affection is braced and purified. To be frank with you I doubt if I am any longer capable of a very ardent or absorbing attachment.⁹³

It is very evident from her writing that she had quickly become very deeply in love with Tyrrell, and that she had also realized that there was no hope of the relationship ever progressing into marriage. The idea of an affair would have been repellent to Petre, not so much from any concern about the condemnation by society, but because of the effect such a relationship would have had on Tyrrell as a priest. "To me the continuance of his life as a Catholic priest mattered more than anything else."⁹⁴ She decided within six months that her role would be to support him in his work, while remaining in the background. As she says in late 1900: "From that time forth my friendship with George Tyrrell took on, ever increasingly, the character of a spiritual vocation."⁹⁵

In keeping with this determination, she took a vow of perpetual chastity in May of 1901, probably on the advice of Père Henri Brémond.⁹⁶ From 1902 through late 1904, she was living in Richmond, at 24 Newbiggin, visited frequently by Tyrrell, as well as von Hügel and Brémond. She was caring for her nephews, and traveling to Paris for visits to Brémond, and in May of 1903 to participate in the general election of a new superior for the DHM.⁹⁷

⁹³ Petre, *MWF*, 275.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 279.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 276.

⁹⁶ PP. Add. MS. 52372 (London: BL, May 23, 1901). Crews, *Modernism*, 14.

⁹⁷ Leonard, *Transformation*, 34.

In late 1906, she bought Mulberry House, in the village of Storrington, where she had a small cottage built for Tyrrell, who by this time was having severe struggles in his relationship with both the Society of Jesus and the Church hierarchy.⁹⁸

Tyrrell, as mentioned previously, was very aware of Petre's feelings, and both flattered and irritated by them. Throughout their relationship, he alternated between relying on her friendship, especially as a sounding board for his writings, and seeing her as an omnipresent burden.

1907 was a tumultuous year in Petre's life. Not only was Tyrrell in more and more controversy with the Vatican, her own writings were becoming suspect. When she published Catholicism and Independence⁹⁹ in 1907, without ecclesiastical permission, she came in conflict with the local Church authorities¹⁰⁰ and with the DHM.¹⁰¹ As a result, the DHM refused her permission to renew her vows in December of 1907.¹⁰² Also in 1907, the Church had come down hard on the whole Modernist "movement"; with the condemnation Lamentabile Sane Exitu by the Holy Office of the Inquisition in July¹⁰³, and the encyclical Pascendi Dominici Gregis,¹⁰⁴ Modernism was officially proscribed by the full

⁹⁸ Also during this time, she provided Tyrrell with a life annuity of £100 per year, so that he would be free to write without worrying about funds.

⁹⁹ M. D. Petre, Catholicism and Independence: Being Studies in Spiritual Liberty (London: Longman's, 1907). Hereafter C & I.

¹⁰⁰ In February, 1907 Petre had submitted C & I to the Archbishop of Westminster, Francis Bourne, whose censor saw her work as "likely to do harm." Crews, Modernism, 120. PP. Add. MS. 52374 (London: BL, February 8, 15 1907).

¹⁰¹ PP. Add. MS. 52374 (London: BL, December 14, 1907).

¹⁰² Crews, Modernism, 120, n.2. Crews cites correspondence from the DHM indicating that the matter was handled entirely within the DHM and that the Curia was never involved.

¹⁰³ Lamentabile, as quoted in Reardon, Roman Catholic Modernism, 242 - 248.

¹⁰⁴ Pascendi, as quoted in Hoffman, The Gospel and the Church, 217-268.

authority of the Church; Loisy was eventually excommunicated; Tyrrell left the Society of Jesus and was denied the right to celebrate Mass, and later the sacraments; Brémond was forced to recant, and committees of Vigilance were set up in every diocese to enforce the prohibitions against what Pius X had called "the synthesis of all heresies."

The next significant trauma to afflict Petre was the relatively sudden death of Tyrrell on July 15, 1909. The effect on her was devastating.

My one desire, after the first days of stress, was to be alone, and I was thankful to be quite by myself at Mulberry House. I was suffering as much as I was capable of suffering, and, like a stricken beast, I shrank from every human contact.¹⁰⁵

One of her main concerns at this time was to prevent the press and other radical elements in the anti-Modernist factions from spreading either the idea that Tyrrell had died outside the Catholic Church, or that he had retracted and submitted to the anti-Modernist oath. In reality, he had received conditional absolution from Fr. Dessoulavy, a priest of the Southwark diocese, and had received Extreme Unction from the Prior of Storrington, and had made his confession and received absolution several times from Brémond.¹⁰⁶ She made the situation very clear in a letter to the Guardian, in which she described the funeral, and printed Brémond's final words at the funeral, for which he was later censured by Bishop Amigo, and forbidden to say Mass in Southwark.¹⁰⁷ Both she and von Hügel sent a letter to the London Tablet three days later, refuting in

¹⁰⁵ Petre, MWF, 288.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ M.D. Petre, "The Late Father Tyrrell," Letter to the Editor, The Guardian, July 28, 1909.

very strong terms the claim by the Prior of the Premonstratentians that Tyrrell had died outside the Church.¹⁰⁸

Despite the pressures and penalties inflicted on her friends and associates, Petre refused to submit to pressure from the Church hierarchy, especially refusing to take the anti-Modernist oath. The bishop of Southwark, Peter Amigo, whose diocese contained Storrington, attempted to block the gatherings of "Modernists" who constantly visited Mulberry House. Eventually he forbade her to receive the sacraments in his diocese,¹⁰⁹ which she countered by attending daily Mass in the neighboring diocese of Westminster.

Her correspondence with both the Archbishop of Westminster and Amigo regarding their insistence that she take the anti-Modernist oath, was always polite and courteous, but she placed Amigo's staff in a quandary by simply asking if he could assure her that every article and statement in both *Lamentabile* and *Pascendi* was an article of faith, and would always remain so. ". . . I hope I may, without presumption, ask for the assurance, that every condemnation or proposition of those 2 documents, without a single exception, is *de fide* now, and will always be in the same sense *de fide*."¹¹⁰

Referring to the anti-Modernist oath, she says:". . . I hold that if I am to give this act of adhesion I must be ready, with God's grace, to lay down my life

¹⁰⁸ M.D. Petre, "The Death-Bed of Father Tyrrell," Letter to the Editor, *The Tablet*, July 31, 1909. Although the Prior had welcomed Tyrrell to Storrington in 1906, and Tyrrell considered him a friend, when *Pascendi* was published, the Prior became adamant that it was his duty to rid the village of Modernists.

¹⁰⁹ Amigo had written to the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Merry del Val, who recommended that Petre be denied the sacraments. Leonard, *Transformation*, 55.

¹¹⁰ M.D. Petre, "An Open Letter to My Fellow Catholics," *Times* (London), November 2, 1910.

under tortures, should such a crisis occur, for the least word of these documents as for the Apostle's Creed.¹¹¹

Tyrrell had appointed Petre as his literary executor in his will,¹¹² and after his death she began to prepare his last work¹¹³ for posthumous publication. After that she began work on his Autobiography and Life, which she published in 1912.

Later Life: (1914 - 1942)

The beginning of World War I changed the direction of Petre's interests for a while. Although she continued to write, she went to France, as did many women of her class, from November 1915 through July 1916¹¹⁴ to assist in nursing wounded soldiers, and later opened her home to Belgian refugees. Initially she pondered the idea of pacifism, but the great British patriotic fervor of the time, tied with her reading of the Book of Maccabees: "Better to die in war, than to behold the sorrows of our people"¹¹⁵ allowed her to accept the fact of the war; "And yet I was not, and am not, a pacifist unconditionally,"¹¹⁶ although she began to question the idea that everything that the Allies did was right, and everything the Germans did was wrong. She later came to the realization that "*Krieg ist Krieg*", and that both sides were often guilty of brutality.¹¹⁷

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Petre, Life II, 433.

¹¹³ George Tyrrell, Christianity at the Crossroads (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1909).

¹¹⁴ Petre, MWF, 305. She returned to England for the month of March.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 300. 1 Mc 3:59. The NAB translation is "It is better for us to die in battle than to witness the ruin of our nation and our sanctuary."

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 303.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 301.

She makes an interesting comment about her service in the hospitals in France, which shows that her spirit of independence and her pastoral care were still alive and well during the War: "I hated the rigorous discipline in a hospital, and evaded the exercise of it to the disapproval of the authorities."¹¹⁸

She wrote one book during the War, and quotes from it in MWF as a summary of her outlook:

It is easier to die well than to live well; it is easier to make war than to make peace. Europe has made many treaties, she has never yet made peace. . . .

There are international problems to which the success of neither side will have contributed a solution; for it is not by victory, and still less by defeat, that either party can be brought to admit of any grain of justice on the other side; which is, after all, the only way in which an international dispute can be peaceably solved.¹¹⁹

After the war, her intellectual horizon begins to widen, and the first indications of her interest in international relations begins; an interest that will continue through the rest of her life:

Yet, on the whole, I feel that the efforts of statesmanship should be directed rather to the construction of peace than to the abolition of war; and it is along the lines of moral, intellectual, and industrial co-operation that international policy should labour.¹²⁰

She was concerned that continued hostilities between nations could lead to global destruction, and expressed her hope that somehow the League of Nations would be able to find some road to international peace. The path of her inquiries led her to investigate Marxism and totalitarianism, and to express some sympathies to the abstract ideas of both, however, rejecting them because of

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 305.

¹¹⁹ M.D. Petre, Reflections of a Non-Combatant (London: Longman's, 1915), 117-8.

¹²⁰ Petre, MWF, 308.

their denial of the place of God in the overall scheme of existence, and their failure to acknowledge individual human rights. She had continued what she perceived as her vocation and even her duty - that of an apologetic for Modernism. She saw herself as: ". . . a solitary marooned passenger; the sole representative of what has come to be regarded as a lost cause - the cause of Modernism in the Roman Catholic Church."¹²¹

The death of von Hügel in January 1925 had a profound effect on her. Even though she had drawn apart from von Hügel after Tyrrell's death, with the feeling that he had given in to pressure and not supported Tyrrell as he should have, and that he had sidetracked Tyrrell from pastoral writing into historical criticism,¹²² still, he had been a major character in her life. "It is, to me, like a piece of life hacked out. My feeling for von Hügel proves its strength by its survival of so much deep disagreement - even disappointment."¹²³

In opposition to the English Catholic papers that attempted to portray von Hügel as either uninvolved in Modernism or as a moderating influence on the other members, she insisted that he was, in fact, the leader, and made his choice to submit to the rulings of the Church because he believed, intellectually and morally, that it was the better choice.¹²⁴ She also responded to those who attempted a comparison between von Hügel and Tyrrell:

¹²¹ M. D. Petre, "Still at It: The Impasse of Modern Christology," The Hibbert Journal 20 (April 1922): 401.

¹²² Ellen Leonard, "Friedrich von Hügel: Spiritual Liberator and Teacher," Papers of the Working Group on Roman Catholic Modernism (Mobile, AL: Spring Hill College, November 1980), 53.

¹²³ PP. Add. MS. 52376 (London: BL, January 30, 1925).

¹²⁴ M.D. Petre, "Friedrich von Hügel: Personal Thoughts and Reminiscences," Hibbert Journal XXIV (October 1925 - July 1926): 85.

Hence, to correct and continue the comparison which the Catholic writer . . . instituted between him and such a man as George Tyrrell, I would venture to say that F. von Hügel was almost surely a saint, but very surely not a martyr; whereas George Tyrrell was not very surely a saint, but was most assuredly a martyr.¹²⁵

After von Hügel's death, Petre renewed her relationship with Loisy, which had waned somewhat over the years since their participation in the *décades* at Pontigny in 1910,¹²⁶ and the two developed an extensive correspondence, often reviewing and critiquing each other's manuscripts. Their friendship continued until his death in 1940.

The '20s and '30s saw Petre continuing her eclectic interests. She continued to write on a variety of topics - spiritual as well as mundane, but perhaps the greatest indicator of her developing character was the variety of her activities. She was involved in local projects in Storrington, family matters, national meetings in England, and international meetings in France and Italy. She was instrumental in forming the Storrington Labour Party, and provided her home for its meetings. In 1925, at the age of 62, she participated in a 36-mile bicycle tour.¹²⁷ She sold her large house in Storrington, bought a smaller one, and continued to divide her time between England and France, with occasional visits to Italy.¹²⁸

In 1934, Petre's brother-in-law, Ralph Clutton, attempted to convince Bishop Amigo to remove the quasi-excommunication that prohibited her from receiving the sacraments in Southwark. Amigo consulted two of his advisors, Fr.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 85.

¹²⁶ See Chapter VIII.

¹²⁷ Leonard, *Transformation*, 92-3.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 95.

W. Rocke, S.J., who recommended the ban be lifted, and Dr. J.J. Curtin. Curtin's recommendation was just the opposite. Based on the titles of some of her articles in the '20s and early '30s on Modernism, without having read them, he advised Amigo: "Miss Petre, it appears has never subscribed to the decree *Lamentabili* or the encyclical *Pascendi* - a fact which Loisy notes with approval in his *Memoires* (1030-31) III, p.209 f."¹²⁹ Amigo followed Curtin's advice, and refused to lift the ban. Petre replied with her unchanged argument:

Why do you ask of me what is not asked of any other laic? And why is this old, old question to be dragged forward again? What is Modernism? I will recite the creeds solemnly if desired, but I can't make declaration about undefined matters - and as I have not the care of souls, I have certainly no obligation to take the oath.¹³⁰

After many delays, she published *My Way of Faith* in 1937. As she makes clear, it was not intended so much as a biography as a journal of her faith struggle over the years. Loisy's comment on her book is a cogent observation: "What impresses me most is the perfect sincerity of your literary approach. That is, perhaps, what will disconcert your orthodox readers. I personally am edified by it."¹³¹

As Loisy says, *My Way of Faith* is totally sincere. In telling the story of her faith journey, Petre "calls it the way she sees it." Although often she denigrates her own capabilities, it is hard to avoid the impression that her sometimes harsh assessment of herself is more the attitude expected of an aristocratic Victorian woman than a valid character analysis. The major themes that permeate the

¹²⁹ As quoted in Leonard, *Transformation*, 101-2.

¹³⁰ As quoted in Leonard, *Transformation*, 102.

¹³¹ Letter from Loisy, quoted in M.D. Petre, *Alfred F. Loisy: His Religious Significance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1944), 127.

whole book are those of her intense love of God, her deep, questioning faith, and her attempts to strengthen that love and faith through her actions. Her conflicts with the Church are told with a certain sadness, but she cannot violate her integrity and say less than she believes is her duty to her faith.

In 1938, while in France visiting Henri Brémond's niece, Suzanne, Petre made an entry in her diary that accurately sums up her life: "I am not destined to lean on others, rather they on me."¹³²

This one statement, even though written by a woman of 75, describes her life from the time she entered the *Filles de Marie* in 1890, through the Modernism period, until her death in 1942. Her time as a superior in the DHM, the association with Tyrrell, her guidance to Brémond on whether to sign the Modernist oath, her civil activities, and a host of other aspects of her life marked her as the one who led, not followed.

In 1939, Petre wrote to Pope Pius XII, attempting to regularize her canonical status. The response from Cardinal Maglione on behalf of the Pope was courteous and provided a papal blessing, but with an undertone of the old party line - take the oath and all will be forgotten: ". . . in sending to Your Ladyship his paternal blessing he blesses also - invoking upon them light and *docility of spirit* - all who in sincerity of heart are straining anxiously toward the one truth and seeking it in charity."¹³³

¹³² PP. Add. MS. 52379 (London: BL, May 10, 1938).

¹³³ PP. Add. MS. 52381 (London: BL. Letter dated April 14, 1939). Translated by Canon A. Lilley. Italics added.

With the beginning of World War II, Petre, as usual, turned to helping others. She took a First Aid course, worked with refugees, handed out food to soldiers during air raids, and became a member of the London Fire Brigade. Her last published article before her death, "A Religious Movement of the First Years of Our Century", was a capsule summary of her life and that of her friends - still maintaining what she saw as the core of Modernism:

. . . a spiritual struggle for the principle of rightful liberty and self-determination. The aim of its leaders was to make the Church "safe for democracy"; to bring the mechanism of religious life into accordance with the free spontaneous life of heart and head in the believer.¹³⁴

Maude D. Petre died on December 16, 1942. She was given a Requiem Mass at the Assumption Convent in Kensington, and was buried, at her request, in the Anglican cemetery in Storrington, next to Tyrrell and their mutual friend, Arthur Bell.¹³⁵ Her close friend, the Anglican Canon Lilley, provided her epitaph in a letter to James Walker, her literary executor, referring to her as: ". . . one of the rarest and most finely tempered Christian souls that our generation has known."¹³⁶ Possibly some day the Church she loved so much will also acknowledge the truth of his statement.

¹³⁴ M. D. Petre, "A Religious Movement of the First Years of Our Century," Horizons 6, November 1942, 330.

¹³⁵ Leonard, Transformation, 115.

¹³⁶ PP. Add. MS 52381, Letter - Lilley to Walker, (London: BL January 11, 1943).

CHAPTER III
PRE-MODERNIST PERIOD (1885 - 1900)

Introduction

This chapter begins the analysis of Petre's writings. It starts in 1885 with her first published work, "Victor Hugo" and ends with her essay "The White Robed Army," published in September 1900 as an aftermath to the Boxer Rebellion in China.¹ Both pieces appeared in the Jesuit periodical, the Month. During the later part of this period, she was in casual correspondence with Tyrrell and von Hügel, and personally occupied with her duties as local and later provincial superior of the DHM.² In 1896 Tyrrell began working as a staff writer on the Month. "The White Robed Army" is included in this section since, allowing for writing, review and publishing time, it seems likely that she wrote it before the beginning of her lasting attachment to Tyrrell and Modernism, which began with a retreat that Tyrrell gave to the DHM in July 1900.³

Petre's association with von Hügel dates from her childhood, when von

¹ M. D. Petre, "Victor Hugo," Month 54, July 1885. M. D. Petre, "The White Robed Army," Month 94, September 1900.

² Petre and Tyrrell had met casually several times, and had been in occasional correspondence. As early as 1897, Tyrrell had written to "V" on the subject of mysticism. "V" was a shorthand notation for *Vescovano*, meaning bishop, in Italian, that he used when referring to Petre. M. D. Petre, ed., George Tyrrell's Letters (London, T. Fisher Unwin Ltd.), 38. Letter dated November 25, 1897, when Tyrrell was working at Farm Street on the staff of the Month.

³ Petre, MWF, 273.

Hügel had visited Coptfold Hall on a regular basis, and was considered as a close friend of the family. She saw him fairly often after her mother's death in 1883, but it was not until 1899 or 1900 that they began frequent correspondence.⁴ Through von Hügel, Petre had become familiar with writings on and by some of the mystics,⁵ and her spiritual growth had become such that she was receptive to von Hügel's ideas and guidance:

It was after I had read something of St. Teresa, and had entered on a wider spiritual horizon, that I became accessible to minds like his; and I remember how cordially delighted he was when I first found a passage, through my reserve, to my inner soul.⁶

During this period Petre's written works are relatively few, and her involvement with Modernism was comparatively slight, this chapter will cover each of her works individually, analyzing the general content and themes.

It is important to emphasize that she had begun to write, on a variety of topics, over a decade before she even began corresponding with Tyrrell, and well before her spirituality had developed under von Hügel's guidance. The thoughts and opinions in her earlier writing are those that she either brought forward from her childhood and earlier life, or that emerged in her own reading and study. Those thoughts and opinions were shaped by both her parents - by the internal spirituality of her convert mother, and the rock steady faith of her father. It seems fair to say that her mother shaped her interior spirituality, and

⁴ Ibid., 255.

⁵ Bernard Holland, Baron Friedrich von Hügel: Selected Letters: 1896 - 1924 (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1927), 82. Von Hügel had provided a selected reading list including several mystics to Petre in December 1899.

⁶ Ibid., 254.

her father the doctrinal character of her faith. In later life, after she had joined the DHM, her interests became more focused on pastoral aspects such as helping the marginalized.⁷

It should also be kept in mind that Petre and her thought processes were shaped by her culture. Regardless of any other factors, she was a Victorian aristocrat, in the period when the sun never set on the British Empire. The days of "stiff upper lip", the "white man's burden", and the divine right of kings were all part of her mindset. Even though she was a woman in a man's world, her childhood training and her own sense of independence led her, almost instinctively, to take the positions she felt were right, regardless of the consequences. Just as she moved into a position of leadership in the DHM, once she found ideas that she supported within Modernism, she could not help but defend those ideas if she was to remain true to her upbringing.

Another facet to be considered in understanding Petre is also related to her status and upbringing as an aristocrat - her rapid advancement in the DHM. For her to move from novice to provincial in a period of just six years is a powerful commentary on both her leadership ability and the level of her spiritual development. Although she had not received the specific leadership molding that her brothers would have been exposed to in the British public schools, the whole environment of her home life would have been permeated with the idea of

⁷ Crews mentions that she was involved in promoting orphanages and settlement houses among the poor, and in instructing converts. He also says that the archives of the DHM provide few details of her work in the order. Crews, English Catholic Modernism, 9, 112, n.25.

noblesse oblige.⁸ The major pillars of her character, her faith and her independence, had been set and hardened before 1900 through her home environment and her time as a superior in the DHM. Although neither Leonard nor Crews deal specifically with the issue of her social class, it is a powerful constituent in her motivations.

Literary Criticism

We now turn to Petre's first venture in what I have categorized as literary criticism, intended to publish her opinions on the works of prominent authors of the time. As examples, I will include her essays on Victor Hugo and Oscar Wilde.

Victor Hugo (1885)⁹

Petre's first published work was an essay on Victor Hugo, written in 1885. This essay was written about the time she went to Rome to study Thomas.¹⁰ We can only speculate on her reasons for writing this piece, but in as much as it was written the year of Victor Hugo's death, it seems possible that his funeral and the attendant holiday atmosphere in France may have been a significant factor in causing her to criticize Hugo.

Her approach to her analysis of Hugo is based on both secular and religious criticism. In the secular world, she maintains that Hugo should never

⁸ This will be particularly evident in some of her later works, such as Democracy at the Crossroads, written in 1918. See Chapter VII.

⁹ M.D. Petre, "Victor Hugo," Month 94, July 1885, 318 - 30.

¹⁰ She went to Rome at the age of 22, which would have been in 1885. See Chapter II, n. 81.

have ventured into politics. She makes a variety of comments:¹¹ "Victor Hugo was not intended by Providence for a politician." She also says: "Those who admire his novels and his poetry will do well not to look at his *Actes et Paroles*, in which we have an account of his political life and speeches." And finally, she makes the critical analysis: "The best apology that can be offered for him is that his mind was not the mind of a statesman, but that of a poet and a man of letters."

One of the main bases for her analysis of Hugo was that he believed that government had no right to interfere in the life and actions of any individual. A person had an absolute right to absolute freedom, including the right to commit crime. For Hugo, good will always triumph over evil - given enough time. This was the root of his opposition to the death penalty.¹² In his mind, someone would eventually reform, and executing him or her for a crime was pre-empting that eventuality. As far as his approach to religion, Petre is very strong in her condemnation of Hugo's belief in God:

Victor Hugo has told us repeatedly that he believed in God. I suppose we have no right to refuse him credit, but it is somewhat difficult to acquire a definite notion of the nature of his faith. ... He forbids us to inquire into the nature of the God we worship, and tells us that any definite form of religion is an insult. But I think that if we analyze his teaching carefully we shall find that the God in whom he believed was a God with exactly his own opinions, who thought as he thought, and prescribed as he prescribed.¹³

In speaking of his death, Petre attacks the secularism of the people of

¹¹ Ibid., 324.

¹² Ibid., 323.

¹³ Ibid., 326.

France at his funeral in Paris: "It was a holiday through France, a day of excitement and merrymaking, the day of Victor Hugo's funeral. ... He is glorified, not for his genius and elevating doctrines, but for his tolerance of crime and his irreligion."¹⁴ Her conclusion is a summary of her opinion:

Truth lives and falsehood dies. As time goes on we shall forget the Victor Hugo who wrote against religion and against law. That was not the true man as God made him, but a perversion. Let that part of him die, and let us remember only the great poet and novelist, who has taught us tender lessons of pity and forgiveness, and who has left us the better part of himself in the portraits of Jean Valjean and Bishop Myriel.¹⁵

In any analysis of Petre's intellectual and spiritual development at this time, we need to remember that this article was probably written during her time in Rome,¹⁶ while she was still under the effects of her traditional religious upbringing. Traces of her father's Cisalpine attitudes toward the independence of the state vis-a-vis any religious strictures may be seen in her disavowal of Hugo's position on the death penalty: "... the right which law possesses to inflict death, flows from its duty to protect life."¹⁷ Given that her early education was in the home, it seems likely that her exposure to Thomist systematics was her first formal training in any kind of structured analysis. Her key point is that Hugo might have been a good writer, but he should have avoided politics. However, overall, the content and organization of this work is mainly the commentary of a

¹⁴ Ibid., 329.

¹⁵ Ibid., 330. Referring to characters in *Les Misérables*.

¹⁶ We know she was in Rome in 1885. See n.11 and Chapter II, n.81.

¹⁷ Petre, "Victor Hugo", 324.

literate, well-read woman, with strong religious beliefs, on a famous personality of her time.

Carlyle on Religious Ceremonies (1885)¹⁸

Shortly after publishing her essay on Victor Hugo, Petre wrote on Thomas Carlyle's attitude toward religious ceremonies.¹⁹ Carlyle was an essayist and historian who had lost his belief in conventional religion, and particularly felt that all external forms of religion were meaningless. Petre begins her article by comparing Carlyle's attitude toward religious ceremonial to the general attitude of the time. She addresses religious ceremonies in general, not just those of the Catholic Church. Whereas Carlyle saw religious ceremonies as an insincere, empty form with no substance, Petre's approach is to refute Carlyle's approach, using a Thomistic type of argument. She states his opinion and reasons, agrees with him if his reasoning were true, but then proceeds to refute him by providing her own arguments. Her opinion is that any fault in the observance of religious ceremonies by an individual lies not with the validity of the ceremonies but with the sincerity of the person participating in them.

The objects of religious worship are the same now as they were in the first days of Christianity. God has suffered no transformation during the last centuries. Then why are the religious forms of the past no longer suitable for the present day? Because man has changed? But he has no right to change. If God remains the same as of old, He may still exact the same service and adorations as of old. What we ask of religious rites is that they should be the fitting expression of man's relation to God. Whether they are used with sincerity is a question that affected the individual, not

¹⁸ Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) was a Scottish historian and essayist of the Victorian era.

¹⁹ M. D. Petre, "Carlyle on Religious Ceremonies," *Month* 55, November 1885, 314-21. Hereafter "Carlyle."

the rites in themselves.²⁰

Later she says: "If we use sacred words that we no longer mean, our endeavour must be not to rid ourselves of the words, but to regain the meaning, to which the understanding no longer reaches."²¹

Petre makes one very significant comment in this work: "God must be for us a real personal God, not an Unknown Cause, an Indefinite Force; or we cannot bend the knee and offer up external rites in His honor."²² For her, God is a real presence within the human soul, to Whom through our faith, we can offer worship in liturgy, not a philosophical abstraction that cannot be reached for any kind of worship. For her the transcendent God is unreachable, while the immanent God, through our faith, provides a path to salvation. Contrast this statement with her later comments about von Hügel:

Baron von Hügel, as he grew older, and as he left the Modernist movement further and further behind him, became suspicious of a certain school of thought with which he had, at one time, been in much closer sympathy; he became extremely fearful of every form of Immanentism; I should say that the last efforts of his thought were concentrated on the maintenance of the transcendency of God, and His distinct otherness from man.²³

Further, in the same work, she says: "I find it more and more difficult to think of God as ever outside and beyond us; and the notion of separateness becomes to

²⁰ Ibid., 316.

²¹ Ibid., 317.

²² Ibid., 318.

²³ Petre, *MWF*, 196.

me increasingly the rock of offense on which spiritual belief is shattered."²⁴ It seems clear that Petre's own position on the immanent vs. the transcendent God is in sharp contrast to those of von Hügel, although in this matter he was isolated from almost every other of the Modernists.²⁵ The critical point is that this essay on Carlyle was written years before the beginning of her tutelage by von Hügel, as well as before the development of her friendship with Tyrrell. In MWF she often displays her deep concern for the presence of God in her life, not as a transcendent abstraction, but an immanent reality. "What we know is that we are here, and that there is something in us that clamours for completion by One greater than ourselves."²⁶ However, her ideas on the personal presence of God did not change, but only strengthened with time.

Another area with which she deals in the essay on Carlyle is that of rationalism in terms of religious ceremonies. As she sees it, the trend in her time for individuals to consider themselves as the ultimate arbiter of truth leads to:

. . . a strong tendency to render everything subjective, to refuse all teaching that comes from an external source and imposes itself on the intellect. What wonder then if the world rebels against objective truth, that it should likewise revolt against all fixed and formed ceremonials.²⁷

Petre's basic premise in this whole essay is the need for an individual to fill him or herself with devotion to God: ". . . that the faith of others will never save us, and that the external forms of religion are of no avail to us, until we fill them

²⁴ Ibid., 197.

²⁵ Alec R. Vidler, A Variety of Catholic Modernists (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 126.

²⁶ Petre, MWF, 193.

²⁷ Petre, "Carlyle," 319.

with our own internal life."²⁸ Her fundamental belief was in a personal, omnipresent God, living within every individual, with whom it was necessary to establish contract in order to develop true spirituality. This concept will become a consistent theme in her later writings, and basic to her pastoral concerns.

Selected Writings

Aethiopum Servus: A Study in Christian Altruism (1895)

Petre's next work, chronologically, is her first book, based on the life of St. Peter Claver and developing the theme of asceticism.²⁹ Although she does not tell us specifically the occasion for writing the book, her "Prologue" gives an insight into her motives. Slavery had been abolished in England in 1838, and by this time was not a social issue. However, in the prologue she introduces two of the major themes that will weave in and out of the remainder of the text - philanthropy and suffering. This fits with her activities at the time within the DHM promoting orphanages and settlement houses among the poor, as well as instructing converts. In this book she traces the life of Peter Claver among the Indian and Negro slaves in Columbia, and uses this as a vehicle to bring out her own ideas about the differences between a saint and a philanthropist. She criticizes the liberal attitude of her time: "For we are living in days when every kind of obligation has grown burdensome; when objective law and government have become so distasteful that even the criminal will find those who excuse him for

²⁸ Ibid., 321.

²⁹ M.D. Petre, Aethiopum Servus: A Study in Christian Altruism (London: Osgood, McIlvane, 1896). Hereafter AS.

following his private inclinations. . . .³⁰ This attitude relates back to her critique in "Victor Hugo" for his tolerance of crime.³¹ She maintains that whereas a philanthropist attempts to alleviate human suffering in this life, the saint places present existence in the context of eternal life. Philanthropists may or may not be religious persons, but their motivation is based on the temporal world. In her view, Peter Claver was both a philanthropist, since he tried to alleviate the temporal suffering of the slaves, and a saint because at the same time he was bringing them to Christianity, referring to himself as "the slave of the slaves."³² Her point is that not all philanthropy involves charitable contributions or the "do-gooder" attitude of many so-called philanthropists of her time, but rather should involve a complete giving of self through love of God and neighbor as did Peter Claver.

Victorian Philanthropy: There was a pervasive debate among the English middle class during the last part of the 19th century over what constituted philanthropy. The controversy had its origins in the Poor Law of 1834, which was an attempt to provide some form of relief to those able-bodied laborers who through no fault of their own were unable to adequately support themselves and their families. It did not apply to the sick, women, or children, nor did it apply to those who refused to work. The intent was to discourage the able-bodied worker from lapsing into

³⁰ Petre, AS, 59.

³¹ Petre, "Victor Hugo," 329.

³² Petre, AS, 146.

pauperism, and to encourage those who had shown themselves to be the deserving poor by thrift and abstemiousness (particularly from alcohol). These were considered as fit subjects for philanthropy - to help those who help themselves.³³ For the Victorians, it was a matter of principle to practice charity. In 1869 the Charitable Organization Society (COS) was established to coordinate the activities of the various charitable groups in England. This was generally focused within the middle rather than the upper class, and many middle class Victorian women saw this as not only their Christian duty, but as a chance to expand their social horizons outside the home into an area which was considered as socially acceptable and even praiseworthy.³⁴ Petre's point is that although many people considered philanthropy as a religious duty, they often carried it to extremes and caused themselves suffering, as well as failing to consider the spiritual condition or needs of those who were the recipients of philanthropy. It often became a case of saving the poor sinner whether or not they wanted to be saved, at whatever cost to person doing the "saving." Regardless of her own social background, it is likely that her work among the poor had led her to see such actions as detrimental rather than helpful.

Although Aethiopum Servus is basically an historical portrayal of the life of

³³ America on Line. <http://www.brookmans.com/history/kingsford2/ch7.shtml>. Accessed 27 September 2002.

³⁴ Gertrude Himmelfarb. "Welfare and Charity: Lessons from Victorian England". America on Line. <http://www.acton.org/publicat/books/transformwelfare/himmelfarb.html>. Accessed 27 September 2002.

Peter Claver, one of the major topics that Petre uses in her descriptions is the aspect of suffering, both by Peter Claver and by the slaves he served throughout his life. As a point of reference, many aspects of her discussion of Claver's life among the slaves bears a strong resemblance to the concept of Inculturation which Peter Schineller describes in A Handbook on Inculturation, as well as that of praxis that Roberto Goizueta discusses in Camenemos con Jesús.³⁵ When Peter Claver described himself as "Petrus Claver, Aethiopum semper servus,"³⁶ he was dedicating himself to the slaves and placing himself in their human condition. This ties in directly with the attitude toward suffering which Petre discusses at length in MWF, relating it back to her childhood training. There she points out that her early training was to see suffering as a means of character building. Suffering was something to be overcome, and for the true Christian, suffering was a means of uniting with the suffering of Christ. Through suffering, the body was made subject to the soul, and thereby directed toward the ultimate life of the soul in the Kingdom.³⁷

In Aethiopum Servus, Petre builds the picture of the miserable condition of the African slaves on their way to Cartagena - their abuse and degradation and total lack of hope. "We have seen that the squalid and hopeless

³⁵ Peter Schineller, S.J., A Handbook on Inculturation (NY: Paulist Press, 1990). Roberto S. Goizueta. Camenemos con Jesús (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995). For example, Schineller says: "One overarching idea is the need for insertion. The leaders of the church, the ministers and the theologians, must be inserted in, involved in, and committed to the concrete lives of those they serve." Goizueta echoes this with his comment: "Implicit here, is an assertion that, if God is present among the poor, we can only know God if we place ourselves there also."

³⁶ Petre, AS, 146.

³⁷ Petre, MWF, 70.

wretchedness of the Negro slaves is far beyond anything we can behold in this century. Their bodies are starved and diseased, and their minds are filled with the most poignant terror and despair."³⁸ Speaking of Peter Claver's preaching to the slaves, Petre says he:

proceeds to tell them that they have reason for joy instead of sorrow; that though they endure bodily captivity, it will be to them the means of obtaining that spiritual liberty which they could never have possessed in their own country; that their sufferings may be great, but that they are not even as much as they deserve, and that they are but as a drop compared to the ocean of sorrow which was the price of their own souls.³⁹

This indicates that Petre is still at least sympathetic to the teaching of her childhood regarding suffering. Although she never actually endorses Peter Claver's preaching along these lines, she makes no special effort to agree or disagree, certainly not to put forth the condemnation of suffering for its own sake that she later expounds in MWF. Her main thrust in this whole discussion is to attack those "professional philanthropists" of her time who make a life work of alleviating the suffering of others by their own suffering, without any religious dimension being involved.

In truth, though it may seem a bold thing to say, unless we can find some philosophy of suffering which will cover voluntary penance in due order and proportion, it will be hard to justify the system of Providence, which depends on the will of God, and continually inflicts on mankind pains more severe than any which are self-imposed.⁴⁰

These people are not acting out of love of God or love of neighbor, but rather from some secular motive generated by the social attitudes of the time.

This gives one indication of Petre's changing attitudes over time. As a

³⁸ Petre, AS, 16.

³⁹ Ibid., 18.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 182.

child she was taught that suffering was valuable for building character; as a woman of 35 she commented on the topic with a certain degree of neutrality, and in her later years, condemned it to the extent it is not related to love of God.

It is not good in itself, but it is good in its results. ... And yet I cannot but feel that there are ascetical teachers whose doctrine of suffering, as of death, lays the Christian conception open to genuine criticism and objection. This is when our mortal existence is represented as contemptible save as a probation for the next one; and when earthly life and earthly happiness are allowed no value of their own.⁴¹

Finally, she sums up her ideas regarding those who are "professional philanthropists:" "But God is the Master of the system, and why need He fashion it so that one man must always suffer that another may rejoice, unless indeed there be some positive fitness of suffering to human life."⁴²

A review of AS referred to her portrayal of Peter Claver as "graphically and sympathetically told", and pointed out the value of the book for anyone working to correct the social and political problems between "the colored races and the more powerful whites."⁴³

In AS Petre addresses two main themes which are relevant to the development of her view of asceticism: suffering and philanthropy. She maintains that suffering has merit only when there is a spiritual component. She also believes that true philanthropy must relate the help given to a consideration of alleviating suffering for love of God, not purely from a mechanical or "professional" philanthropy. Rather than allowing God to provide, these people feel that they should provide. The philanthropists have thus usurped God's place in the scheme of things.

⁴¹ Petre, MWF, 72.

⁴² Petre, AS, 184.

⁴³ Review: "Life of Peter Claver and Work with Slaves." Catholic World 62, March 1896, 846. This is the first notice of her work in the U.S., where she will later publish extensively.

Shades of the Prison House (1899)⁴⁴

This article for the Month is a combination of her themes of social reform and spirituality; it is primarily a lament that commercial and mechanical progress has made human beings more interested in profit and efficiency to the detriment of art and spirituality. Whereas in the past people were able to contemplate higher subjects such as art and philosophy, the pace of modern development has made development of minor conveniences and material details more important than poetry and art, particularly that consecrated to the service of religion.⁴⁵ In her discussion she sees the poet or artist as similar to the mystic in their contemplation of the unknown: "What the poet is in things natural to the rest of mankind, that is the mystic to other believers in matters of faith and religion."⁴⁶

Even though it is not a primary theme, Petre is displaying some interest in mysticism throughout this article in her comparisons between mystics and artists. By this time she was in correspondence with von Hügel, and had been exposed to his intensive interest in mysticism. We know that she had read the life of St. Teresa;⁴⁷ "The kingdom of the mystic, who is the poet of religion, and of the poet, who is the mystic of nature, is governed by exactly opposite principles."⁴⁸ She sees the artist as someone who: ". . . gropes after something that he can never fully render, and he knows that his aim is beyond his reach." The mystic and the artist are both reaching for something outside themselves, and in the great art and cathedrals of the Middle Ages, the craftsmen combined their art

⁴⁴ M.D. Petre, "Shades of the Prison House". Month 93, April 1899, 381 - 89. Hereafter "SPH." Note that this article is unrelated to the last chapter of MWF. The phrase is taken from William Wordsworth's "Ode" (On Intimations of Immortality).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 382.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 387.

⁴⁷ See note 5. Presumably St. Teresa of Avila. Note that Tyrrell's sermon "The Gospel of Pain", was also focused on St. Teresa of Avila.

⁴⁸ Petre, "SPH," 385."

and their faith in creating great works dedicated to the glory of God.⁴⁹

Although she acknowledges the utility of modern invention, she laments what may be lost:

The hideous, painted engine is snorting before us, prepared to sweep us through the beauties of Nature, which are disfigured as it passes, and can we refuse the modern conveyance and call for a mule? . . . in our success, we have lost the power of doing anything slowly, we have adopted the means of mechanism, and can no longer imitate the methods of life.⁵⁰

Later she says:

One thing is certain, we cannot deliberately stem the stream of practical knowledge; having means scientific at our disposal, we cannot persuade men knowingly to set them aside, and attain their end by a slower and more laborious method.⁵¹

As far as the contributions of art to human worship in the past, she says:

We can no longer build cathedrals, and we cannot even paint religious pictures. Why should the *bourgeois* spirit have tainted the growth of religious art more than that of any other? It is true that the ages in which it flourished were ages of faith, but are there not many who still believe, still pray, still worship, still love?⁵²

An underlying theme throughout this essay is her spiritual and pastoral concern, shown by her concern that the changes she addresses will cause people to minimize their dependence on God, and think any progress is their own doing.

She believes that regardless of how engrossed a person might become in

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 388.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 383.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 389.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 384.

trade or science, they will always remember that they have bodies, and apply prudence, caution, and moderation to business dealings, but their connection to their soul may disappear. On the other hand, a mystic is just the opposite, and focused his or her concern on the world outside the mundane. She is here again drawing a distinction between the secular and spiritual worlds in order to support her deep belief that true spirituality consists of an inner relationship with God in all things.

How many realize that the great part of their thoughts and words are concerned with the mere surface of their lives - that their lives are spent not so much in living, as in guarding and multiplying the means of livelihood.⁵³

This article displays two aspects of Petre's character: first, her constant concern for the importance of the synthesis of body and soul in the life of human beings, and secondly, her concern that the society of the time had become so engrossed with the twin pressures of profit and efficiency that it no longer found a place for the spiritual.⁵⁴

Lawful Liberty and Reasonable Service (1899)⁵⁵

This was Petre's first published work in the United States. It is a review of George Tyrrell's book Hard Sayings⁵⁶, which he had published in 1898. Tyrrell had joined the staff of the Month in Farm Street in 1896, where he remained, off

⁵³ Ibid., 386.

⁵⁴ Strangely enough, the only place in the whole article where Petre uses either the word "God" or "Divine" is in a quote from Blessed Angela of Foligno, and yet she is obviously comparing and contrasting the secular and the Divine.

⁵⁵ M.D. Petre, "Lawful Liberty and Reasonable Service," American Catholic Quarterly Review, 24 July 1899, 90 - 101. Hereafter, "Lawful Liberty".

⁵⁶ George Tyrrell, Hard Sayings: A Selection of Meditations and Studies (London: Longman's, 1898).

and on, until he was discharged in 1900. Petre and Tyrrell had been in correspondence since 1897.⁵⁷ Although she states that they had met prior to 1900, there is no record of when or why, but Petre was living in Richmond, a London suburb, at the time, and Farm Street only about two miles away, so it is certainly possible they had met during this period. Publication of this review in an American periodical was a new venture for Petre. She was certainly not in any trouble yet with her English superiors, and Tyrrell had not yet published "A Perverted Devotion,"⁵⁸ which was to cause him his first overt problem with the censors, and "had excited the vigilance of his Italian superiors."⁵⁹ However, as Petre implies, he was definitely suspect by this time.

Up until the end of the year 1900, Father Tyrrell had no definite external trouble with his religious or ecclesiastical superiors. With care and subtlety, such as are exercised by many an extremely orthodox writer as well as by liberal ones, he had evaded the condemnation of the censors . . . and had won a hearing for ideas that might otherwise have been suppressed.⁶⁰

One possible explanation is that she published in the United States, where Tyrrell was considered less of an irritant by the censors,⁶¹ in order to avoid calling direct attention to him, with possible negative effects if the English censors decided to look at his book further. However, the most likely explanation

⁵⁷ M.D. Petre, ed., George Tyrrell's Letters, (London: T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., 1920), 38. Tyrrell had written to V. on November 25, 1897 on the subject of Mysticism, obviously responding to questions she had asked him.

⁵⁸ George Tyrrell, "A Perverted Devotion," Weekly Register, December 16, 1899.

⁵⁹ Petre, MWF, 290.

⁶⁰ M.D. Petre, Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell, 2 vols. (London: Edward Arnold, 1912). Hereafter Life I and Life II.

⁶¹ William L. Portier, "Tyrrell in America," U.S. Catholic Historian Volume 20, Number 3 (Summer 2002): 86.

is that she was merely capitalizing on the relatively small number of English speaking Catholic periodicals available to religious writers of the time. The American Catholic Quarterly Review (ACQR) routinely published articles from the Month, and Tyrrell was considered by American readers as an extremely popular spiritual writer in the ACQR, the American Ecclesiastical Review (AER), Ave Maria, and Catholic World, at least until the controversy over "A Perverted Devotion" broke in 1900.

Hard Sayings is a collection of Tyrrell's meditations, sermons, and lectures, covering a broad range of topics, from sin and suffering to the mystical body. He is approaching the end of his "mediating orthodoxy"⁶² phase, and most of the individual works within Hard Sayings are still within the bounds of orthodox dogma. Petre's review is a combination of extensive quotes from Tyrrell, combined with her own commentary, which, on the surface often seems unrelated to the work in question. For example, in one place she displays her Cisalpine heritage: "Anarchy, in the civil order, is a condition of things in which no man can be secure of his individual rights; in religion it means an intrusion of the public into our most private and sacred affairs."⁶³

She is also beginning to display her inclinations toward the ideas of Modernism, at least in the sense of adapting to the modern age. Commenting on some other reviews that considered Hard Sayings as "up to date" asceticism,

⁶² Petre, Life II, 98.

⁶³ Petre, "Lawful Liberty," 95.

she says: "That a breath of the *Zeitgeist* blows through it is undeniable, for it is to the mind of today that it is addressed, it is the difficulties of our present age that are chiefly held in view."⁶⁴

One of Tyrrell's sermons, included in Hard Sayings, given on October 15, 1896, is entitled "The Gospel of Pain."⁶⁵ Much of the content of the sermon, as well as the appendix amplifying the text, appear to be similar in content to the description and context Petre uses in 1895 for describing the suffering of Peter Claver and the Negro slaves in Aethiopum Servus. We know that they had met prior to the retreat in July 1900. "I had met Father Tyrrell a few times before we became closely acquainted during the course of a retreat he gave, in July of 1900."⁶⁶ Is it possible that Tyrrell had read Aethiopum Servus, and used it as a foundation for his sermon? If they had been in correspondence as a result of Petre's book, this could explain Petre's reason for reviewing Hard Sayings. There is no hard evidence of this, other than an identical quote in both works from Thomas a' Kempis: ". . . if thou carry the Cross willingly, it will carry thee"⁶⁷, one that would have been readily available, but some of the general thoughts are the same.

Other than the direct quote, there are at least a dozen other similarities related to the topic of suffering and pain. However, the strongest thread that

⁶⁴ Ibid., 91.

⁶⁵ George Tyrrell, S.J., "The Gospel of Pain." and "Appendix: Note to the Gospel of Pain," Hard Sayings (London: Longmans, 1898).

⁶⁶ Petre, MWF, 273.

⁶⁷ Thomas á Kempis. Imitation of Christ, Book Two, Chapter 12.5.

runs through both works is a criticism of professional philanthropists who compulsively seek to eliminate all human suffering without regard for its value or without considering any spiritual dimension. Tyrrell, in his position on the Month, would have had ready access to religious books and periodicals. It is at least possible that the simplest answer to account for this pattern of similarities is that Tyrrell had read Aethiopum Servus prior to his 1896 sermon, and that his treatment of human suffering in "The Gospel of Pain" is derivative from Petre's writing.

Several of Petre's themes can be related back to her previous works. As she did in "Shades of the Prison House", she mentions the problem of the pace of modern life that leaves no time for assimilating art or spiritual reflection, quoting from Tyrrell.⁶⁸ She also questions those ascetics who adopt a utilitarian approach to art and spirituality and eliminate everything that is not obviously related to the modern age.⁶⁹ She relates to her criticism of modern philanthropy from AS:

When shall we learn, in things that concern the mind and heart, that it is as tyrannical to shout in a man's ears when he does not want to hear, as forcibly to prevent him from listening when he would. That we can sin against man's liberty as much in stripping him of what he likes to wear as in covering him with wraps he feels heavy and oppressive.⁷⁰

Her ideas of freedom of conscience are reflected toward the end of the article; "It comes then to this - the rebel, whether civil or religious, is *a/ways* right in resisting compulsion, but is often wrong in his estimate of what compulsion

⁶⁸ Tyrrell. "The Hidden Life", Hard Sayings, 25. The article in the American Catholic Quarterly Review erroneously refers to it as "The Higher Life".

⁶⁹ See "Shades of the Prison House", 383.

⁷⁰ Petre, "Lawful Liberty," 94-5.

really is."⁷¹ "The principle of personal independence is based then on the presence of God in the soul, speaking by the voice of conscience, and if thus understood cannot be exaggerated."⁷² "It is in that hall of conscience, that seat of the particular judgment, that the dispute must finally be terminated. . . ." ⁷³ This attitude reflects both the Cisalpine position that she will later develop in MWF and 9LP and the training in honor characteristic of the English aristocracy.

One final point concludes the article; although still relating to freedom of conscience, it again points to her developing antipathy toward the attitude within the Church that authority is to be unhesitatingly accepted, not to be questioned.

But just as there exists a political party which would force the public law into private affairs, . . . so has there also been a certain school of asceticism which would regulate the diverse and varying needs of the individual according to an iron law of common convenience and would crush personal energy rather than liberate the slightest divergence from the beaten track.⁷⁴

Much of this article is more a presentation of Petre's own ideas, particularly on individual freedom of conscience, than a pure literary review of Tyrrell's work. Since this article and "Shades of the Prison House" were written only two months apart, it is not surprising that many of the same thoughts recur.

Petre's writing in this article covers a number of themes. Although it falls into the overall category of literary criticism, it certainly spills over into the categories of religion, with her comments on anarchy in religion and asceticism, and even somewhat into sociology when she bemoans the effect of modern life on spirituality and her criticisms of philanthropy.

⁷¹ Ibid., 98. Original italics.

⁷² Ibid., 99.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 100. It is impossible to tell if Tyrrell's work influenced this essay.

Stray Thoughts on the Women's International Congress (1899)⁷⁵

This article is the last of the works that Petre wrote during her pre-Modernist period. Whether she intends it as such or not, it is a vehicle indicating the breadth of interest that she is developing, as well as her own increasing willingness to set out her own opinions. By this time, she has been local superior and provincial of the DHM for 3 years; she is experienced in being in a position of authority, and has written enough that she is comfortable expressing herself in print.

She begins with the contrast between the era of exploration, with the attempts of various European countries to exploit the people and riches of the New World and Africa, and her time, when there is a climate of intellectual exchange: ". . . to the exploring of opinions instead of countries, to the exchange of thoughts instead of merchandise, to the conquest of minds instead of bodies."⁷⁶ However, her objectivity may be somewhat biased by her sense of nationalism and British national arrogance. In the Victorian era, British imperialism was a fact of life, particularly for the aristocracy. She says in reference to this intellectual exchange: "our victory shall be measured by our sympathy, and our intercourse shall possess that charm which exists when a number of cultivated people have agreed to make the best of one another."⁷⁷ She maintains that: "Minds are gained by persuasion and not coercion."⁷⁸ Her whole approach seems directed toward an idealistic plea to the European intelligentsia, in an era when such policies as American expansionism into the

⁷⁵ M. D. Petre, "Stray Thoughts on the Women's International Congress," *Month* 94, August 1899, 186-93. Hereafter "Stray Thoughts."

⁷⁶ Petre, "Stray Thoughts", 186.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 187.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

Pacific, German conquests in Africa, and British exploitation of India were reshaping the entire face of the world. She speaks of "a spirit of broad, universal tolerance,"⁷⁹ a situation which applied in neither the world of international politics or that of academe, e.g. Darwinism was a major division in the world of science, and papal infallibility was still a point of contention between Catholics and many of the world's other Christian denominations.

A large section of this essay seems to be a combination of patronizing comments and pastoral concern. On the one hand, she displays a distinct attitude of social and intellectual class superiority, describing the poor in terms of their miserable working and living conditions, speaking as if she were a member of a ruling class commenting on those who live in a different world.

To the poor inhabitants of crowded towns it is second nature to breathe exhausted air, and live in serried throngs. Even pleasure is not pleasure to them unless they take it together in dense ranks; and the conditions of light, space, and air, so necessary to more refined natures, are to them quite indifferent. But the result is a stunted, underdeveloped physique, wanting in healthy robustness and vigour.⁸⁰

On the other hand, she devotes a great deal of the article to her pastoral concerns over the social conditions of women and the importance of their being able to free themselves from the situations that lead to abuse and marginalization.

Another strong topic in this work is the importance of freedom of thought and the ability to carry out intellectual pursuits without pressure to bring them to light prematurely. "A mind that dwells in its own home can afford delay; its ideas

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

are its life, and are cherished, not for their instant result, but for their own truth and beauty."⁸¹ The danger being: "we must speak quickly lest others speak before us; and our half-formed conceptions are hurried to the light, lest others should produce a similar article first."⁸²

Feminism: This article is the first time Petre introduces her ideas on the role of women in society, so a brief digression at this point seems appropriate. Her ideas on feminism and the suffrage movement will be addressed in more detail in Chapter VIII. In an article in 1988, and again in *Transformation*, Leonard refers to her as a "soft feminist" and properly points out that the term means different things to different people.⁸³ She would have disagreed strongly with those feminists of the late 20th century who sought total equality with men, because she would have seen their approach as denying their basic feminine nature. In Petre's opinion, the danger in total equality was the abrogation of those characteristics that are unique to the feminine character.

Although Petre refers to her mother as "what we would now call a feminist,"⁸⁴ it is in the context of an advocate of women's rights in a society which

⁸¹ Ibid., 189.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ellen Leonard, C.S.J., "Other Modernisms: Maude Petre and the Place of Dissent," *Month* December 1988, 1010. Her usage is taken from a paper delivered by Beverly Harrison in 1974, referring to those who accept the notion of woman's "special nature", but use this as a reason why women should move beyond the home to "feminize" the public world. See note 15 of the above.

⁸⁴ Petre, *MWF*, 11.

denied women the right to vote, own property, inherit land, etc., and where domestic violence against women was treated as a trivial misdemeanor. In Petre's case, her position is that of someone who felt that women had a right to their own intellectual and social independence, while still retaining those intellectual and emotional characteristics that contribute to their distinct femininity. As Ellen Leonard points out: "She was clearly *not* interested in 'women's rights,' but she was very interested in 'women's emancipation'."⁸⁵ She is hard on the suffragette movement in England in the late 19th century and early twentieth century⁸⁶ because she felt that it was too one dimensional, and that the cause of seeking the vote would not gain the freedom of choice and independence which she saw as women's rights. Petre was a person who cared about people, regardless of gender, race, religion, but from the viewpoint of someone who still saw her world comprising a distinct class structure, in which her own status required her to take an active part in improving the status of those in the lower classes, whether it be that of better religious instruction, improved living conditions, or opposition to unjust laws. In this article, she says:

We have no intention of entering on the discussion of professions suitable or not suitable for women... It is certain that many single women, and a few married ones, are bound to make a living somehow, and that educated women are no more bound than educated men to eke out their existence by manual drudgery.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Leonard, *Transformation*, 120.

⁸⁶ PP, Add. MS. 52374 (London: BL, July 7, 1908).

⁸⁷ Petre, "Stray Thoughts", 189.

She sees it as important that people, particularly women, should have the right to help others as they choose, in either the public or the private sphere, and that either, although good in itself, cannot be compared to the other. She uses the example of a mother caring for her family, and a nun caring for the sick: "The two kinds of work are absolutely different in nature and kind, and statistics are useless as a standard of measurement."⁸⁸ Similarly, women should have the right to choose their own careers, in the home, or business, or politics - just as men do. Tyrrell would disagree with Petre at this point. Although he maintains that the Church has raised the status of women over the centuries, he also strongly feels that women are unsuited to certain occupations. "It is certainly a pleasure to think that at least one-half of humanity is exempted from the risk of moral and physical degradation attendant on many occupations and callings in the political, civil, and industrial world."⁸⁹

Here again she returns to her theme of the need for a spiritual dimension in altruism, whether it be public or private - the reformer working for repeal of unjust laws, or the mother caring for her family:

Let us ask ourselves whether it is greater love to die for the many in general, or for one in particular...personal love of God or man has a hold which no abstract devotion can attain...but let them not forget that the concrete is more than the abstract, and that, though it is good to live or die for the whole world, it is even better to be ready to make the same sacrifice for a single soul in it.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Ibid., 190.

⁸⁹ George Tyrrell, "The Old Faith and the New Woman," American Catholic Quarterly Review 22, July 1897, 644.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 192-3.

The general themes of this article fall into the categories of religion and sociology. In religion she addresses pastoral concerns with her compassion for the poor and her plea for a spiritual dimension in altruism. In sociology she touches on international relations in her discussion for the need for intellectual exchange between nations. Her opinions on feminism fall primarily into the sociology category. She is concerned about marginalization of the women of her time, and the importance of intellectual freedom and the right of women to choice in their lifestyle. A common minor thread running through the article is that of Petre's uncritical, or perhaps even unconscious, acceptance of the intellectual and social gap between the various social classes of her day.

"The White Robed Army" (1900)⁹¹

This article was written after an address by the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, warning missionaries in China of the dangers they faced during the Boxer Rebellion.⁹² In this work, Petre is pointing out that the concept of martyrdom has changed from the early days of the Church, when a person's faith and his or her adherence to it were the only criteria that were important. She says:

The missionary of the nineteenth century is no longer a simple preacher of the gospel truth . . . he is, nevertheless, a representative, at the same

⁹¹ M.D. Petre, "The White Robed Army," *Month* 96, September 1900, 225 - 32.

⁹² The Boxer Rebellion began in 1899 with the rise to power of a nationalist Chinese group known as the Society of the Fists of Righteous Harmony, which became known in the West as the Boxers. In 1900 they besieged the foreign embassies in Beijing for 55 days until an international relief force of some 20,000 troops relieved the city. The Boxers were notorious for their harsh treatment of foreign missionaries, which sparked Lord Salisbury's warning.

time, of his country's influence . . . To sum up the whole matter, the missionary does not belong to himself alone, nor must he entirely sunder the religious and the political aspects of his work.⁹³

Part of this essay can again be seen as related to her mindset as a Victorian aristocrat. Many of the missionaries saw their role (the "white man's burden") as not only one of bringing religion to the natives, but also as providing them access to the advantages of British culture.

Her initial approach in this piece is that a missionary may be put to death simply because he or she is a foreigner, rather than because they have made a conscious effort to uphold their faith. In her mind "Martyrdom does not depend, then on a choice of alternatives, nor on the exact motive of the persecutor. It is based on grounds more spiritual and intrinsic, less subject to external causes."⁹⁴

Thus in the contemporary usage of her time, "the conception of a martyr as a man *who dies* for faith or charity passes into that of one *who is killed* for the same reason."⁹⁵ She feels that a true martyr is one who deliberately and consciously makes the decision to remain true to his or her faith in the face of the threat of death, regardless of whether he or she had previously been a spiritual person. In times of stress, the true inner spirituality of a person is revealed. It may require an incident of extreme danger to bring out the adequate expression of a person's true love of God.

Petre interjects a criticism of religious authority directed mainly at religious

⁹³ Petre, "The White Robed Army", 224.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 226-7.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 227. Original italics.

orders, comparing the use of as external factors such as rules and organization used to bring a person closer to God:

It has been taught that sanctity consists not in doing great things, but in doing small things perfectly well; . . . The suffering that is caused by these well-meaning efforts [rules and organization] is again a result of that ever recurring tendency to urge the material to the detriment of the spiritual sense of any doctrine.⁹⁶

Although practice of menial duties can lead to heroic sanctity, it is not the practice of these tasks that of itself leads the soul to God, but rather the charity involved in ignoring the external circumstances. Thus the real glory of martyrdom is that a person's true inner spirituality is revealed through witnessing to a person's faith through their death.

Petre's overall approach in this article returns to one of her consistent themes - the presence of God. For her, it is absolutely vital for a person to develop their relationship with God by discovering that deeper part of their being that yearns to know and love God above everything else - their "restless heart." Regardless of the status of a person's previous relationship with God, someone who chooses God above everything else, in the face of possible death, can be called a martyr.

General Themes for the Period

Looking at the overall period, we can see Petre broadening her scope of interest, and beginning to display her individuality in her presentation of her chosen topics. She is gaining her own voice as a writer. Most of her writing falls

⁹⁶ Ibid., 231. It seems probable that she is referring to more structured religious orders than to the less formally organized DHM.

into the religion and sociology categories. The most consistent theme that runs through her work for this period is that of spirituality, stemming from pastoral concern. She particularly stresses the concept of Divine Immanence as reflected in "Carlyle on Religious Ceremonies", "Shades of the Prison House", and "The White Robed Army." However, her approach is more than an academic disagreement with the transcendent God of von Hügel. For her the presence of God is a pastoral concern - no one can be truly religious or in touch with their own relationship with God unless they understand the indwelling of God in the human spirit, and are able to integrate their spiritual and personal selves. In one sense this idea of Divine Immanence and human spirituality shows through in "The White Robed Army", when she defines a true martyr as one who makes a critical spiritual choice. Her pastoral concern is strongest in "Stray Thoughts on the Women's International Congress", although the primary emphasis in that work is on intellectual freedom, and shows also in "Lawful Liberty & Reasonable Service."

Petre gives us no direct indication of why she wrote Aethiopum Servus. It is at one level a biographical and historical description of St. Peter Claver's work with the Negro slaves of Columbia, but on another, more implicit, level it is a condemnation of the Church's position on slavery over the centuries, and on yet another level, a theological reflection on the meaning of human suffering, and a condemnation of those who attempt to eliminate all human suffering through misplaced altruism. It is possible that this book is an attempt to concretize her

fantasies from her early childhood, when her goal in life was to be a philosopher, a saint, and a martyr.⁹⁷ However, the most obvious rationale for this book is her growing pastoral concern for the marginalized, rising out of her experience with the poor as a member of the DHM.

A minor thread of mysticism runs through much of her early work, e.g. in "Shades of the Prison House," although it is not a dominant or even a major theme. Minor topics include thoughts on separation of Church and state in "Lawful Liberty & Reasonable Service," and a criticism of modern progress as it interferes with intellectual pursuits in "Shades of the Prison House," which is also reflected briefly in "Lawful Liberty & Reasonable Service," in a quote from Tyrrell.

Although not a theme, per se, the concept of social class is frequently evident in many of Petre's writings. It is evident that she considers all humans as equal in the sight of God, but it is equally obvious that their equality does not extend to the social or intellectual world. She would have had no compunction about working with the marginalized persons of her day, as a matter of fact, she would have seen it as her duty, but she would never have considered them as her social or intellectual equals. For Petre, her status as an educated Victorian aristocrat was simply a fact of life, not much different from the fact that her hair might be brown - she could do nothing to change either.

As would be expected, there is little in her writing for this period that indicates any significant Modernist content, or that appears to be derivative from

⁹⁷ Petre, *MWF*, 65.

any Modernist authors. Her pastoral concerns would track with those of Tyrrell, as would her insistence on an immanent vs. a transcendent God, but her interests appear to be those formed through her own study and spirituality. During this period, Tyrrell had published several articles, and three books,⁹⁸ Loisy had not yet published *L'Evangile et L'Eglise* or *Autour d'un Petit Livre*, and von Hügel was primarily in the letter writing mode while working on his later books. It is almost certain that Petre had access to Tyrrell's work, and after 1899 or 1900 she was under von Hügel's tutelage.⁹⁹

Two ideas that Petre focuses on during this period appear totally outside the scope of any writings of the other Modernist principals - those of the legitimacy of spiritual doubt, and of the criticism of professional philanthropists. The other themes, pastoral concerns, suffering, mysticism, and Divine immanence have developed from her own beliefs, even though they will later parallel some of the thoughts of Tyrrell, von Hügel, and Loisy. Her correspondence indicates that these men saw her as a discussion partner, not a bystander. For example, in one series of letters, Tyrrell is obviously in a discussion mode over the nature of the subconscious;

I see more clearly where we split in our view of the subconscious self. With you, as with F.W. Myers, it is the fuller, realer self of the future, forcing itself up into the light. With me it is the accumulation of past life, the formed or dead matter which gets pushed behind and congested as

⁹⁸ He had published at least 7 articles in the *Month* between 1893 and 1899. *Nova et Vetera* (1897), *Hard Sayings* (1898), and *External Religion: Its Use and Abuse* (1899), all of which went into multiple reprints.

⁹⁹ Bernard Holland, ed. *Baron Friedrich von Hügel: Selected Letters: 1896 - 1924* (London: J.M.Dent & Sons Ltd., 1927), 82. In this particular letter, written December 5, 1899, von Hügel is recommending a series of books on German mystics for Petre to read.

life goes on. . . . We both agree, though you sometimes have denied it, that full consciousness is the higher state. . . .¹⁰⁰

This kind of dialog is typical of her correspondence with her associates, and consistently indicates that they considered her as an intellectual equal.¹⁰¹

Analysis of this chapter provides the foundation for establishing Petre as a capable author, with varied interests, even before she became associated with Modernism.

¹⁰⁰ Letter from Tyrrell to "V" dated May 30, 1902. M.D. Petre, George Tyrrell's Letters (London: T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd., 1920), 205.

¹⁰¹ The only major exception is her early correspondence with von Hügel, when he was guiding her in her spiritual studies.

CHAPTER IV

PETRE AND TYRRELL

One other factor needs to be discussed before looking at Maude Petre's work in detail - her relationship with George Tyrrell. In My Way of Faith, Petre devotes an entire chapter to her personal relationship with Tyrrell.¹ "For the first time in my life I cared for someone enough to be ready to risk all in his companionship."² Even though it was written over three decades after the events she describes, it paints a clear picture of her feelings and emotions that is borne out by the entries in her journals for the actual time period. In the next chapter I will deal with the effect of her relationship on her writing, but in this chapter I want to define the nature of the relationship, and the circumstances surrounding its development. This chapter will show that Petre's affection for Tyrrell profoundly affected her life and even after his death determined the course of her writing.

Prior to the retreat Tyrrell gave to the DHM in 1900,³ Petre and Tyrrell had met casually several times, and had been in occasional correspondence. As early as 1897, Tyrrell had written to "V" apparently responding to her on the

¹ Petre, MWF, Chapter XX, 270 - 88.

² *Ibid.*, 271.

³ See Chapter III, n.69.

subject of mysticism.⁴ In a letter somewhere around the 1st of September 1900, she had written to him explaining her feeling, and although her letter has not survived, the tone of his response and her own comments indicate that both had initially accepted the relationship as a platonic, intellectual friendship. Petre added an additional factor: "And from that time forth, my friendship with George Tyrrell took on, ever increasingly, the character of a spiritual vocation."⁵ This attitude, even at the secular level, was perfectly in keeping with the prevalent attitude of Victorian women that their role in life was to support men's work.⁶

It is important to understand the total scope of her relationship with George Tyrrell. Her journal indicates that she was deeply in love with him, and at the same time realized the impossibility of their ever marrying. "To me the continuance of his life as a Catholic priest mattered more than anything else, and I would have certainly died to secure his spiritual safety."⁷ ". . . quite frankly, I was conscious, in my friend, of what seemed to me a kind of satanic daring in regard to his spiritual destiny."⁸ Crews says: "The diaries for the early part of the Petre-Tyrrell friendship reveal a deeply troubled woman. They show Maude Petre as emotionally attached to Tyrrell, but 'determined to make this affection all

⁴ M.D. Petre, ed., George Tyrrell's Letters (London: T. Fisher Unwin LTD., 1920), 38. Hereafter Letters. Her question was apparently whether it was inappropriate to apply the word "mysticism" to love of God. Petre also references a letter of August 4, 1900, where Tyrrell is discussing his feeling about going to Richmond. Petre, Life II, 131.

⁵ Ibid., 276.

⁶ Leonard, Transformation, 126.

⁷ Petre, MWF, 278-9.

⁸ Ibid., 279. It is interesting to note that this idea of "satanic daring" is prevalent in Tyrrell's description of his religious experimentation leading up to his becoming a Catholic, as reflected in Vol. I of Life.

that it ought to be; to constantly raise it and purify it"⁹ Leonard says, referring to the years from 1900-1907:

Despite the anxieties of the modernist struggle and the pain that the relationship with Tyrrell brought her, Petre looked back on these turbulent years as the catalyst of her own mission, and her commitment to Tyrrell and his mission. It was a precious time that transformed her utterly.¹⁰

Loomer has stated, in speaking about the Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell: ". . . it was precisely her devotion to Tyrrell's memory that prevented her from seeing him whole and made it impossible for her to achieve the distance and objectivity prerequisite for approaching the man."¹¹ The significant question for the present work is not whether Petre was or was totally unbiased in her analysis of Tyrrell's writing, but rather the effect that the relationship had on Petre's own work. Because of her love for Tyrrell, she obviously presented a favorable picture of him. For example, a comparison of the first and second volumes of the Life shows this. Tyrrell wrote the first volume, even though Petre edited it, and presents himself as self-centered - initially interested in Catholicism because of the social danger involved - something to shock his Protestant friends and relations. He was generally critical of those he first met after joining the Jesuits because of their lack of intellectual prowess. In the second volume, Petre's biography of Tyrrell, she shows him more as a troubled soul, unfairly prevented by the Jesuits and the Church hierarchy from fulfilling his true role in providing spiritual guidance. What is interesting and revealing is the analysis of

⁹ Crews, Modernism, 13.

¹⁰ Leonard, Transformation, 23.

¹¹ Thomas Michael Loomer, Liberal Catholicism, Reform Catholicism, Modernism (Mainz, Germany: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1979), 17.

Petre's journals for the first decade of the twentieth century, which lay out the agony she felt about the lack of reciprocity in her love for Tyrrell, and the indifference he showed to their relationship, even though he continued to exploit it.

Three primary sources provide insight into the relationship between Petre and Tyrrell - Petre's journals, and Tyrrell's letters to Petre, both held in the Petre Papers collection in the British Library, and Petre's George Tyrrell's Letters.¹² Her journals cover the entire period of her relationship with Tyrrell, as well as the later periods of her life. In her capacity as his literary executor, she destroyed many of Tyrrell's letters to her, but some of the earlier ones survive as witness to Tyrrell's initial feelings, as well as many extracts which she included in the Life and Letters as letters to "V."¹³ I do not intend to attempt a psychological analysis of either party, but rather to provide insight into the stresses and attitudes which affected their relationship and her writing.

Before starting on the analysis of their relationship, a brief chronology of the major events in their lives during the period will set the framework for the discussion.

- 1897 - November 1 ... Response by Tyrrell to Petre letter on Mysticism¹⁴
- 1900 - July Tyrrell gives a retreat to the DHM. ¹⁵
- 1900 - Late Summer . Petre in Engelberg, Switzerland for a rest ¹⁶
- 1900 - September 10 Petre began a journal at Tyrrell's suggestion. ¹⁷
- 1900 - Aug/Sept Letters to/from Tyrrell discussing her love for him ¹⁸

¹² Petre, Letters.

¹³ See note 4 above.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Petre, MWF, 273.

¹⁶ Ibid., 274.

¹⁷ PP. Add. MS. 52372 (London: BL, September 10, 1900).

¹⁸ Ibid., *passim*.

- 1900 - September In Paris with Brémond for a General Chapter of the DHM¹⁹
 1901 - February 2..... Renewed her vows in the DHM for 1 year²⁰
 1901 - May 23 Took a vow of perpetual chastity²¹
 1902 June - 1904 September. . . Living at 24 Newbiggin in Richmond, Yorkshire caring for her nephews. Tyrrell also in Richmond²²
 1905 - January Resigned as provincial superior, still provincial councilor²³
 1905 - February 22.... Petre resigns as provincial councilor of the DHM²⁴
 1905 - Late Tyrrell leaves Richmond²⁵
 1906 - February 1..... Tyrrell expelled from the Society of Jesus²⁶
 1906 - April 24..... Tyrrell moves to Clapham, near the Shelleys²⁷
 1906 - October 28 Petre moves to Storrington - buys Mulberry House²⁸
 1906 - December Tyrrell moves to Storrington - living in Premonstratensian monastery²⁹
 1907 - May Tyrrell moves to Mulberry House cottage.³⁰
 1907 - July 3..... *Lamentabile Sane Exitu*³¹
 1907 - September 8 ... *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*³²
 1908 - February 2..... Petre leaves the DHM³³
 1909 - July 15..... Death of Tyrrell³⁴

First of all, there is absolutely no evidence that there was at any time an improper sexual relationship between the two. Petre would have seen such a relationship as hostile to Tyrrell's status as a priest, although, as will be shown, she was frequently taken with thoughts and desires in that direction. Petre saw Tyrrell as her vocation in life, but at the same time, her own human desires often

¹⁹ Ibid., September 30, 1900.

²⁰ Ibid., February 2, 1901.

²¹ Ibid., May 23, 1901

²² Petre, *MWF*, 283.

²³ PP. Add. MS. 52373 (London: BL, January 18, 22, 30, 1905).

²⁴ Ibid., February 22, 1905.

²⁵ Petre, *MWF*, 283.

²⁶ Petre, *Life II*, Appendix VII, 502.

²⁷ Ibid., 299.

²⁸ PP. Add. MS. 57374 (London: BL, October 28, 1906).

²⁹ Petre, *Life II*, 311.

³⁰ Ibid., 315.

³¹ *Lamentabili*, as quoted in Reardon, *Roman Catholic Modernism*, 242 ff.

³² *Pascendi*, as quoted in Hoffman, *The Gospel and the Church*, 217 - 268.

³³ She formally left when her temporary vows expired. Leonard, *Transformation*, 50. She began renewing her temporary vows for one year at a time in 1901. PP. Add. MS. 52372 (London: BL, February 2, 1901).

³⁴ Petre, *Life II*, 433.

caused her great pain. For example, while staying in Montreaux during her European vacation which had started at Engelberg, Switzerland, she writes: "Dancing this evening at the hotel. The sound of it always rouses the 'world' in me, and gives me dissipated cravings. I have failed much today on that point; must pull up again."³⁵ A little later, while back in London, she worries about the societal perceptions of their relationship: "I must guard every bulwark of chastity - not act in defiance of convention in the least way,"³⁶ and later in the year, referring to Tyrrell: "It is horrible to me that I may be a difficulty and a cause of temptation to him instead of a help."³⁷ Her problems continue over many years. In 1905 she writes: "Frightful temptations last week, all in a certain direction."³⁸ Later, in July, she becomes more open and specific:

I feel in some ways more convinced of the good of the Church than of the Gospel. And yet there are times when I would almost have the faith shaken, for temptation has been very violent these last days, and how gladly would I see a certain Gospel prohibition removed.³⁹

Later, in 1908 she is still disturbed by their relationship: "I am horribly down. I want what I cannot have."⁴⁰ She later specifies exactly what it is she cannot have:

The craving for home and the peace and duties of married life has been tearing me to pieces of late. That and the sickness at Montreaux had a

³⁵ PP. Add. MS. 52372 (London: BL, September 26, 1900). Original quotes and underlining.

³⁶ Ibid., October 22, 1900.

³⁷ Ibid., December 19, 1900.

³⁸ PP. Add. MS. 52373 (London: BL, June 12, 1905). Although not explicitly stated, the general context of her journal entry is sexual longing.

³⁹ Ibid., July 24, 1905. It is difficult to specify exactly which prohibition she is referring to. The gospel texts on sexual conduct deal mainly with adultery. She may have meant scriptural text, which would allow inclusion of the Old Testament prohibitions on fornication.

⁴⁰ PP. Add. MS. 52374 (London: BL, May 14, 1908).

disastrous effect in that respect, although I do not care to write down the exact way in which it was brought about.⁴¹

Again, it should be emphasized that there is no evidence that Petre ever acted on any of her temptations. On the contrary, she seems to have used them as a motivation for increased prayer, although sometimes it appears that she dwells excessively on the suffering aspect, e.g. "I am willing to be pilloried with him, but not to cause him to be pilloried. How simple death would be!"⁴²

Tyrrell, although some writers have raised the question whether he was a homosexual,⁴³ seems more likely to be socially immature - a description which is reinforced by his description of his childhood and adolescence in his Autobiography,⁴⁴ which portrays him as a "loner," more interested in mechanics and intellectual exercises than in any kind of significant social life, with men or women. How then did their relationship of more than 10 years begin and what was its nature? In most cases their own words paint the picture, and I will use extensive quotes, with minimum interpretation.

As previously mentioned, the earliest extant letter between the two is one that Tyrrell wrote to Petre on November 5, 1897,⁴⁵ on the subject of mysticism.

⁴¹ Ibid., June 14, 1908. The illness she refers to was a fall while visiting in France, leading to a dislocated shoulder, which required extensive recuperation at a sanatorium in Montreaux. Again, it is difficult to determine just what it is that she doesn't care to write down, but in the overall context of her journal entries for this time, sexual desire seems likely.

⁴² Ibid., August 8, 1905.

⁴³ In her book, Prophets and Guardians (London: Hollis & Carter, 1969) Meriol Trevor raised the question of Tyrrell's possible homosexuality. Even though she eventually concluded that he was emotionally immature rather than homosexually inclined, the potential question was raised, and despite Thomas Loome's refutation of the possibility in "Tyrrell's Letters to André Raffalovich," Month, March 1970, 138-40, the question still arises. See David G. Schultenover, S.J., George Tyrrell: In Search of Catholicism (Shepherdstown: Patmos Press, 1981), 394-5, n. 28, and Leonard, Transformation, 24.

⁴⁴ Petre, Life I, passim.

⁴⁵ Petre, Letters, 38ff.

Judging from his response, she had written questioning whether it was appropriate to use the word "mysticism" to apply to love of God. Tyrrell's response is friendly and scholarly, basically agreeing with her position, and encouraging her to push further.

Multiple letters from Tyrrell to Petre between 1897 and 1900 still exist in the British Library, and indicate a deepening intellectual relationship. Some brief excerpts include:⁴⁶ "July 8, 1898 - Wimbledon College: Commerce and machinery are undoubtedly at the root of the evil you combat."⁴⁷ Later in the same letter he writes:

If you have influence or interests to get it with one of the quarterlies I think it would do good. I should omit the explicit allusion to America on p. 9 because you have many sympathetic readers who would be offended. We can hardly afford to throw stones across the Atlantic in this matter.⁴⁸

Then later he says:

April 19, 1899 - Wimbledon College - I am afraid there is not too much intelligent interest abroad in matters of asceticism and their ethical bearing, nor do 3% of the readers of Hard Sayings see the far-reaching which it quickly assumes,

Sometime between 28 May and 15 August, 1899, while Tyrrell was working at Farm Street, he wrote, concerning Petre's "Temperament of Doubt":⁴⁹ "I like this more than I can tell. It is very bold and yet very sound."⁵⁰

⁴⁶ All quotes in this section are from PP. Add. MS. 52367 (London: BL), dates as indicated.

⁴⁷ Possibly referring to the ideas that she expressed in "Shades of the Prison House", published in April 1899. See Chapter III.

⁴⁸ There is no evidence as to what work is being discussed. Aethiopum Servus had been published in 1896, but it seems unlikely she would be trying to get it into a quarterly after it had been published as a book.

⁴⁹ Later published in Catholicism and Independence.

⁵⁰ PP. Add. MS. 52367 (London: BL, sometime between May 28 and August 15, 1900).

On August 15, 1900, after Tyrrell had been dismissed from the staff of the Month, he moved to Richmond, in North Yorkshire, and wrote to Petre recommending that she give up her office as local superior of the DHM, which indicates that Petre had corresponded with him enough that he felt she would be open to advice. In addition, a week earlier, he had written to her about his feeling on being transferred to Richmond. The tone of this letter is very open and friendly, e.g. "I feel horribly selfish in running away from my responsibilities to this haven of absolute quiet, but can only justify it by the thought that my leisure may eventually be more profitable to others than my fussiness."⁵¹

Both Petre and Tyrrell had been in London⁵² prior to Tyrrell's move to Richmond in August 1900. However, her first significant contact with him that can be established with certainty was when he gave a retreat to members of the DHM in July 1900.

I had met Father Tyrrell a few times before we became closely acquainted during the course of a retreat he gave, in the religious house to which I was attached⁵³, In July 1900. *Shortly after I went for a rest to Engelberg . . . contemplating the problems of life, which had taken on a fuller significance to me.*⁵⁴

It seems highly probable that one of the problems she was contemplating was the development of a feeling for Tyrrell, since the next letter that we have is a response to her from Tyrrell on September 3, 1900 (once again, as she says,⁵⁵

⁵¹ Petre, Life. Vol. II, 131.

⁵² Tyrrell was at Farm Street, while Petre was probably at a house of the DHM at 9 John Street. These locations are less than two miles apart.

⁵³ Possibly at 9 John Street, London.

⁵⁴ Petre, MWF, 273-4. Italics added.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 274.

her original letters no longer exist). The content of her letters can be deduced from Tyrrell's:

My Dear Miss Petre

I was almost certain of what you told me, but not being quite certain I had to speak in general terms in my letter; and I do not therefore wish to unsay but simply to emphasize what I said there. We must simply help each other in this matter never to deviate from the highest standard of what such a relationship should be. Conventions will seem hard and cruel at times, but in respecting them affection is braced and purified. To be frank with you I doubt if I am any longer capable of a very ardent or absorbing attachment. . . . it would be a great happiness to me if, when you get to know me better, with all my fearful limitations and weaknesses, you could still extend to me the regard you now feel for me. . . .⁵⁶

It is interesting to note changes in the style of Tyrrell's letters after September. In the letter cited above, the salutation was still "My Dear Miss Petre" - perfectly proper and formal. On October 11, 1900 he writes to "My Dear Maude," and ends "Affectionately Yours;" on December 18, 1900, he ends a letter with "Yours, I know not how."⁵⁷ The next step was January 12, 1901, when his letter began: "Dear Maude" and ended "Yours Ever." By the end of January 1901, he was ending with "With All Love, Yours, GT." In May, the situation had de-escalated somewhat and he was now "Ever Affectionately" and "Ever Yours Affectionately," and from that time on, he frequently omitted any salutation or closing in his letters to Petre.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ PP. Add. MS. 52367 (London: BL, September 3, 1900).

⁵⁷ Also from the above letter: ". . . it is not the femininities of a woman that attract me, nor the clinging dependence; nor can I care for a love that is not critical and intelligent;" Tyrrell was apparently of the opinion that he was only capable of an intellectual relationship.

⁵⁸ Petre destroyed much of their correspondence, so it is impossible to tell whether the lack of salutation or closing was a continuing practice.

Judging from the general content of the letters, Tyrrell had initially accepted what would have only been seen by the society of the time as an unconventional relationship, at best, and within 6 months backed away from his initial emotional level of acceptance. In the meanwhile, Petre's journals reveal the depth of her emotional feelings. Her own words are very descriptive of the increasing intensity of her attachment:⁵⁹ "September 10, 1900: I have had one or two letters from G. Tyrrell since retreat, on a subject of moment to me. *Mater pulchrae dilectionis, ora pro me.*"⁶⁰ A week later she writes: "September 17, 1900: How one yearns to be wrapped around by human love." Shortly following: "September 22, 1900: Had a morning of acute suffering. G. T. has, for some reason, probably by my own fault, got a positive genius for saying things that wound me at present." Two days later, continuing her self-analysis she says: "September 24, 1900: But God grant that I may not be bound to give up what would perhaps be the making of my life and that of another if we use it in the right way." She seems to be reaching an answer in her own mind with the next two quotes: "September 27, 1900: I feel determined now to make this affection all that it ought to be - to constantly raise and purify it - otherwise it is not only displeasing to God, but insulting to its object." And: "October 3, 1900: I believe God means us to help one another, and that our affection is for mutual good." She also realizes that their relationship has potential for scandal: "October 22, 1900: I must guard every bulwark of chastity - not act in defiance of convention in the least way." For the next few months, her mood would gradually turn from

⁵⁹ All quotes in this section are from PP. Add. MS. 52372, dates as indicated

⁶⁰ "Mother of beautiful love, pray for me."

retrospective to depressed: "October 28, 1900: It seems to me as though (sic) at present my one end in life was to pray for him and share his struggles and sufferings."

After December 7, 1900, when Tyrrell sent her a copy of "An Englishwoman's Love Letters" (see Chapter V), her mood becomes more focused on love, eventually turning almost to despair: "December 19, 1900: He does so need someone to love him through thick and thin." In January 1901 she is becoming extremely upset: "January 7, 1901: Have had two days of great pain and struggle. It is hard to love unselfishly." On January 11, 1901, she is extremely down: "I have often a kind of conviction that, when his heart comes to life again, it will not be for me, and I shall have to stand by and see it given to others - that will be the last act of my tragedy." And on January 15, 1901 she writes: "These last days have been days of deadness - darkness - apathy - bewilderment. It seems as if he might fall into 10 pieces that could walk off in different directions and I should not know which to follow."

In March 1901, Petre is working on editing Tyrrell's autobiography,⁶¹ and still obviously in pain: "March 6, 1901 - *aut pati, aut mori*⁶² - I long with a longing God only can understand, to suffer and win his salvation by my love." She obviously feels that she is on her own as far as external advice: "March 11, 1901:

⁶¹ After much effort, Petre had convinced Tyrrell to write the Autobiography. He vacillated over whether he would allow her to keep it, but eventually left it in her hands without any instructions as to its disposition. Petre, Life I, v-vii.

⁶² "Either suffer or die."

I must sometimes talk to my journal of my love, for I can talk to no other."⁶³ By the end of March, she seems almost ready to give up: "March 30, 1901: I wish that I might just do some little thing for him and then die."

Her journals continue in this vein for years. When Tyrrell is kind to her, she is euphoric, and when he criticizes or ignores her, she is plunged into the depths of despair. "January 19, 1905: I had a letter from him today. He is saddening me horribly just now - he sometimes lifts me up then dashes me down."⁶⁴ One constant theme is that of her suffering so that Tyrrell may be spared, often associated with a wish to die, either for him or to end her suffering.

Tyrrell, on the other hand, appears to be having second thoughts about the relationship. Although, in the years to come, he will continue to take advantage of Petre's companionship and support, he refused to display any signs of affection until on his deathbed. It may be speculated that he was merely trying to prevent any excursions into more than an intellectual relationship, but given his personality, which tended, even by his own reckoning, heavily toward being self-centered, it seems more likely he was more concerned with his own problems with the Jesuits and the Curia, or afraid of any kind of personal commitment. Possibly this is a harsh criticism, but it is in keeping with the documentation. Referring to a letter from Tyrrell apparently discussing whether their relationship was a help or a source of temptation Petre says: "Ought it to go

⁶³ She later discussed the relationship with Abbé Huevelin, Peré Bremond, and her superior in the DHM, Mother Delattre.

⁶⁴ PP. Add. MS. 52373 (London: BL, January 19, 1905).

on? He seems to understand me so little; I wish he knew me better."⁶⁵ This concern continues: "He is so cold - so apathetic. But I have chosen, and I will persevere, and I will love him with all my heart."⁶⁶

It appears that Tyrrell finally became upset with her protestations of affection: "He wishes no further mention in my letters of my affection for him . . . It may be better for us to practice more reserve."⁶⁷ Her devotion continues despite Tyrrell's indifference: "My nightly prayer is 'Forgive him and let me bear his faults.'"⁶⁸ Finally, it seems that she has again almost reached the breaking point: "I have found it so hard not to give way to bitterness against my dearest - that horrible letter of Sunday comes back to my mind again and again . . . and that growing indifference seems to gall more and more."⁶⁹

Shortly after the letter cited above, life took a change for both Petre and Tyrrell. As previously mentioned, after his dismissal from the staff of the Month, Tyrrell had moved to a small Jesuit mission in Richmond, North Yorkshire, some 200 miles north of London.⁷⁰ From time to time, Petre would visit, renting rooms in the town. In the autumn of 1901, Petre obtained permission from the DHM to care for her two nephews, Arthur and Philip, for two years, while her younger sister Margaret joined her husband, Ralph Clutton, a naval officer assigned to the

⁶⁵ Ibid., January 15, 1901.

⁶⁶ Ibid., September 11, 1901.

⁶⁷ Ibid., January 2, 1902.

⁶⁸ Ibid., February 7, 1902.

⁶⁹ Ibid., March 28, 1902.

⁷⁰ Petre, MWF, 132. The mission was maintained by the Jesuits as a sort of convalescent/rest home for priests. See further discussion in Sagovsky, On God's Side, Chapters 9 & 10. Sagovsky implies that Tyrrell had been sent there to get him away from the public life in London. For Tyrrell it was a case of being thrown in the briar patch, since he despised London and what he perceived as Jesuit hollowness in ministering to London society. For him, Richmond was a true rest home where he could think and write with no pressure or duties.

China Station.⁷¹ She describes the relationship: "It was with them (the nephews), in June 1902 that I went to Richmond, in Yorkshire, where I stayed for a year. During that time I saw Tyrrell continually, and we formed the habit of reading together most evenings."⁷² She stayed for more than a year, until, in September 1904, two of her friends convinced Tyrrell that their relationship was becoming a source of increasing gossip, and Petre was reluctantly convinced to leave.⁷³

During the time they were living in Richmond (June 1902 - September 1904), both Tyrrell and Petre traveled individually, both in England and Europe, but much of their time was spent together, having meals together and reading in the evening. Tyrrell was battling with the Society of Jesus to clarify whether he was being dismissed from the Jesuits, or allowed to leave, and in the process, sowing the seeds of his own destruction by his obstinacy and arrogance.⁷⁴ Finally, as it became clear that he would be dismissed, he resolved to leave the Jesuit mission and set up housekeeping somewhere else. After Petre left Richmond, she, Tyrrell, and Brémond had been discussing plans for a sort of spiritual/intellectual commune, where they could all live and be somewhat protected from harassment. Brémond suggested settling in Italy, near Assisi, which apparently appealed to Petre: "Brémond plan - everyone to live at Assisi -

⁷¹ Ibid., 283; Leonard, *Transformation*, 32.

⁷² Ibid., 283.

⁷³ She refers to her friends as Miss Gossage and Miss Thompson; possibly associates in the DHM. PP. Add. MS. 52373 (London: BL, September 2, 1904).

⁷⁴ Tyrrell's problems with the Jesuits are well documented. In *MWF*, Petre devotes an entire chapter (Chapter XI) to the controversy. Loomer, Sagovsky, and Schultenover also cover it in detail.

Sabatier there. So that after all, we shall all be together to work for 'The Church of the Future.'⁷⁵ Tyrrell had also considered living with Brémond at Aix.

On January 1, 1906, Tyrrell left Richmond, spending a month in Tintagel, in Cornwall, and then visiting friends in England until his final dismissal on February 11, 1906.⁷⁶ After his dismissal, he wandered England and Europe, visiting his friends in and around London, traveling to Paris to meet Brémond, and then to Freiburg, returning to Paris in the spring, and to England sometime in April.⁷⁷ In the middle of May, he moved to the Premonstratensian priory in Storrington, in Sussex, where Petre had bought a home - Mulberry House.⁷⁸

After Tyrrell left Richmond, Petre had begun to express some irritation at his failure to settle down in some specific location, or at least to come up with a viable option for his future life. Tyrrell wanted to go to Paris for an extended stay with Brémond, but Petre was unwilling to join them for reasons unspecified: "I cannot do Paris."⁷⁹ Her journal gives a hint that all was not well: "They have misjudged me grievously in this whole business. They have seen feminine jealousy and susceptibility where such indeed have existed, but have not been

⁷⁵ PP. Add. MS. 52373 (London: BL, July 1, 1905). The title was probably taken from a pseudonymous book attributed to Tyrrell: Hillaire Bourdon, *The Church and the Future* (London: Turnbull & Sons, 1903). It is also the title of Chapter XXI of Volume II of the *Life*.

⁷⁶ It should be noted that Tyrrell was not laicized; he was dismissed from the Jesuits and had he been able to find a bishop to incardinate him, could have remained a priest in good canonical standing. He was allowed to receive communion, but not to say Mass. Only after 1907 was he forbidden the sacraments.

⁷⁷ Sagovsky, *On God's Side*, 203ff.

⁷⁸ She later built a small adjacent cottage for Tyrrell on the grounds.

⁷⁹ PP. Add. MS. 52374 (London: BL, April 22, 1906).

the leading motives." She felt betrayed by Brémond, and thoroughly impatient with Tyrrell.⁸⁰

However, the other side of the coin is equally revealing. The early months of 1907 were very stormy and trying for Tyrrell as well as Petre; Tyrrell had moved from Storrington, where he had been living while Petre was recuperating in France from the fall that had dislocated her shoulder.⁸¹ According to Sagovsky, the two had a major argument in the spring. Writing to Brémond, Tyrrell says:

(S)he is completely broken in nerves and the doctors ordered her abroad for some months. But no, she says nothing will rest her so much as to see me perfectly at home here at last! Was there ever a more ridiculous situation? Poor thing; I find it harder to talk to her than ever; and as she gets more nervous with me I get more formal; and stiff *malgré moi* [despite myself] . . . Of course I am elaborately reminded that if I would rather live with the Williamses or with you or at Clapham I am not to consider myself tied in the least degree to Storrington.⁸²

Things became even worse in the next few months; again writing to Brémond: "She cannot help but see that I am alive with my other friends and dead with her. I cannot help it. She has no *light* side - all philosophy or romping. Community of *humour* is the *sine qua non* for companionship."⁸³ As she herself was later to say in *MWF*, she was often afflicted with a Victorian stiffness.⁸⁴ Although Tyrrell remained at Mulberry House in Storrington, it seems that Petre

⁸⁰ Ibid. She is apparently referring to her attempts to have Tyrrell settle with her in Storrington.

⁸¹ See note 40 above.

⁸² Letter, Tyrrell to Brémond, May 26, 1907. As quoted in Nicholas Sagovsky, *On God's Side: A Life of George Tyrrell* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 216-17.

⁸³ Ibid., Sagovsky, 217. Tyrrell to Brémond, July 25, 1907. Original italics.

⁸⁴ Petre, *MWF*, 272.

continued to feel depressed: "I am horribly down - I want what I cannot have."⁸⁵

while Tyrrell apparently felt trapped:

Owing to M.D.P.'s grand idea of going without a chaperone there is going to be another Storrington crisis ... My God, what we suffer from the devotion of woman! 'Cut it off and cast it from thee.' It is by that member they hold us. Let us leave it in their hands and fly, like Joseph from Mme. Potiphar, sexless but free.⁸⁶

Certainly during this time both Tyrrell and Petre were under great stress from *Pascendi* and Tyrrell's excommunication; however, in the overall context, it seems that Petre's affection had become too much for Tyrrell, and although he continued to remain at Mulberry House, and continued to live on the £100 per year that Petre had settled on him in late 1905,⁸⁷ he sought every opportunity to get away from Storrington, spending 6 months with Nora Shelley and her mother in Clapham, in the Wandsworth section of London.

During the last months of his life, Tyrrell alternated between Storrington and Clapham, and returned to Storrington in April 1909, where he died in Petre's house on July 15, 1909.

Looking at the above quotations and evidence, it seems apparent that we are looking at two similar yet widely disparate people who spent almost ten years in each others company, in a relationship that smothered on one hand, and dominated on the other. As Sagovsky says:

As it happened, his feelings for Maude Petre oscillated between affection and gratitude based mainly on her sense of intellectual companionship,

⁸⁵ PP. Add. MS. 52374 (London: BL, May 14, 1908).

⁸⁶ Letter, Tyrrell to Brémond, May 12, 1908. As quoted in Sagovsky, *On God's Side*, 240.

⁸⁷ Petre, *MWF*, 284; Leonard, *Transformation*, 37.

and irritation and boredom caused by her intensity and her at times pathetic devotion to him.⁸⁸

Petre sounds surprised that she and Tyrrell could have developed a friendship:

Tyrrell and I were as unlike as possible in temperament and character; he was elusive, I was direct; he was rebellious, I was law-abiding; he was subtle, I was simple; he was utterly without self-regard, I was self-conscious.⁸⁹

The point that Petre will make over and over is that Tyrrell leaped before he looked, without any regard for the effect of his actions on him personally. For example, his letters⁹⁰ to the London Times attacking *Pascendi* resulted in his prohibition from receiving the sacraments.

Their similarity arose from the very deep and sincere love that both had for Catholicism, and their equally deep love of God. Tyrrell was, and in his mind always remained, a priest - dedicated to bringing humanity closer to God. Petre, as previously mentioned, saw her vocation as supporting Tyrrell in this effort. However, she also chose her own paths, separate from his, or any other of the Modernists. For example, there is one tantalizing entry in her journal: "September 12, 1908 - Have begun my manual for the instruction of children."⁹¹ Apparently such a manual was never published, but it indicates a direction she planned to take on her own.

Because of her emotional attachment, Petre was not about to give up Tyrrell, regardless of how he may have mistreated her psychologically, and

⁸⁸ Sagovsky, *On God's Side*, 104.

⁸⁹ Petre, *MWF*, 271.

⁹⁰ George Tyrrell, Letter to the Editor, Times (London), September 30 and October 1, 1907.

⁹¹ PP. Add. MS. 52374 (London: BL, September 12, 1908).

Tyrrell was only too ready to capitalize on the intellectual and economic support she provided. Petre saw herself in the role of a dedicated sufferer, whose mission was to support Tyrrell; she felt very strongly that Tyrrell's ministry was the pastoral care of souls, and frequently criticized von Hügel when he moved Tyrrell in the direction of historical criticism. "Tyrrell was a man with an eye for moral as well as intellectual problems; and for that reason I have always regretted his wanderings into the subject of history and criticism."⁹² She was perfectly aware of Tyrrell's weaknesses and still gave him her entire devotion, while Tyrrell seems primarily concerned with his own problems with the Society of Jesus and the Church hierarchy. Petre was willing to shade the truth to fit her own perceptions, e.g. always putting herself down in comparison to Tyrrell, while Tyrrell was constantly in the confrontational mode, willing to lie if he thought he could get away with it, e.g. "Letter to a University Professor."⁹³

Sagovsky overstates his case against Petre's manipulations. Writing about the tensions between von Hügel and Tyrrell in 1906 he says: "The cracks in their relationship, undoubtedly exploited by Maude Petre, who saw the Baron as standing in the way of her plans for Tyrrell, were beginning to show."⁹⁴ Petre was trying to manage people and events in such a way as to allow Tyrrell to continue his spiritual direction as well as to maintain her relationship with him. Petre was probably right that he would have been an outstanding pastor of souls

⁹² Petre, *Von Hügel and Tyrrell*, 9.

⁹³ At the request of the Archbishop of Milan, the Superior General of the Jesuits, Fr. Martin, had questioned Tyrrell as to whether he was the author of an anonymous article published in *Corriere della Sera* on 1 January 1906. The letter allegedly contained comments from "an English Jesuit" on Church reforms. Tyrrell attempted to deny authorship, although finally admitting it. This controversy was the rationale finally used for Tyrrell's dismissal from the Jesuits.

⁹⁴ Sagovsky, *On God's Side*, 209.

if he had stuck with retreats and pastoral guidance, but his personality, which brooked no other opinion but his own, was a major factor in his destruction. It is impossible to say what effect his increasing problems with Bright's Disease might have had on him in the last years.⁹⁵ Through Scylla and Charybdis, in 1907, is certainly not the work of a feeble or deranged mind.⁹⁶ Petre undoubtedly contributed to Tyrrell's writing through her commentary and support, how much she contributed to his mental unrest will never be known.

It is important to realize that, in the preceding descriptions, we are not dealing with simple, straightforward individuals, but rather with very complex personalities, both of whom have their strengths and their weaknesses. Tyrrell was certainly impatient, arrogant, and self-centered; but at the same time he was a very deeply spiritual person. His reputation as a retreat master and as a spiritual director indicate a deep concern for souls, and even in the most controversial of his writings, his real goal was to aid the Church, not to destroy it. As for Petre, she may have been aloof and humorless, obsessed with her love for Tyrrell, but she was also a woman of great spirituality, who constantly sought healing in prayer and her love of God. She saw her devotion to Tyrrell as her ministry, and her concern for the poor and marginalized is continually reflected in her writings.

⁹⁵ Bright's Disease was a catch-all term used at the time for a variety of kidney disorders. Tyrrell suffered from severe migraine headaches, one of the symptoms of ureic poisoning, as early as 1902. It is likely that he was in frequent severe pain throughout most of the remainder of his life. In a discussion with an urologist, who declined to be quoted, he informed me that there is a significant body of literature indicating that advanced uremia can also have severe psychological effects, including depression and paranoia.

⁹⁶ George Tyrrell, Through Scylla and Charybdis (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1907).

As will be shown in the next chapter, the attitudes and ideas that Petre developed during the years of her relationship with Tyrrell infiltrated much of her writing. Her ideas of love and suffering are a constant theme. Much of her work in the 1900 - 1907 period deals with asceticism, with the suffering motif very noticeable. She was a very devout woman, and with few exceptions, most of her work can be related to advice to others in the development of personal spirituality. In many ways the woman of her journals is a totally different person from the woman of her published writings. Although her personal pain shows in many of her works, particularly in the area of suffering, the overall image portrayed in her published writing is that of an educated intellectual, providing pastoral guidance, rather than that of a love-struck Jesuit groupie.

This chapter has described the personal relationship between Petre and Tyrrell, in order to provide a baseline for analysis of the content of Petre's writing on Modernism, as well as her perception of her mission in life after Tyrrell's death. The next chapter will investigate the content of Petre's writing during the period before *Lamentabile* and *Pascendi*.

CHAPTER V
EARLY MODERNIST PERIOD (1900 - 1906)

Introduction

This period covers the time from 1900, when Petre attended a retreat given by Tyrrell, later becoming deeply involved with him and the other principal Modernists, through 1906, when she published her six part series on Nietzsche.

In the last chapter, the emphasis was on defining the nature of the relationship between Petre and Tyrrell. In this chapter, I will show two facets of the nature of Petre's writing during this time period; first, that she was developing her own interests and second, there was no significant influence on her work by any of the principal Modernists.

The best way to describe Petre during this time is as a public intellectual. She writes on what she chooses, and is not in the least reluctant to critique authors or their ideas, even disagreeing with Tyrrell's work in one case. Multiple themes will run through these works, with two standing out as prominent: asceticism, and pastoral concern; she will also address minor themes of human affection and suffering, and produce three works falling into the category of literary criticism. This chapter will show that Petre had her own theological ideas, divergent from those of her associates; she was concerned with modernizing the Church, not Modernism.

Scholars of Modernism leave us with a conventional portrait of Petre mainly as a biographer of Tyrrell and historian of Modernism. However, during the period covered by this chapter, her writings did not significantly address any of the topics later associated by the Church with Modernism, e.g. church authority, historical criticism, the nature of Revelation, religious experience, etc. On the contrary, although her topics ranged from asceticism to literary criticism, there was nothing to do directly with Modernism. Although the term was not yet defined, and would not be until Pius X used it in *Pascendi*, the intellectuals with whom Petre associated were working along the lines later condemned, while she focused on her own areas of interest.

This chapter focuses on four of her works: first, I will analyze: "An Englishwoman's Love Letters,"¹ because Tyrrell sent her a copy of the book to which it refers, possibly as a result of his disenchantment with their relationship; in addition, her personal stresses and fixation on suffering show very clearly in her comments. In the second work: "Human Love and Divine Love,"² she disagrees with Tyrrell in print for the first time, as well as showing the mix of her writings with her emotions and the inclusion of suffering from a spiritual aspect. The third work, Where Saints Have Trod: Some Studies in Asceticism,³ is one of her major works, and presents her views on a variety of topics in the field of asceticism, as well as a great deal of material again on suffering, allowing a

¹ M.D. Petre, "An Englishwoman's Love Letters," Month 97, February 1901, 116 - 26. Hereafter "Letters."

² M.D. Petre, "Human Love and Divine Love," Catholic World 74, January 1902, 442-53. Hereafter "Love."

³ Petre, Saints.

further glimpse into the effect of her personal life on her writing. The fourth work, The Soul's Orbit,⁴ was a joint effort between her and Tyrrell. Finally, I will include a short section on what I call her literary criticisms, that provide insights on her views of several contemporary intellectuals outside of any connection to Modernism. These articles demonstrate her style of writing and the scope of her intellectual interests as well as her developing willingness to take on the role of public intellectual.

It is important to remember in any analysis of Petre's writing, that, given her feelings for Tyrrell, as well as her own developing intellectual power, and as demonstrated by the variety and quantity of her writing, it would be expected that she should: a) write in support of Tyrrell and Modernism, and b) devote a significant portion of her writing to Modernist related topics. Those works in this period in which she did not touch on Modernist topics are the indicators of her own distinctive intellectual directions. She was concerned with modernizing the Church, but picked her own areas to defend. During this period it might be expected that her thought processes and opinions would follow those of Tyrrell, Loisy, and von Hügel. However, she went her own way within the broader framework of Christianity, as can be seen by her choice of subject matter, e.g. her focus on asceticism.

Before reviewing selected writings, it would be well to keep in mind the definitions and descriptions of Modernism presented in Chapter I. The most

⁴ M.D. Petre, compiler, The Soul's Orbit (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1904). Hereafter Orbit.

descriptive is that from 1926 in "Friedrich von Hügel: Personal Thoughts and Reminiscences."

Catholic Modernism was an effort to combine the latest claims of science and history and democracy with the spiritual teaching of the Church, and to obtain right of citizenship for the scholar, whose sole aim *quâ* scholar was scientific or historic truth, in the Church to which he submitted his religious life and conduct.⁵

In other words, Petre believed that the basic purpose of Modernism was to allow scholars to have their research considered by the Church when it had the potential to affect spiritual teachings.

Selected Writings

"An Englishwoman's Love Letters" (1901)⁶

The occasion of this essay was the publication of a book by the same title in which John Murray had collected a series of love letters from a woman to her fiancé, both before and after a broken engagement. The final letters had been kept by the woman and forwarded to her former betrothed after her death.⁷ The book was one of the sentimental sensations of the year for late Victorian London.⁸

At this time, Petre was agonizing over Tyrrell's problems with the Society of Jesus:

⁵ Petre, "FvH," 83-4.

⁶ Petre, "Letters," 116 - 26.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁸ Crews, Modernism, 16.

I was horribly anxious and afraid. I had a feeling that my friend was capable of desperate solutions, and that the very heroism of his character, and his indifference to his own fate and fortune, constituted a danger. To me the continuance of his life as a Catholic priest mattered more than anything else, and I would certainly have died to secure his spiritual safety.⁹

Given her concern for Tyrrell's state of mind, and her own feeling of frustration at being unable to help, her essay provided an opportunity to express her own pain and probably her own identification with the "Englishwoman." She writes: "There is but one heart to give, and love is the giving of it, whether the term be one or several."¹⁰

As early as 1885, when she wrote Aethiopum Servus Petre had demonstrated her concern with pain and suffering. "For why is the world so constituted that happiness must be bought by pain, and that the meek and generous must purchase the joy of others by the sacrifice of their own."¹¹ In "An Englishwoman's Love Letters" Petre is taking the position that those who are most spiritually alive are the persons who are bound to suffer the most in their relationship with God.

Hence, the spiritual life of those most spiritually alive resolves itself into a two-fold struggle, whereof the first element is the wrestling of the mind to believe what it cannot see; the second the straining of the heart to love what it cannot hold.¹²

Her whole discussion is reminiscent of Augustine's "restless heart" - the idea that the human soul can never be truly happy until it rests in God. Her approach in

⁹ Petre, MWF, 278-9.

¹⁰ Petre, "Letters", 117.

¹¹ Petre, AS, 181.

¹² Petre, "Letters", 123-4.

this essay is to claim that the "Englishwoman's" love was destined to be painful because it was a truly spiritual love that transcended the mundane and focused on a higher plane. Just as the love of a mystic for God can often cause extensive pain because of the lack of fulfillment in the Beatific Vision, so human love that is more truly focused on the other person may eventually be more painful because the other person has the ability to cause deep pain by the abuse of that love.

This essay demonstrates Petre's pastoral concerns. It is clearly non-Modernist. It addresses human suffering and the longing of the soul for God. There is no hint of advocating intellectual freedom or critiquing religious authority. The main category is religion, with the main theme of spirituality, and a minor theme of mysticism. It reflects her own spiritual pain, and stems from her lifelong concern with suffering and pain. It also can be linked to some of the ideas she brings out in Aethiopum Servus, as well as her interest in mysticism, and ideas expressed in "Shades of the Prison House,"¹³ all from the pre-Modernist period of her life. Any parallel to the development of her relationship and concern for Tyrrell and the situation of the "Englishwoman" appears to be totally separate from any specifically Modernist ideas - more that of deep concern for the condition of her friend, and an expression of her own human pain at the impossibility of the relationship being anything more than it was.

¹³ Ibid., 125.

"Human Love and Divine Love" (1902)¹⁴

Petre wrote this as a review of Tyrrell's essay "Poet and Mystic", which he had included in The Faith of the Millions.¹⁵ However, it reflects her position on the importance of human affection. The significance of the review is that it is her first publication discussing the work of any of the principal Modernists,¹⁶ as well as the fact that she disagrees with Tyrrell in print. Tyrrell, in turn, had written his essay as a commentary on Coventry Patmore's¹⁷ poetry, particularly his position on the whole question of human love. Patmore maintained that married love was the highest form of human emotion, ". . . the very blessed of heaven and the flower and consummation of love between man and woman."¹⁸ Any other form of human love was of a lesser quality, with the potential for human corruption.

Tyrrell's objection was that he saw Patmore as taking the position that only through married love could human beings truly attain love for God, and that Patmore was therefore maintaining that ascetics, specifically those in religious life, having taken a vow of celibacy, could not reach the same level of love of God as those in the married state.¹⁹

¹⁴ Petre, "Love."

¹⁵ George Tyrrell, The Faith of the Millions: A Collection of Past Essays. Two volumes (London: Longman's, 1901).

¹⁶ "Lawful Liberty and Reasonable Service" was a review of Tyrrell's Hard Sayings in 1899, but this was before her connection with Modernism.

¹⁷ Coventry Patmore (1823 - 1896) was an English Catholic poet, noted for his opinions on human vs. Divine love.

¹⁸ "Coventry Patmore". <http://www.iath.virginia.edu/courses/ennc986/class/bios/patmore.html>. Accessed 29 November 2002.

¹⁹ It is interesting to note the following undated, anonymous marginal note in a copy of the 3rd edition from the Marian Library: "A lot of wasted energy, dear Tyrrell - as if anybody - besides a few other English pseudo-mystics - had ever given a hoot for Patmore's rubbish and worse than rubbish!"

(I)t seems as though he passes from the idealization and apotheosis of married love to the conception of it as being the highest form, not merely the richest symbol, but even the most efficacious sacrament of the mystical union between God and the soul.²⁰

Petre's review covers Patmore's position and Tyrrell's disagreement, with the introduction of her own ideas on the interpretation of true asceticism, how Tyrrell reconciles two opposing views of asceticism, and her own arguments and conclusions on the question. However, Petre's journals show how her own ideas the love of God and the love of humanity are developing. On October 29, 1900 she writes:

Eucken has a passage bearing on G. Tyrrell's letter *re* the love of God and the creature. He talks about the same view, condemning the ordinary notions of a jealous God. My opinion remains unformed but *I am instinctively resisting theirs*. It seems as though it would lead to the condemnation of so much in the Church that could not have existed had there not been a true reason for it. My experience of the last few weeks makes me feel pretty strongly that there can be conflict between the love of the Creator and the creature.²¹

On December 7, 1900, her opinions have become stronger:

G. Tyrrell's article on Patmore has appeared. ... I am more and more bewildered on the subject, but *I cannot accept his views*. Certainly the idea of a "jealous" God who wants us to love no one else is debatable - yet, I think, there is another meaning to the expression which we have not yet got at.²²

Later, on January 23, 1901, in a long entry, referring to her difficulties with her love for Tyrrell, she says:

²⁰ George Tyrrell, "Poet and Mystic", *The Faith of the Millions*, Vol. 2 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1902), 43-4.

²¹ PP. Add. MS. 52372 (London: BL, October 27, 1900). At von Hügel's recommendation, Petre was reading *Der Kampf um einen Geistigen Lebenshalt* by Rudolph Eucken. Her "experience of the last few weeks" may refer to her developing relationship with Tyrrell. Italics added.

²² *Ibid.*, December 7, 1900. Italics added.

Is not the moral of that simply that there is a kind of love I can give to God alone, and that He means to have it. Perhaps to some He does not teach the same lesson. He does not ask for their love so directly; but is it not precisely this direct call which is answered by the practice of spiritual chastity? *In which case my instinctive antagonism to G.T.'s "Patmore" article is justified.*²³

These quotes from Petre's journal show that she is very much in conflict with Tyrrell's position on this issue, at least at the beginning of 1901. Looking at this apparently favorable review, published a year later, it would seem, on the surface, that she has revised her opinion. However, what she has really done is again to use a subtle argument that presents her own position distinct from Tyrrell's. Since this is Petre's first public disagreement with Tyrrell, the review is worth analyzing in some detail.

She sets the stage in her introductory paragraphs. In terms reminiscent of Newman's thesis of development of doctrine,²⁴ she says that asceticism may come from the past, but its justification must be found in the present, and that it must be reconciled with its surroundings and can only prepare to meet the future by adapting to the present.²⁵ She then presents Tyrrell's treatment of the whole question of human love, and its treatment by Coventry Patmore. She maintains that Patmore's concept of divine love was a reaction to the Neo-platonic exaggerations that had developed on the subject, and that he had constructed a theory which held human love as the very foundation, almost the *Ursakrament*, of

²³ *Ibid.*, January 23, 1901. Italics added.

²⁴ PP. Add. MS. 52372 (London: BL, July 31, 1901). The first specific reference to Petre's familiarity with Newman is in July 1901, in a discussion with Wilfred Ward; however, given Newman's almost iconic status among many English Catholics, it seems highly likely that she was at least generally familiar with the themes of his work before that time.

²⁵ Petre, "Love", 442.

the union of the soul with God.²⁶ Tyrrell, on the other hand, holds that Patmore's views are in contradiction to common Catholic ascetic teaching, and defeat the very *raison d'être* of all monastic institutions. Interpreting Tyrrell, Petre says that if Patmore were correct, then the life of a professed, celibate religious is unjustified. If conjugal love is, in fact, truly the love of God Himself, and the greater the love of husband and wife, the greater their love of God, then the religious life is totally mistaken. Although Patmore does admit the possible grounds for celibacy in those who are devoted to good works, where domestic responsibilities could be a distraction, Petre disagrees with him and here supports Tyrrell, saying:

(I)n the first place, we see that the married state is sometimes quite compatible with the highest devotion to a cause spiritual or other. . . (W)e must nevertheless recognize that, in many cases, marriage no more impedes devotion to the cause of the Church than the duties of any other profession. And in the second place, even granting the greater advantages of celibacy in this respect, we shall not ordinarily find in such a merely negative and external motive a sufficient incentive to the most intimate sacrifice that a man can make.²⁷

Continuing her own analysis, she says that:

If, as is certain, the only true asceticism is that which tells us to die to that which is lower in order to live to that which is higher, then must this higher life comprehend the lower one which has been forsaken.²⁸

She maintains that true asceticism attains a higher good that both comprehends and transcends the good that has been sacrificed and claims that true asceticism is a function of the fallen nature of humanity, and that:

²⁶ Ibid., 443.

²⁷ Ibid., 444.

²⁸ Ibid.,

Hence, the second Adam and Eve came, not to repair for that which was in the order of nature and would never have been anything but holy had man been faithful to his trust, but rather to atone for the great sin which had divorced nature from grace, and separated the interests of soul and body.²⁹

She quotes Tyrrell, who says that Patmore had fallen into a one-sided theory that ignored the whole question of asceticism as proper to sinful human nature.³⁰

In the next section, Petre begins a long series of quotes from Tyrrell³¹ discussing how he has reconciled the two opposing and mutually exclusive ascetic views of intense human affection and intense sanctity. The crux of the matter is: "Briefly, it is a question of the precise sense in which God is a 'jealous God' and demands to be loved alone."³² As she explains it, the first view is one that sees God anthropomorphically, in competition for human affection; therefore, human affection involved a diminution of love of God. This seems to be the concept that a person is only capable of x pounds of love, and if y pounds are given to another human, then only x - y are available for God, and God cannot be loved perfectly until He is loved alone.³³ The second view is that for which Patmore claims authority from such mystics as Sts. Bernard, Teresa, Francis, etc. In this view God's love is seen as similar to a light shining through humanity, whereby any positive human attributes are seen as reflections of God's presence and the love that they excite passes back to God through them.³⁴ Thus it is God

²⁹ Ibid., 445.

³⁰ Ibid.,

³¹ All of these particular quotes are taken intact from Tyrrell's work, and do not contain any of Petre's analysis or comments.

³² Petre, "Love," 446.

³³ Ibid.,

³⁴ Ibid., 446-7.

who loves and who is loved, and therefore human love cannot be the cause of a diminution of God's love. Tyrrell presents the first view as compatible with ordinary human love, while reserving the second for those with "a certain degree of intelligence and studious contemplation, and therefore not necessary, at least in any high degree, for all."³⁵

After this long series of quotes from Tyrrell, Petre begins her own analysis, the title of the section being: "The Reconciliation Not Wholly Satisfactory."³⁶ As she has done before, she takes her position not from the academic theology of Tyrrell, but rather from her own interest in the pastoral concerns of ordinary humans. "(T)his reconciliation of the two views appears not wholly satisfactory when we apply it to the living representatives of either."³⁷ Her claim is that the first view ("this crude and partly false doctrine")³⁸ is founded on a genuine ascetic insight, since monasticism always uses it in some fashion as a supporting argument for sanctity, and the "jealous God" still requires some sacrifice on the part of the monastic in order that God might be loved more fully.³⁹ Only as the soul progresses in sanctity will it move more toward the second view. She again brings out her previous argument that asceticism is only appropriate in a world that is under the burden of original sin. Contrary to Patmore's position of human love envisioned as occurring in innocence and joy, ascetical teachers have

³⁵ Tyrrell, "Poet and Mystic", 55.

³⁶ Petre, "Love," 447.

³⁷ Ibid.,

³⁸ Ibid.,

³⁹ Ibid., 448.

taught that those who renounce human love, while understanding its reality, are those who reach the highest levels of love of God.

Tyrrell's approach is to say that the call to leave father, wife, and children is not a spiritual danger to the ordinary Christian because "they do not conceive themselves called to the way of the saints, or to offer God that all-absorbing affection which would necessitate the weakening or severing of natural ties."⁴⁰ Petre disagrees and raises the point that we must consider fallen human nature in any discussion of human affection, and that monasticism is as fitting as secular life under the condition of sinful humanity, where both the lover and beloved, in the case of married love, or the individual, in the case of the monastic, can be neither perfect objects nor subjects of love because of the imperfections of human nature.⁴¹ She also again emphasizes that ascetical teachers, in speaking of conjugal love in the sense of a symbol of the relationship between God and the human soul, have taught that renunciation of married love can lead a person to attainment of the highest form of love of God, whereas Patmore places this highest level within the love between spouses.

Petre's argument begins by asking why conjugal love is on one hand represented as an obstacle to achieving complete love of God [ascetical teaching], and on the other, as the highest symbol of that love [Patmore]. She maintains that there is a deep justification for ascetic choice, and that it can be found in analysis of deep and strong human affection. Against Tyrrell, Petre

⁴⁰ Tyrrell, "Poet and Mystic", 51.

⁴¹ Petre, "Love," 448.

claims that the majority of human affections are so weak and self-centered that they cannot interfere with love of God. Utilizing her ideas from "Shades of the Prison House,"⁴² she argues that people are as likely to be as cautious in their spiritual life as they are in their business dealings. Thus, when human love is controlled by prudence and self-interest, it is likely that the same caution would be applied to love of God.⁴³ However, when conjugal love is strongest, and not prudent or careful of itself, it can then approach the love achieved by the mystics in the Divine union by placing God above self, just as strong conjugal love places the partner above self.⁴⁴

Petre maintains that conjugal love is exclusive. It is a one to one relationship, which is disrupted by the entrance of a third party.

And this is so because its peculiar quality consists not in the giving of love but the giving of self and in a certain absolute identity of ends and interests. To his other friends a man gives love, sympathy, and good service - to a spouse he gives himself; in the former case something goes out from him to them; in the latter there is nothing to go out for the giver is the gift.⁴⁵

For her, human love cannot attain its full potential because of the fallen nature of humanity, since two people bound together by marriage vows must share not only their temporal life and possessions, but their spiritual values as well. "We cannot entirely give ourselves to God and to a creature who will not in everything seek God, and no creature on earth seeks Him wholly and entirely."⁴⁶

⁴² See Chapter III, n. 54.

⁴³ Petre, "Love," 449.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*,

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 450.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 451.

Any human relationship is always bounded by limitations - the least of which is conscience. If one partner sins, then the other is bound in conscience to take a different path, and thereby diminish the relationship.

Petre concludes with a summary example:

And thus, the love of a St. Francis for a St. Clare puts on the likeness of conjugal love transformed and deified; it is not so much, in the ordinary parlance, that each one sees God in the other, but rather that God Himself sees through the eyes of each one, and they share a certain measure of His own perception.⁴⁷

There are two facets to the analysis of this article - the personal and the theological. With regard to the first, we must consider the time frame in which it was written, and Petre's and Tyrrell's states of mind at the time. Recall that Petre and Tyrrell had disagreed on Tyrrell's interpretation of Patmore's essay at the end of December 1900 and in January 1901.⁴⁸ At this time, their relationship was in its initial phases; Petre is deeply and completely in love with Tyrrell, while Tyrrell is vacillating in and out of the relationship - willing to accept Petre's intellectual companionship and support, but also very uncomfortable with the idea that her affection could be any more than intellectual. There is a curious entry in Petre's journal for April 6, 1901: "Heard from G.T. He thinks I have put my finger on the difference in our views of human affection and thus (illegible) says he

⁴⁷ Ibid., 453.

⁴⁸ See n. 31 and n. 32.

will have to modify his own."⁴⁹ On July 23, speaking about the love of God vs. love of creatures, she says: "Anyway, for me there can be no separation."⁵⁰

This leads into an analysis of the more theological content of the three works. Patmore maintains that the highest form of human love is that between husband and wife, and that in achieving that level, human beings have reached the level equivalent to that involved in love of God. Tyrrell takes issue with that approach, citing the two commonly held Catholic positions that: first, love of an individual human being diminishes the potential for complete love of God, which then justifies monasticism and clerical celibacy, and second, that true asceticism, i.e. the monastic life, allows individuals to love God more totally since human love is a reflection of God's presence and thus is not diminished.

Petre, on the other hand, disagrees with both, and stresses the fallen nature of humanity as the primary cause of the difference between love for a human and love for God - if humanity were still in the garden, the love would be the same. Quoting Julian of Norwich she says: "To God, all the world is as one man, and one man as all the world."⁵¹ She then continues her own comment:

We are all organs of the mystical Body of Christ; and not only organs, but each one a vital organ. Like the soul in the body, so is the love of God in all humanity, whole in the whole, and whole in each part. And thus God can be

⁴⁹ Ibid., April 6, 1901. It is worth noting that Tyrrell's original essay was dated December 1900; however, despite his comment to Petre, he did not change a word in either the second or third editions.

⁵⁰ Ibid., July 23, 1901.

⁵¹ Petre had recently become acquainted with the writings of Julian of Norwich, sometimes referring to her as Mother Juliana, and found great spiritual comfort in her ideas. She was particularly impressed with Julian's explanation of how God would resolve the problem of salvation for different religions. Julian of Norwich. Shewings, 13th Revelation.

the spouse of each individual soul, and yet, at the same time, of all together.⁵²

Further, she says:

It is in the conjugal union that this one-in-one and all-in-all affection is exemplified, and we find a certain dim, inadequate shadow of the special; and unique love of God for the individual soul in even the aberrations of strong human affections. Even when wrong in its manner it may still be like in its essence, and thus in every affection of the kind we have some human approach to its divine counterpart.⁵³

We can only speculate how much of Petre's essay results from her personal situation. What is important in the analysis of this essay is that she has demonstrated her own independence by publicly disagreeing with Tyrrell. She has used extensive quotes from his essay in Faith of the Millions as a basis for her own analysis after showing how Tyrrell's essay had refuted Patmore's theories. This indicates an independence and willingness to not only form her own opinion but to defend it.

The obvious category for this essay is literary criticism, since Petre is criticizing both Patmore and Tyrrell. However, there is certainly a direct link to religion in her discussion of the similarities between love of God and human love. Her pastoral concern is a minor theme, when she applies the controversy to both lay and religious individuals. Asceticism is also a minor theme, when she defends the value of the religious life.

⁵² Ibid., 452.

⁵³ Ibid., 453.

Where Saints Have Trod: Some Studies in Asceticism (1903):⁵⁴

This work is Petre's first book of this period, and includes a number of individual essays and reflections that she had developed in the past. Tyrrell wrote a *Preface* to the book dated: "The Feast of the Holy Name [January 2], 1903." It contains extensive reflections on various aspects of asceticism as she sees them. We do not have a good clue as to the reason for her writing this book, other than it continues the themes of asceticism, love, and suffering that she began in *Aethiopum Servus*; nor do we have any indication as to when the individual essays might have been written. Some of the essays may have been influenced by her work in the DHM, but generally they appear to be directed more at the "learned." Although of the variety and scope of the topics covered in this book indicate her breadth of interest and competence, I will only address a few selected chapters in detail in order to provide analysis without repetition.

One of the factors to be considered in the analysis of Where Saints Have Trod is the definition that Petre uses for asceticism. The entry for "Asceticism"⁵⁵ in the 1909 edition of the Catholic Encyclopedia is contemporary with this work, and worth quoting in part as a reference as to the terminology and content that Petre would have understood at the time.

The word *asceticism* comes from the Greek *askesis*, which means practice, bodily exercise, and more especially athletic training. The early Christians adopted it to signify the practice of the spiritual things or spiritual exercises performed for the purpose of acquiring the habits of virtue. It is not uncommonly confounded with austerity, even by Catholics,

⁵⁴ Petre, Saints.

⁵⁵ The Catholic Encyclopedia. America On Line. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01767c.htm>. Accessed December 21, 2002.

but incorrectly. ... St. Jerome, whose proneness to austerity makes him an especially valuable authority on this point, thus writes to Celantia:

Be on your guard when you begin to mortify your body by abstinence and fasting, lest you imagine yourself to be perfect and a saint; for perfection does not consist in this virtue. It is only a help; a disposition; a means though a fitting one, for the attainment of true perfection.

In her comments on various aspects of the ascetic life, Petre will again and again stress the need for asceticism to be engendered as a method of achieving a closer union with God, not a retreat from society.

Asceticism vs. Mysticism: Another important distinction in terminology needs to be highlighted at this point - that between asceticism and mysticism. This distinction becomes relevant in considering von Hügel's possible influence on Petre, given his predilection for studies on mysticism, e.g. The Mystical Element of Religion,⁵⁶ and his very early advice to Petre on reading in the German mystics.⁵⁷ The Catholic Encyclopedia cited above states:

Neither should asceticism be identified with mysticism. For although genuine mysticism cannot exist without asceticism, the reverse is not true. One can be an ascetic without being a mystic. Asceticism is ethical; mysticism, largely intellectual. Asceticism has to do with moral virtues; mysticism is a state of unusual prayer or contemplation.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Friedrich von Hügel, The Mystical Element of Religion as Studied in Saint Catherine of Genoa and Her Friends (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 2nd ed. 1923).

⁵⁷ FvH to MDP, December 5, 1899. As quoted in: Bernard Holland, ed., Baron Friedrich von Hügel: Selected Letters: 1896 - 1924 (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1927). As an aside, von Hügel considered Meister Eckhart, a condemned heretic, as the greatest of the German mystics. See p. 83 of the above work.

⁵⁸ As a point of comparison, Richard P. McBrien gives definitions in the Glossary of his 1981 Catholicism. ASCETICISM: Exercises undertaken to live the gospel more faithfully, especially in the light of the Cross of Christ and the sacrificial nature of His whole life. MYSTICISM: A human's experience of God. Christian mysticism is the experiencing of God in Jesus Christ in light of the Holy Spirit. Richard P. McBrien, Catholicism (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1981), 1238, 1250.

This distinction needs to be stressed in analyzing Petre's writing, because her interest in mysticism, in spite of von Hügel's attempts to influence her, remains minimal throughout her life, while that of asceticism dates from her earliest writings, and pre-dates her involvement with any of the principals of Modernism.

Despite Leonard's quoting of a letter from von Hügel to Tyrrell: ". . . how fully and deeply that living mystical way of taking religion is working in her . . ." in which she implies that Petre was somehow living a mystical life, Leonard's reference is more of an indication of her consistent prayer life and spiritual development.⁵⁹ There is absolutely no evidence in her journals or in any of her writings that Petre had or sought any sort of mystical experience, or that she was particularly interested in mysticism as anything but an academic topic.

Where Saints Have Trod contains Tyrrell's *Preface*, Petre's *Prologue*, and 12 individual essays. The last essay, "Deus Mea et Omnia" is a slightly rewritten version of her previous essay "Human Love and Divine Love". In this version she eliminates any references to Coventry Patmore and Tyrrell's critique of him, but she maintains the same basic theme of asceticism as equal to conjugal love as a valid method of loving God. The remainder of the essay covers a variety of ascetical topics that give a good insight to Petre's sense of the context of asceticism. In the *Prologue*, Petre asks the question whether past "institutions

⁵⁹ Leonard, Transformation, 21. Von Hügel to George Tyrrell, June 18, 1899, M.D. Petre, Selected Letters of Baron Friedrich von Hügel: 1896 - 1924 (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1928), 76.

and habits and opinions,⁶⁰ should be abandoned as irrelevant or considered for possible rejuvenation in the present. She is critical of those who are impatient with the past, and look only to the future. She seeks to show how people should treat the practices of the past saints in the developing of their own ascetic practices in the present. She feels that those who look to investigate the past should make a value judgment on what they find: "They must find in the past what will nourish their present, or leave the past alone."⁶¹ Many of these essays establish her interest in bringing the practices of the Church (e.g. devotions) more in line with modernity. Although she occasionally mentions science, she does not enter into any areas of historical criticism, or the notion of the Church considering the findings of modern science in changing tradition. Although this work might be seen as her first support of the ideas of Modernism, it remains within the fields of ascetics and spirituality, rather than the theological complexities of Loisy, Tyrrell, and von Hügel. Thus, it is not part of the discourse on Modernism.

Typical Essays: In order to aid in a better understanding of Petre's approach and style, I will provide brief analyses of three of the twelve essays in the book. Appendix A provides a thematic listing of all of the contents of Where Saints Have Trod. Notice that she continues her themes of asceticism and suffering, themes that are not emphasized in the Modernist movement.

⁶⁰ Petre, "Prologue," Saints, 1.

⁶¹ Ibid., 5.

"Catechism and Catechists" discriminates between religious learning and faith.⁶² Petre describes spiritual teaching as an attempt to "rouse our consciousness to those inner realities which it is in our power to disregard," whereas scientific teaching deals with outer, material facts which we cannot ignore.⁶³ In the case of spiritual teaching we have faith calling upon faith, not as in scientific teaching where evidence provides testimony. She maintains that faith is not dependent on teaching, whether as a child or an adult, since humanity always has free will and the power of choice, and often moves away from the teachings of childhood. Even though early religious teaching may have an impact on later life, a loss of faith may or may not be a function of the quality of early training.⁶⁴ She feels that the important factor is the quality of the catechist, rather than that of the catechism. When a teacher demonstrates a high, sincere level of faith, based upon his or her own beliefs, then the student learns by the teacher's example rather than by the content of the lesson. She also maintains that the lessons should be difficult, so that the student feels that he or she is working for something worthwhile. To Petre, a sincere mother, who genuinely believes in and loves her child, is the paradigm of instruction. The child perceives the mother's faith as well as her love. Therefore, when a child is faced with the problem of distinguishing between instruction about the kingdom of heaven, and fairy tales - both of which are outside the material, visible world - the love and faith of the mother cooperate with the grace of God already within the

⁶² Petre, "Catechism and Catechists," *Saints*, 35.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

child to instill a genuine faith, regardless of the actual information of the lessons.⁶⁵ Her basic conclusion is that: "*Knowledge* may be imparted in a more or less external manner, *faith* can only be kindled by the contact of heart with heart."⁶⁶

This essay appears to be original and not derivative from Petre's associates. Although the issue here is knowledge vs. faith, her particular approach, i.e. the importance of the catechist over the lessons, does not appear in any of her previous works, nor does it reflect any Modernist theme. The topic of catechesis does not appear in any of Tyrrell's works. Hard Sayings stays in the realm of academic theology, and even Nova et Vetera, with its 330 various topic areas, makes no mention of teaching in terms of its impact on true faith. Petre's concern is for the individual person, not theological abstractions, and the methods for him or her to develop a deeper, personal relationship with God through growth in faith. This essay deals primarily with religion, with the main theme being her pastoral concern for people, e.g. the nature religious training a parent should give a child. It is certainly possible that some of her thoughts on the importance of catechesis may have developed from her work with the poor, the essay would have been for a more intellectual audience.

"Death before Dishonour"⁶⁷ is the longest essay of this book. Its title may refer to Major General Sir Hector Archibald Macdonald, the hero of the Battle of Omdurman and the Boer War, who was a national hero about the turn of the

⁶⁵ Ibid., 42.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 46. Original italics.

⁶⁷ Petre, "Death Before Dishonour." Saints. 63 ff. Hereafter "Death."

century.⁶⁸ In this essay, Petre deals with the seeming contradiction between the traditional Church teaching that we are to endure all things in humility and patience for love for love of God - to despise our own reputation - and the opposite attitude whereby we are supposed to give good example by our leadership. She says that: "Now reputation is our life in the minds of others, and is based on an instinct almost as strong as that of self-preservation."⁶⁹ If we were indifferent to our reputation in the eyes of others, she maintains that we would soon return to the status of uncaring beasts.⁷⁰ Just as God's laws guide us in the spiritual realm, so our care for our reputation should guide us and prevent us from becoming boorish in the social order.

Turning specifically to asceticism, she asks, regarding the opinion of others:

"What right has any ascetical doctrine, any religious practice, to fly in the face of a fundamental law of our being?"(sic) The answer is that it has no right, and that any interpretation of a counsel of perfection involving such consequences must be deliberately judged false and pernicious, and amended in favor of a solution which will not falsify nature, however jealously it may guard the rights of grace.⁷¹

Her basic question is that when we constantly see good people sacrificing their instincts of life and happiness in order to reach a higher life, why then should

⁶⁸ General MacDonald committed suicide in Paris in March 1903 rather than face a court-martial on charges of "sexual irregularity," thus preferring "Death before Dishonour." See Trevor Royle, Death Before Dishonour: The True Story of Fighting Mac (Edinburgh, Scotland: Mainstream Publishing Company, 1982).

⁶⁹ Ibid., 68.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., 69-70.

they not also sacrifice its social counterparts for the good of others.⁷² Her answer is that: "The law of God is not to save our neighbor, but to love him."⁷³ When we try to reform a neighbor, we attempt to follow the baseline of the image we have formed of ourselves in our own mind, based on our own perception of our own reputation. Often, in our zeal to reform, we lose sight of our primary goal - to improve ourselves and become all that we might be. A true understanding of the ascetical doctrine of humility is based, not on ignoring the opinions of others, but rather respecting those opinions, and using criticism to improve our own situation as a member of the family that is the Body of Christ.

In this essay, Petre draws on a biography of St. Francis of Assisi, and quotes from an unspecified work of Abbé Laberthonnière - the former as an extreme example of humility, and the latter as a contemporary commentator on asceticism. Her intent is to point out the dichotomy between the traditional expectation of humility as taught by the ascetical manuals, and as exemplified by saints such as Francis. In these manuals, people are expected to "care nothing for the opinions of men – to prefer contempt to honour, misunderstanding to appreciation."⁷⁴ Yet, people were also told that it is a requirement for spiritual growth to always give good example. She solves the problem by equating a person's self esteem to a natural instinct, necessary for the preservation of order in society; if we do not care for the others' opinion of us, then society would

⁷² This question relates directly to the criticism of philanthropy that she dealt with extensively in *Aethiopum Servus*. See Chapter III.

⁷³ Petre, "Death," 72.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 65.

degrade to savagery and cruelty. For Petre, it is necessary to respect other's opinions of us while still valuing our status as members of the Mystical Body.

This again appears to be original Petre, at least in comparison to her associates. The idea of updating the Church teaching is certainly an advocacy of modernization, but it is liberalism, not Modernism, and dates from her earlier, pre-Modernist writing.⁷⁵ When Tyrrell addresses asceticism, it is more in the sense of formal exercises like those of St. Ignatius, and von Hügel stays more in the realm of mysticism. This essay falls into the category of religion, with the major theme being asceticism. This is reflected in her comparison between true humility and the need to give good example by leadership.

In "Not Peace but the Sword,"⁷⁶ Petre returns to one of her recurring topics - that of suffering. In this essay, her intent is to reconcile the teaching that peace is the ultimate goal of humanity with the teaching that life is a continual struggle, full of suffering.⁷⁷ Her approach is to highlight the dichotomy between the teaching of philosophy, which maintains that true life is a continual struggle, which is the only way that a human can develop, and the teaching of "spiritual masters" who advocate the desirability of peace as a rightful inheritance to those of good will.⁷⁸ She quotes St. Bernard and St. Ignatius on the paramount importance of peace for those who are trying to find God, and then counters with

⁷⁵ See Chapter III, "Lawful Liberty and Reasonable Service."

⁷⁶ Petre, "Not Peace but the Sword". *Saints*, 89. Hereafter "Peace."

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, Presumably she is referring to teachers of asceticism.

the gospel quote that Jesus came to bring "not peace but the sword." Her question is: "Are we so sure that it is less disturbing to move from good to better than from bad to good?"⁷⁹ In the spiritual existence of the ascetic, there is a difference in the understanding of the words consolation and desolation, as compared to the natural order. For the ascetic, consolation means to be fully alive – to feel intensely, whether it be pain or pleasure, whereas desolation means to be insensible to realities of either joy or sorrow.⁸⁰ She quotes from St. Teresa "*aut pati, aut mori*" (either suffer or die).⁸¹

The last part of this essay is directed toward the suffering of an ascetic who may be struggling toward more advanced spirituality: for example: "Hence the cry of the saints, "to suffer or to die"; "hence the thirst of the human lover for suffering and sacrifice"; . . . "I suffer, therefore I am." ... "to be most truly alive is also to be most truly in pain." . . . " . . . because the body grows sick and weary from the exertions of the soul, we learn to identify fullness of life with keenness of suffering." And finally: ". . . it is, nevertheless, life through pain, and not pain itself which is the true object of all our striving; that suffering is not good for its own sake, but only as the road that leads to a kingdom."⁸²

The quotes above indicate that Petre is viewing suffering and pain as an essential component of the struggle for salvation: ". . . suffering is not good for its

⁷⁹ Ibid., 92.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 93.

⁸¹ This phrase, taken from St. Teresa of Avila, is pervasive in both Tyrrell's and Petre's writing. It was first used, *ad nauseam*, by Tyrrell in "The Gospel of Pain" (1896), and by Petre in her Journals (e.g. March 6, 1901).

⁸² Petre, "Peace," 94, 95. Applies to all of the quotes in this section.

own sake, but only as the road that leads to a kingdom."⁸³ It is difficult to determine whether any of this material is derivative; although she had certainly read Hard Sayings.⁸⁴ Tyrrell's approach in "The Gospel of Pain" is more oriented toward uniting human suffering with that of Christ on the Cross than as a necessary condition of human life. However, both Petre and Tyrrell constantly bring forward the "*aut pati, aut mori*" dictum, that indicates both equate pain and suffering with human existence.

In Where Saints Have Trod, Petre has put together a series of essays setting forth some of her ideas with the main theme being asceticism. In this process she often uses a Thomistic style of argument, presenting a thesis, with its supporting arguments, and then presenting the refuting argument, with its supporting evidence. However, she sometimes uses this approach to present both sides of an issue rather than to refute one side or the other. In this work, she has written a practical commentary on asceticism, in opposition to the formal Church manuals which she often criticizes. There is no significant overlap with any material from Tyrrell or von Hügel, and almost all of the content appears to be her own original composition. Although there are frequent allusions to modernizing the Church, they are more from her perspective as a liberal rather than from that of a Modernist. Although again it is possible to ascribe some of her thoughts to her position as a superior in the DHM, the nature of that order is more aligned with pastoral care than personal asceticism.

⁸³ Ibid., 95.

⁸⁴ See Chapter III.

The Soul's Orbit (1904)⁸⁵

This work is the end product of over three years of rescue work by Petre. In the late 1890s, Tyrrell had conceived the idea of a major work based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. His intent was to bring the "Exercises" into a modern context. As Petre says:

He regarded St. Ignatius as a great innovator, and held that some of his much criticized rules (e.g. "manifestation of conscience") had been instituted wholly in the interests of individual liberty, and as a substitute for mechanical rule. But under the formalizing process this Ignatian system of flexible, spiritual government was being transformed into a closely knit and ultra-conservative organism, while the "Exercises" were becoming petrified by the prevailing lack of mysticism.⁸⁶

In 1900, the Jesuits reacted unfavorably to Tyrrell's "A Perverted Devotion." They ordered him to cease giving retreats, and more closely monitored his writing. He responded by becoming more and more disillusioned with the Society, and destroyed much of the manuscript he had already written. He felt that the Jesuits were becoming so engrossed in formalizing the structure of the "Exercises" that they were destroying the spiritual content, and therefore it was pointless for him to try to preserve the original spirit of Ignatius. "It would have only created a false idea of the teaching and principles of the existing S.J. which would have been neither fair to the Order nor to the public."⁸⁷

Partly at Petre's instigation, and partly through his own desire to publish on the topic, Tyrrell sent Petre the sections he had not destroyed as well as some of his draft notes. This allowed her to reconstruct Tyrrell's work and

⁸⁵ Petre, Orbit.

⁸⁶ Petre, Life II, 78.

⁸⁷ Letter from Tyrrell to "V", September 24, 1900. As quoted in Life II, 80.

eventually publish it as The Soul's Orbit in 1904. Tyrrell's name does not appear anywhere in the work.⁸⁸ On the Title Page, the entry is "Compiled, with Additions, by: M.D. Petre." Although she does include a short note "To the Reader" describing in generalities the origin of the material, it was not until 1912 that Petre admitted, in the Life, that she and Tyrrell had collaborated on the book.

I took the materials and used them as my own; thus at times I was merely a compiler, at times a sort of commentator, at times an author. Sometimes whole passages were put down as they stood; more frequently they were interpreted from the rough MS.; or again I would use the latter as suggestive of further ideas. . . . until certain parts were of such mixed authorship that now, as the MSS. are destroyed, I can hardly myself distinguish the twofold authorship. . . . Roughly we may call him sole or chief author of Chapters I., II., III., IV., V., IX., XI., XIV.; and part author of Chapters VI., VII., VIII., XIII.; with the remaining chapters he had little to do.⁸⁹

The Soul's Orbit is basically "expanded notes of sermons, exhortations, and addresses."⁹⁰ The format is intended to lay out the journey of a soul seeking salvation through pilgrimage. As Petre says in the "Prologue": The aim of this work is to prepare such a devotional attitude of mind as will be undisturbed by any intellectual cataclysm.⁹¹ Appendix B gives an overview of the author, title, and thematic content of each chapter.

As Petre said, without her specification of authorship mentioned above, it is almost impossible to separate out the sections written by each. In some cases it is obvious, as in Chapter I where the author (Tyrrell) is obviously an

⁸⁸ His authorship was a poorly kept secret. Reviews in both the Catholic World LXXX, January 1905, 552, and the American Ecclesiastical Review XXXII, February 1905, 197, identify Tyrrell as the author. Both reviews are extremely favorable.

⁸⁹ Petre, Life II, 83.

⁹⁰ Petre, Orbit, "To the Reader."

⁹¹ Ibid., 5.

experienced confessor, or in Chapter X, where Petre takes some phraseology from Where Saints Have Trod.⁹² There are other indicators; for example, the parts written by Tyrrell tend to be more abstract while those of Petre are more personal. Tyrrell uses extensive Scriptural quotations, while Petre's use is minimal.

In 1900 Tyrrell is moving out of what Petre describes as his "Mediating Liberalism" period into his "Militant Action" phase. He is becoming more disillusioned with the Society of Jesus. Two comments help to explain this situation: Petre: "He had thought first to work through the Society for the Church, and through the Church for the world; he now definitely abandoned the first of these aims."⁹³ Tyrrell: "No effort of my will could ever again make me trust the Society - or regard it as otherwise than the prison house in which I have been put for my sins."⁹⁴

Even though what he had envisioned as his great work on the "Spiritual Exercises" was not to be, The Soul's Orbit is still a major piece of pastoral spiritual writing. There are occasional traces of what might be seen as foreshadowing Modernism: Petre in the "Prologue": "Our hope is to present in these pages a few thoughts which will enable all to bear *the change which is surely coming, to be prepared for the storm, and to have a dwelling ready before the old one is demolished*."⁹⁵ Or Tyrrell in Chapter IV: "His sayings and doctrines

⁹² She refers to "Not Peace but the Sword", the title of Chapter X in Saints.

⁹³ Petre, Life II, 84.

⁹⁴ Letter from Tyrrell to Petre, Add. MS. 52367, London: BL, January 29, 1901.

⁹⁵ Petre, Orbit, 4. Italics added.

must have formed that first nucleus of the Apostolic tradition to which the events of His life were added later, as of subordinate interest, yet it is only partially true."⁹⁶ However, the overall book is in no way polemic, but rather something written "for those whose religious sense is quickened and comforted only by spiritual doctrine that is presented in a more modern form and style."⁹⁷ It is strong evidence of Petre's intellectual capabilities that she was able to pull together the disparate fragments of Tyrrell's work in such a way that the book is almost totally transparent to the actual authorship of individual parts.

This book can be seen as almost entirely reflecting the theme of asceticism, but from the aspect of pastoral concern. It is meant as a spiritual guide.

Literary Criticism

As mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, Petre published several critiques of individuals during this period. She is now demonstrating her abilities to move into the literary world outside of the religious sphere. By engaging and critiquing some of the prominent literary figures of the time, she is asserting not only her independence, but her belief that she has something important to say.

Her piece on Coventry Patmore has already been discussed, but three more should be touched upon briefly, since the content indicates that they are her work and her ideas alone. The three works include short critiques of Oscar

⁹⁶ Ibid, 54. (written by Tyrrell).

⁹⁷ "Criticisms and Notes," American Ecclesiastical Review XXXII (February 1905), 196.

Wilde,⁹⁸ and Arthur Schopenhauer,⁹⁹ and a six part series on Friedrich Nietzsche.¹⁰⁰ Each of these men lived outside the bounds of Christianity - Wilde with his hedonistic life, Schopenhauer with his belief in the "overwill," and Nietzsche with the concept of the "Superman." Petre criticizes various facets of the beliefs of each of these men, but what is interesting is that in each case there is also an appreciation of the individual's contributions.

Oscar Wilde

While she questions the validity of Wilde's alleged conversion while in prison - his avowed shift from a life of total pleasure to one of total suffering, she also praises him for the fact that he was able to control his own fate by finding a use for his suffering. ". . . this at least we may say – he was courageous and consistent in a very dark hour, and he left us at least an example of how a man may make his fate his own."¹⁰¹

This article appears to be nothing more than a commentary by a literate, well-read person on an item of literary interest. Wilde remained popular, even five years after his death, and Petre is providing her opinion on his alleged change of heart. Her approach to finding some good in a notorious hedonist is in keeping with her pastoral concern for all people.

⁹⁸ M.D. Petre, "De Profundis." *Month* 105 (April, 1905), 383 - 87.

⁹⁹ M.D. Petre, "Pessimism in Relationship to Asceticism" *Catholic World* 81 (April 1905), 33 - 43.

¹⁰⁰ M.D. Petre, "Studies on Friedrich Nietzsche" *Catholic World* 82, 83. A six part series from December 1905 through June 1906. See bibliography.

¹⁰¹ Petre, "De Profundis," 387.

Arthur Schopenhauer

In her analysis of Schopenhauer, she attacks his concept of the mindless "overwill" that controls all human destiny. In place of his "will not to live" as the ultimate goal of the thinking person, she brings forth some of the thoughts on love that she proposed in "Human Love and Divine Love." As she ends the essay, she tries to salvage some of Schopenhauer by saying: "Had his contemplation been blended with love his philosophy would have at once been more human and more personal."¹⁰² Her conclusion includes the spiritual dimension, relating "the denial of the will to live" to Christ by framing that denial in terms of breaking down the barriers of self-love in order to allow God to enter - a denial of "all that would obstruct and contract the infinite power of living."¹⁰³

This essay, even though it ventures into the realm of philosophy, is another example of Petre's own thought processes. In this case, she had obviously read Schopenhauer, and as part of her own intellectual activity, submitted it for publication as a scholarly critique.¹⁰⁴ However, once again, her care for people allows her to find some good even in Schopenhauer.

Friedrich Nietzsche

Petre became interested in Friedrich Nietzsche in 1903. She and Tyrrell began reading his works in February of that year. The following comments indicate her initial impressions: "We have begun to do some Nietzsche together -

¹⁰² Ibid., 42.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 43.

¹⁰⁴ PP. Add. MS. 52373 (London: BL, March 15, 1905).

very sardonic-very horrible in its ruthless earnestness."¹⁰⁵ Later she writes: "Both much pleased with Ecce Homo - seems so entirely in accordance with modern lights."¹⁰⁶ She makes an interesting comment that fits with her effort in the series to present some positive aspect of Nietzsche: "Am reading Zarathustra - I believe Nietzsche has a very real philosophy - not mere license and blasphemy - am trying to reach it."¹⁰⁷

In 1904, she was asked by the editor of the Catholic World to write some articles, which led to this 6 part series. Petre addresses six characteristics of Nietzsche in a style that might be described as a balanced apologetic. These articles are not related to Modernism, but rather carry through her themes of suffering, pastoral concern and spirituality. As she says in the fourth article, particularly focused on the concept of the Superman: "Our task will be rather, as in the other points we have considered, to fix attention on the positive and original elements of Nietzsche's conception, dwelling less on its negative aspects."¹⁰⁸ This describes her approach to all of the areas she discusses. She does not hesitate to criticize where she feels Nietzsche is wrong, as in his concept of the Superman, or his contempt for women, but she also attempts to find positive elements in his philosophy, based on trying to consider his work as a whole, and not just to dwell on those negative aspects that were popularized and taken out of his total context in later years. Generally she tries to put Nietzsche's

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., February 17, 1903.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., February 19, 1903.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., March 21, 1903.

¹⁰⁸ M.D. Petre, "Studies on Friedrich Nietzsche: No. IV: Superman," The Catholic World 82, March 1906, 773.

philosophy in terms of a broader Christian context, at least where such is possible.

Petre points out that, in her opinion, Nietzsche was a philosophical thinker, not a philosopher, since he had no balanced or completed system. Even though he may have been working on such a system, his insanity ultimately prevented its completion. She also proposes an idea of Nietzsche as an ascetic, basing her analysis on her observation that his whole life was devoted to cultivating the ability to put his mind in control of all his emotions and feelings - to never lose control. This for him was the "will to be strong." Petre compares his idea to the Christian ascetics who were so intent on controlling their own passions that they paid no attention to the affect on others. Even later in life, when Nietzsche was battling physical pain and mental breakdown, he still insisted that he had to overcome the influence that Wagner had exerted on him - to rid himself of the influence of another mind and will on his own.

Even though Petre certainly disagrees with his philosophical ideas, she sees the potential for him and his work to have a positive effect on Christians: "We must read him ... *in order to grow strong and surmount him.*"¹⁰⁹ Her admiration for his character reflects the attitude of the British aristocracy toward pain and suffering as well as her own views on suffering as an ennobling experience, although in her case she relates suffering to a method of achieving a

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 330. Original italics.

closer unity with God, while Nietzsche saw it as something to be overcome because giving in to suffering meant that the will was no longer strong.

As with her attempt to salvage Schopenhauer's character, she uses similar words about Nietzsche, saying that if he had concentrated on being a poet: "The good in him would have been more forcible, the bad would have been less objectionable."¹¹⁰ She still feels that it is necessary to view the whole scope of his work in order to fully evaluate him, but that the bitterness of his later years often detracts from the enthusiasm of his earlier writings.¹¹¹

All of these essays are literary criticism, but her attempt to find some good in each of these men reflects her overall pastoral concern. There is a revealing statement in a letter to Fr. John Burke, C.S.P., editor of the Catholic World referring to her treatment of Nietzsche: "I shall deal with him sympathetically, because *I believe in no other treatment for any thinker, if one wants to treat of him at all . . .*"¹¹²

Two aspects of Petre's life dominate these six years; first, her problems with her emotional life and Tyrrell, and second, the variety and scope of her writing. With regard to the first, it has been shown in Chapter 4 that she lived on an emotional roller coaster, subject to Tyrrell's moods. It would be interesting to see the language and content of the letters she wrote to Tyrrell, but very few have survived. Tyrrell, for his part, was undergoing the trauma of separation

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*,

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 517.

¹¹² M.D.Petre, Richmond, Yorkshire, England to Fr. John Burke, New York, June 28, 1905, Paulist Fathers Archives, Catholic World Correspondence, Petre File, #12. Italics added.

from the Jesuits, and it seems quite probable that he took some of his anger out on Petre,

Her discomfort and frustration are often reflected in the topical content of her writing, whether consciously or not. For example, four of her essays reflect the theme of suffering. "An Englishwoman's Love Letters" concentrates on the importance of suffering in human life. Her own relationship parallels the ideas comparing human and divine love, and the suffering caused by being unable to fully love God, as well as that caused by a love that is unreturned, or less intense than that given. The same idea of suffering is portrayed in "the Buried Life", although in this case she focuses more on the spiritual aspect. "The Chastisement of Our Peace" reflects her lifelong attitude toward suffering as a necessary condition to achieve union with God. "Not Peace but the Sword" continues the theme of life overall as a suffering struggle, ending with the repeated idea that her ministry in life was to suffer so that Tyrrell might survive.

Another thematic aspect of this period is the presence of spirituality in her writing. Without exception, all of her work has some spiritual focus. Even "De Profundis", questioning the sincerity of Oscar Wilde's conversion in prison, has a dimension of Wilde's relationship to Christ.

The major theme she addresses throughout this period is asceticism, and for her it is very clearly separate from mysticism. In her mind, even ordinary people can practice asceticism, to some degree, as an aid to becoming closer to God. The different components of asceticism she discusses in Where Saints

Have Trod are her attempt to replace the manuals of asceticism that were used within the Church of the time. Her message is also pastoral - even catechetical rather than academic. She is not concerned with the distinctions of neo-Thomistic theology, but more with explaining and analyzing what she sees as roadblocks to a person being able to improve his or her spirituality. Her pastoral concern derives from a combination of factors. Undoubtedly much of it developed during her work in the DHM, but there is also a component which could very well come from her upbringing. The English aristocrat generally felt, and often practiced, the concept of responsibility for the welfare of "the working class," particularly those somehow under their care. Petre could easily have extended this to include the spiritual welfare of the lower classes.

With regard to her connections to what would later be called Modernism - her intellectual friends, Tyrrell, von Hügel, and Brémond were certainly working toward bringing the Church more in keeping with the discoveries of the age. Petre was also concerned with modernizing the approach of Roman Catholicism to a variety of topics, but through this period she was operating within the framework of intellectual discussion as a liberal rather than focusing on polemics.

This chapter has dealt with some of the works Petre produced during the initial phase of her relationship with Modernism. It shows not only her accommodation to the ideas of her friends, but also her increasing ability to strike out on her own in a variety of topical areas, while still retaining her overall focus on spirituality and pastoral care. In the next chapter, with the excommunication

of Loisy and Tyrrell and the censuring of Brémond, the promulgation of *Lamentabile* and *Pascendi*, as well as her own treatment at the hands of Bishop Amigo, the approach will change.

CHAPTER VI
PASCENDI AND BEYOND (1906 - 1918)

Introduction

This chapter will cover Petre's life and writing during the period from early 1906 through the end of the First World War. As far as her religious and personal life, four events stand out: the promulgation of *Lamentabili* and *Pascendi* in 1907, the death of Tyrrell in 1909, her conflict with Bishop Amigo, of the Diocese of Southwark, beginning in 1909, and the First World War. The Vatican documents primarily affected her friends. However, through them, and through the pressure that was brought to bear on them by Church authorities, Petre herself made the transition from the role of public intellectual to activist and at times vocal defender of the views of her associates. It is her activities during this period that might lead people to see her in the role of "the last Modernist;" however, I maintain that it is this period that best shows her growth outside of the label of Modernist. The death of Tyrrell certainly had a major personal impact on her, and reinforced her ambition to continue his work. The conflict with Bishop Amigo led to direct confrontation with the authorities of the Catholic Church, which placed some of her writings on the Index of Forbidden Books, and prompted the interference of the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Merry del Val. Finally, the Great War led her into new areas of analysis, those of

patriotism, pacifism, and international relations. These areas will be covered in more detail later in this chapter.

The primary goal of this chapter is to address the changes in Petre's writing and attitude through these four events, as well as new intellectual directions she chose after the condemnation of Modernism and Tyrrell's death.

Two major themes are reflected in her writings for this period: first, her concern about the question of doubt in religious beliefs, and second, her advocacy for the need for the Church to change in its dealing with the people and institutions of the 20th century, i.e. her advocacy and defense of Modernism. In addition, she moved into a broader scope of investigation, leaving the ascetical and spiritual realms for more investigation into the social and political disciplines.

As in the past, Petre wrote on a variety of topics. Her most important books of this period¹ are Catholicism and Independence (1907),² which was a primary cause of her leaving the DHM, and the Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell (1912),³ which had been in preparation since 1901.⁴ One other work deserves special attention. On November 2, 1910, she sent a long letter to the London Times, outlining her rationale for refusing to sign the oath against Modernism, and her opinions about the condemnations. Some of her other writings during this period provide some insight into her thoughts and

¹ Although Modernism: Its Failures and Its Fruits falls within this period, it will be treated separately in Chapter VII.

² M. D. Petre, Catholicism and Independence: Being Studies in Spiritual Liberty (London: Longmans, Green, 1907). Hereafter C & I.

³ Petre, Life I & II.

⁴ PP. Add. MS. 52372 (London: BL, 2 February 1901).

motivations, but can be grouped together to illustrate their contributions to the changes in her scope or attitude.⁵

The Ethics of Belief Debate:

Before starting into the analysis of Petre's writing, it seems appropriate to briefly discuss the Ethics of Belief debate that occupied many of the Victorian intelligentsia during the last part of the nineteenth century. This has direct bearing on the content of Petre's spiritual positions, since she makes extensive reference in MWF to her problems with doubt as a child, and her continued questioning throughout her life. As she says: ". . . doubts began early, and persisted, in one form or another, throughout life."⁶

However, rather than doubt per se, the fundamental question that concerned the Victorians was how to quantify the extent of a person's belief. One side, known as "proportionism" or "equationism", originated with Locke and Hume, and held that we must proportion the confidence we have in our beliefs to the amount of evidence for those beliefs. William Clifford (1845 - 1879) narrows the option and holds that we assent only to those propositions for which we have sufficient evidence.⁷

In the Victorian era, social, scientific, and political change had left many people in a position where the loss of the old order had given rise to an air of skepticism, particularly with regard to established religion. The accepted

⁵ E.g. her writings on the war and pacifism.

⁶ Petre, MWF, 110. Her overall discussion of doubt is in Chapter XIII of MWF.

⁷ Gerald R. McCarthy, ed., The Ethics of Belief Debate (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press), 2.

religious world-view developed by the rationalists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was under scrutiny, and the fundamentals of religious belief itself were now being questioned.⁸ Darwin had struck a major blow at the comfortable certainties of the previous centuries; his Origin of Species and The Descent of Man threatened the very fabric of Christian, particularly Protestant, belief in the inerrancy of the Bible, thereby threatening belief in Divine Providence. If the Bible was not literally true, for example, in the creation story, then how can the rest be relied upon?

In order to deal with these questions, "The Metaphysical Society" was formed on April 21, 1869 and continued meeting on almost a monthly basis until November 16, 1880. Even after the Society disbanded, the debates continued in the pages of such journals as the Spectator, the Dublin Review, and many other prominent intellectual periodicals.⁹ Men such as John Stuart Mill, John Henry Cardinal Newman, William George Ward, and many of the prominent scholars of the time, in a variety of disciplines, across religious boundaries, involved themselves in the debate. Although by the 1890's the discussions had died down, articles on either side were still being published. For example, both Wilfred Ward and Auguste Sabatier published articles on the topic.

Although there is no direct evidence that Petre's work was affected by the debate, particularly since it had died down by the time she started writing, the basic concepts had permeated English intellectual circles, and it seems likely that she would have been aware of the problems involved when she wrote "The

⁸ Ibid., 12.

⁹ Ibid., 15.

Temperament of Doubt” as the first essay in Catholicism and Independence discussed later in this chapter.

The Papal Condemnations

It is also worth briefly reviewing some of the actions preceding and leading up to the condemnations in order to put Petre's later actions into perspective. Although the condemnations did not affect her directly,¹⁰ the impact on Loisy, Tyrrell, von Hügel, and the rest of her intellectual associates changed the direction of her writing.

Much of Petre's attitude during this period was shaped by the actions of the Vatican in response to what the Curia perceived as liberal attacks on the structure of the Church, papal authority, Scriptural inerrancy, and the nature of dogma. The immediate roots of *Pascendi* and *Lamentabili* can be traced to Pius IX, who had been totally devoted to his perception of the nature of the Church as a bulwark against liberalism and to the idea of ultramontanism.¹¹ Any attempts to liberalize the Church or include modern ideas were met with total rejection. “[We condemn the idea that] the Roman Pontiff can and ought to reconcile himself and reach agreement with progress, liberalism, and modern civilization.”¹² The

¹⁰ As laity, neither she nor von Hügel was subject to the same obedience and discipline as members of the clergy.

¹¹ Ultramontanists felt that the secular world was completely taken over by liberals, and favored increasing Church authority, centered on the Pope, and adopting a siege mentality for the Church.

¹² Pius IX, Syllabus Errorum, December 8, 1864, No. 80. As quoted in Alec R. Vidler, The Church in an Age of Revolution, The Pelican History of the Church, Vol. 5 (New York: Penguin Books, 1961), 151. In all fairness to Pius, this statement had been taken from a previous document condemning the Piedmontese for attacks on convents and harassment of priests. The statement had referred to “civilization” in the sense of a system invented to weaken or overthrow the Church. See Thomas Bokkenkotter, A Concise History of the Catholic Church (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 282.

definition of papal infallibility by the First Vatican Council reinforced Pius IX's position, and severely checked any further attempts at liberalization - i.e. accommodation with modern society - within the Church.¹³

Although Pius IX's successor, Leo XIII, was initially seen as having some accommodation for liberal ideas, in reality he was anything but liberal. He did try to repair relations with France and Germany and to cope with the changing world of the Industrial Revolution. In addition to the realm of international relations, one of his primary concerns was in the area of social justice. His encyclical *Rerum Novarum* still stands as a fundamental document in this area. However, Leo was still basically a medievalist in intellectual matters, and through his support, neo-Thomism was established as the measure of Catholic orthodoxy.¹⁴ Despite his apparent tolerance of liberalism, Leo was determined to restore the papacy to a position of international power, as in the days when the popes had wielded temporal power. He saw himself in the role of a world arbiter, to whom nations would turn for resolution of their disputes. Although not going to the extremes to which Boniface VIII had gone in *Unam Sanctam*,¹⁵ he still felt that his was the power to bind and loose and it should be applied at the national level in standards of conduct. By controlling the morality that was used for public decisions, Rome would thus be able to influence the actions of civil authority. Liberalism and ideas such as separation of Church and State threatened this

¹³ Bokkenkotter, *History*, 282.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 311. Leo's encyclical of 1879, *Aeterni Patris*, established the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas as the basis for theological thought within the Church.

¹⁵ Boniface VIII, *Unam Sanctam* (November 18, 1302). Boniface stated that: ". . . it is altogether necessary for salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff." As quoted in Richard P. McBrien, *Lives of the Popes* (San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1997), 231.

belief, by challenging the authority of the Church. For Leo, the secularizing ideas of liberalism posed a real danger to the spiritual health of the Church. This last concern led to the encyclical *Proventissimus Deus*¹⁶ that proclaimed the total inerrancy of the Bible, providing theological grounds for the later condemnation of Loisy's works.¹⁷ Since much of the theology of the past had been built on Scripture, a threat to inerrancy was seen as a threat to the Church herself. The stage was now set for Pius X to condemn Modernism.

Pius X was at heart a pastor, having come up through the ranks of parish priests rather than through the diplomatic bureaucracy of the Vatican; however he often surrounded himself with men who were familiar with Vatican politics. The result of his personnel selections created a *cadre* of advisors who were firmly entrenched in the ultramontane attitudes of Pius IX and Leo XIII. Although basically concerned with the welfare of souls, Pius X was also totally adamant when it came to matters that he perceived as threatening papal authority. The idea of any form of liberalism in Church matters was anathema to him. Within months after his election in 1903, five of Loisy's books, including *L'Évangile et L'Église* and *Autour d'un Petite Livre* had been placed on the Index of Forbidden Books for "very grave errors" in regard to the primitive revelation, the authenticity of the gospel history and teaching, Christ's divinity and knowledge, His resurrection and the divine institution of the Church and the sacraments.¹⁸ Although Tyrrell was not formally

¹⁶ Leo XIII, *Proventissimus Deus* (November 18, 1893). America on Line, <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Leo13/l13provi.htm>. Queried 3 September 2003.

¹⁷ Joseph H. Jacobs, "The Rise and Fall of Roman Catholic Modernism" (Dayton, OH: The University of Dayton, 1987), 12.

¹⁸ Reardon, *Modernism*, 35-6.

excommunicated until October 1907, after the promulgation of the Vatican condemnations, his writings were published in Italy, and familiar to both the Curia and the Cardinal Secretary of State, Rafael Merry del Val. In 1907, Pius X defined Modernism as the “synthesis of all heresies” in his encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*.¹⁹ Although many of the 65 condemnations of *Lamentabili*²⁰ were directed at Loisy, and scriptural exegesis, the primary thrust of both condemnations was against all of the “isms” that had developed in the post-Enlightenment world - rationalism, liberalism, socialism, Gallicanism, Americanism, and now the “synthesis of all heresies”, Modernism. In the minds of the Vatican hierarchy, virtually all errors, whether theological, political, social, or moral, originated from the error of private judgment. In the case of Modernism, this led to disobedience and defiance of the Church’s authority.²¹

Catholicism and Independence (1907)²²

Petre published this book in December 1907, after the promulgation of *Pascendi* and *Lamentabili*. It is a collection of 11 articles and essays, with a prologue and an epilogue. Six of the pieces had been previously published, which was one of the arguments Petre used when she applied for (and was refused) an *Imprimatur*. This book was the direct cause of her leaving the

¹⁹ *Pascendi*, as quoted in Hoffman, *The Gospel and the Church*, 217-268.

²⁰ *Lamentabili*, as quoted in Reardon., *Roman Catholic Modernism*, 242 - 248.

²¹ David G. Schultenover, S.J., *A View from Rome* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1993), 162.

²² Petre, C & I. This book was to be the cause of Petre's first major conflict with the Church, and ultimately was a factor in her leaving the DHM.

DHM.²³ In February 1907, she had written to Cardinal Bourne²⁴ asking for a review and *Imprimatur*.²⁵ Cardinal Bourne referred the review to a Benedictine, Father Bergh, to act as censor. His reply to the Cardinal's secretary is worth quoting:

Miss Petre's book won't do at all. It would have to be rewritten to pass, though some of her Essays are good & the whole is very clever indeed. It is an apology for reformers & a vindication of the rights of private judgement (sic) against the authority of the Church. If printed, it is likely to do harm, as the objectionable views are very plausibly put.²⁶

As for how Petre saw the content of the book, she says in the "Prologue:"

If, as the writer hopes, they have one dominant note, one pervading and connecting thought, it is that of the right, the necessity, the duty of every mind to work out its own salvation by the courageous facing of its own difficulties, the resolute following of its own lights.²⁷

Appendix C provides a thematic overview of the content of the articles and essays.

Two major topics run through this book - the right, even the duty, of a person to doubt in religious matters, and the primacy of individual conscience vs. the authority of the Church. As with her previous works, I will look more closely at some selected essays as examples of her style and content.

²³ The DHM asked her to withdraw the book; she refused and stated that she would leave the order when her vows expired in February 1908. Leonard, *Transformation*, 45, 49.

²⁴ Then Archbishop of Westminster.

²⁵ Leonard, *Transformation*, 46. The original title of the book was *Through the Letter to the Spirit*. PP, Add. MS. 52374. London: BL, February 8, 1907.

²⁶ Francis Bourne Papers, Archives of Westminster, Book 1/32. As quoted in Leonard, *Transformation*, 46.

²⁷ Petre, *C & I*, ix.

Typical Essays

"The Temperament of Doubt":²⁸ This is the first essay in the book. It was originally published in 1901 by the Catholic Truth Society after several attempts by Petre to have it accepted elsewhere: "Fr. Sidney Smith is afraid to publish 'The Temperament of Doubt' in the Month. I must now cut it up into 3 and try the Pilot."²⁹ Tyrrell was quite pleased with the essay: "I like this more than I can tell. It is very bold and yet very sound."³⁰ This work reflects a classic Victorian difficulty rooted in the Ethics of Belief Debate,³¹ i.e. whether it is morally licit for a person to doubt in matters of religious belief. Although there is no direct evidence that Petre was trying to interject herself into the debate, her ideas reflect a cultural *ethos* resulting from the multiplicity of social, political, and scientific changes that had occurred during the Victorian era.

Most of the debate, by men like Cardinal Newman and William Ward, centered on an attempt to quantify the extent of an individual's belief. Petre, on the other hand, was specifically concerned with the opposite side of the coin, that of doubt. She begins by stating the problem as she sees it: "The epidemic of doubt seizes on populations now where it only affected individuals in former ages."³² She then limits her investigations:

. . . to depict our mental attitude towards certain theories, principles, facts, or fictions which we have never held, but are approaching for the sake of

²⁸ M.D. Petre, "The Temperament of Doubt," C & I, 1-32. Hereafter "Doubt."

²⁹ PP. Add. MS. 52372 (London: BL. September 14, 1900). Apparently Tyrrell agreed. See PP, Add. MS. 52367, September 15, 1900.

³⁰ Letter, Tyrrell to Petre, PP. Add. MS. 52367 (London: BL, between May 28 and August 15, 1900). This indicates that "The Temperament of Doubt" may have been written as early as the end of 1899.

³¹ See above.

³² Petre, "Doubt", 4.

inquiry, or are simply relegating to a half-way domain of opinion or uncertainty. Such doubt as this is rather that which precedes than that which follows on belief; . . .³³

Further, she says:

. . . We must distinguish between a doubt which is fully approved and accepted, which is received into the mind and seated in the place which faith had occupied, from that which is merely suggested . . . and is not yet admitted as conqueror or friend.³⁴

Thus, her main concern is with the doubt that has not yet been either accepted or rejected, but is still worrying at a person's soul, causing suffering and possibly a sense of loss. People experiencing this kind of doubt are those who feel they are personally responsible for their beliefs, and would consider it a matter of sin if they were to give them up. Such people may include those who hold to an infallible authority. Often this type person does not want to abandon his or her belief, however, they feel they must do so in order to remain true to themselves, while at the same time having a feeling of compulsion from outside to remain true to their beliefs, rather than an inner conviction.³⁵ These people also tend to reject help and remain unapproachable in their pain and uncertainty.³⁶

Petre again returns to definitions as she turns to the discussion of difficulties. She says: "A difficulty, pure and simple, is, in fact a conundrum or problem which torments us as long as we look at it, . . . but remains partly

³³ Ibid., 4-5.

³⁴ Ibid., 5.

³⁵ Ibid., 7.

³⁶ Ibid., 8.

external as long as it has no direct connexion (sic) with our life or interests."³⁷ More than one person may have the same difficulty, but a doubt is peculiar to an individual, affecting either moral or intellectual relationships to certain facts or doctrines.³⁸ In the Middle Ages difficulties seldom produced doubts because the Church was the arbiter – the sole teacher of religious truth, and believers were sustained by the unity of thought around them.³⁹

Petre sees a potential for spiritual comfort in the fact that doubt often attacks those who think deeply on religious topics rather than those to whom religion is a casual concern. For her the presence of doubt in such people is a sign that their faith is alive and not stagnant. However, those individuals who are able to partition their minds into discrete categories, e.g. science, business, religion, are not easily troubled by difficulties or doubts; it is only when a person tries to integrate diverse categories that problems begin to occur. Thus, a religious individual who tries to subordinate all of his or her activities in life to religion often begins to experience doubts as to the validity of this or that facet of their life, which before they were able to keep separate.⁴⁰

The question of moral responsibility in doubt depends on what theory a person holds as to the origin of faith. Although those who believe agree that doubt is an evil, in that it disturbs our spiritual calm, it only becomes a sin when there is a will to doubt, since sin requires a conscious act of the will. Opposing schools of thought either believe that faith is like the light of day, visible to all who

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

do not deliberately shut it out, and that doubt is a deliberate act of the will resulting in blindness, or else, on the opposing side, they see doubt as a sickness obscuring faith, which can be cured by an act of the will. All agree on the duty of accepting a revelation from God, and guarding a faith already possessed, but for some, faith is always available if a person is willing to accept it, and for them doubt is a deliberate refusal to accept faith. The will is something that would eliminate doubt but sometimes refuses to do so. Petre draws a distinction between doubt as a deliberate choice, in the sense of a sin against the virtue of faith, and doubt that indicates that our faith is alive. She says, referring to doubt: "Because we feel the snake we know that we believe, and, because he stirs beneath our touch, we know that our faith has the fullness and possibilities of life, and is not a stereotyped formula."⁴¹

Too often people relegate their faith to a sort of subconscious, automatic status, and then when it is tested, it is unfit for use. "(A)s the active can become the habitual, so also the habitual can become the automatic: . . ."⁴² Thus, in Petre's mind, a faith that has no doubt is in danger because it has become complacent. In our anxiety to make faith a durable habit, we sometimes go too far and produce a mechanical instead of a living faith, based on rote formulae. This faith is limited, and seldom finds difficulties, and can often be superceded by something more living and personal, possibly some factor from daily life. As Petre says: "Faith and religion are nothing unless they regard the whole moral

⁴¹ Ibid., 30. She is comparing doubt to the snake that stirs beneath St. Michael's foot.

⁴² Ibid., 22.

and intelligent being; . . . ⁴³ if they are not personalized they may become automatic, and if faith is automatic and compartmented, then belief can be negated without difficulty. However, if faith is personalized, a crisis in spiritual belief may lead to a renewed faith, based on a new perception of spiritual reality. Thus, in a crisis of faith, the problem is not solved unless the solution is a personal and not an automatic act.

Turning to the Church, Petre indicates a level of concern when she says:

"The Church must be to us a thing of spiritual, not material beauty, and then we shall not be troubled at finding that, if everlastingly beautiful, she may also be temporarily black."⁴⁴ She ends with the theme that runs throughout this and several other articles - the primacy of conscience:

And most of all, must we cling to the assurance that it can never be a question of choice between our faith and our truth, that there can never be an obligation for us to accept a belief unless that obligation arise from our fundamental conviction of that truth.⁴⁵

The overall category of this essay is that of religion, with the main theme being spirituality, as when Petre discusses the nature of faith. She touches lightly on the nature of the Church when she sees it as "temporarily black," indicating her belief that all is not as it should be.

This essay is of major importance in consideration of Petre's theological and intellectual accomplishments. First of all, it was originally written in 1900, possibly as early as late 1899, before her involvement with Modernism. Second,

⁴³ Ibid., 25.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 29. This theme is developed more fully in "Black but Comely", a subsequent essay in the book.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

and most important, it is a unique statement of her position that doubt is an inherent component of faith, all the way from the internal personal relationship of an individual with God, up to and including his or her relationship to the Church. The question of doubt has been with her from her childhood, and will remain throughout her life. It is this issue of doubt vs. certainty in the matter of faith that defines her spirituality. She believes that both the neo-scholastics and later, the Modernists have missed the idea that doubt is a basic ingredient in the very experience of believing, because they have confused certainty with faith. Petre's mindset, or temperament, is driven by her aristocratic, Cisalpine background. She will not accept unsupported claims, but rather insists on questioning, and being convinced. However, she also holds that the existence of God cannot be proven by reason, therefore she struggles with doubt her entire life. The important factor here is that she remains a Catholic in spite of her doubts, and grows in her faith through them

"The Order of Melchizedek": This essay was originally published in the Monthly Register⁴⁶ in 1902. Petre's main association with priests during this time was with Tyrrell and Brémond, both of whom were having their problems with their Jesuit superiors and censors, and both of whom Petre saw as primarily spiritual men. This essay is her apologetic for distinguishing between the human and spiritual nature of the priesthood.

⁴⁶ M.D. Petre, "The Order of Melchizedek," Monthly Register, 1902, 265-67.

One of the major points she makes relates directly back to her Cisalpine upbringing. In discussing the possibility that a priest may be a source of scandal to his parishioners she says:

To the Old English Catholic this difficulty would not have occurred. He was not much given to seeking advice and example, and to him the Englishman's soul was his castle, not to be entered on meddled with by priest or layman. He had a deep reverence for the priest as administrator of the sacraments, but did not habitually look to him for intellectual light and guidance, nor even to any great extent for spiritual direction. . . . Within a certain province he paid him the sincerest respect, but that province was very strictly circumscribed and limited.⁴⁷

She is also making a point that there is a difference between the intellectual and spiritual characteristics of a priest, and that every priest should not be expected to be at the same level in both. In her opinion, the real strength of a priest is in his spiritual relationship to God; "But the essential, indispensable quality of the priest is that he be *priestly* i.e. the representative of the unfailing cause of God in a failing world."⁴⁸

This essay shows additional evidence of her increasing dissatisfaction with the institutional Church. She begins the essay with an almost eschatological question: ". . . as to the future, is the ideal for which we strive one according to which, religion becoming more spiritualized, men will go straight to God without any human help whatsoever?"⁴⁹ She then goes on to answer her own question with the idea that everyone with any religious tendencies will always need some

⁴⁷ Ibid., 78. Petre will discuss the Cisalpines more fully in The Ninth Lord Petre. See Chapter VIII.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 89. Original italics.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 71.

intermediary or guide in his or her search for God.⁵⁰ ". . . we would say that, as long as any visible Church exists, a visible priesthood is equally necessary."⁵¹ The danger that she sees is that some people may develop a "most pagan reverence"⁵² for the priest, which could lead to total reliance on the priest for spiritual guidance and direction, becoming an excuse for spiritual inertia on the part of the individual.

Where such a conception of the sacerdotal office exists, we shall find arrogance in the priest, servility in the people, which latter easily passes into distrust and hatred; the priest is disliked in proportion as he is indispensable; in proportion as he is to the faithful a reminder of their own helplessness.⁵³

As far as the institutional Church, she moves into the realm of mysticism with the following comments:

There is a body of the priesthood which corresponds with and belongs wholly to the body of the Church; there is a soul of the priesthood which corresponds with and belongs to the soul of the Church. . . . The spiritual priesthood will often accompany its official counterpart; but as grace may be bestowed independently of the sacraments, so may the spiritual power of the priesthood exist in those who do not bear its official mark.

And as these members of the spiritual priesthood are recipients of an order which God alone confers, so does every priest, in so far as he enters on these higher functions, receive his mandate from God, and not from his earthly superiors.⁵⁴

It seems possible that in this essay Petre is setting forth her concept of Tyrrell as a priest, in the face of the adversity that he is facing from the Society of Jesus and the English hierarchy. She is also condemning those who, while on

⁵⁰ Ibid., 73. It is interesting that she cites Isaac Hecker as an example of such a guide.

⁵¹ Ibid., 83.

⁵² Ibid., 74.

⁵³ Ibid., 74-5.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 87-8.

one hand criticizing the priesthood, are in fact fundamentally anti-clerical. As Crews quotes her: ". . . many are severe critics precisely because they demand much of the priest that is not his duty to supply; thus they show themselves much too dependent on their priests in the first place."⁵⁵ She later relates back to the dual nature of the priesthood she expresses in this essay when she says: ". . . he was believed in by me in his double destiny, as one who had both spiritual and intellectual responsibility; who had to dare much but who had also to 'save God's word in all things.'"⁵⁶ A sub-theme that appears in this piece is that of the universal priesthood of all believers. Notice in note 53: ". . . so may the spiritual power of the priesthood exist in those who do not bear its official mark." Later: ". . . in some sense, every man or woman may be a priest, yet to him [referring to an ordained priest] it is the one calling of life."⁵⁷

This essay focuses primarily on religion, but Petre has introduced several new themes - the priesthood of all believers, and the nature of the priesthood. These themes are unique to this essay, although the nature of the priesthood can be seen as related to the question of authority within the Church.

"Unum Necessarium":⁵⁸ Petre originally published this work in the Monthly Register of September 1902, on the occasion of the publication of Dr. Albert Ehrhard's Katholicismus und der Zwanzigste Jahrhundert (Catholicism and the Twentieth

⁵⁵ Crews, Modernism), 19.

⁵⁶ Petre, MWF, 282.

⁵⁷ Petre, C & I, 90.

⁵⁸ M.D. Petre, "Unum Necessarium," The Monthly Register, (1902): 224 - 6. Later published in Catholicism and Independence as "The One Thing Needful." Hereafter "Unum."

Century).⁵⁹ Erhard's work was intended to open discussions on the possibility that 20th century scholars, particularly Catholics, could deal with the scientific advances of the time, not in a spirit of compromise, but of conciliation.⁶⁰ Petre approaches his idea from the point of view that over time, the Church has had many imperfections - a fact which should be acknowledged. The problem, as she sees it, is a dichotomy between those who see this world as containing all that is relevant, and those who see it merely as a detour on the way to eternity. She feels that the Church should not attempt to adapt the material elements of modern culture to a spiritual end, but rather to participate in whatever components of the culture that already have a spiritual component. As she says: "The world can advance in civilization without the aid of the Church, but the best fruits of culture are unattainable without the co-operation of religion."⁶¹

Two aspects of this essay indicate Petre's interests. First, as shown above, she lays great stress on the need for the Church to become part of the modern world in order to further the cause of religion. "Can the man who, in greater or lesser degree, beholds all things *sub specie aeternitatis*, really compete in worldly efficiency with him who finds his all in the actual present?"⁶² Secondly, she includes a factor which is becoming more and more evident in her writing - that of her Cisalpine upbringing: ". . . the injury to either side arises when this side strives to be foremost in that which is not its proper domain, for then to win in appearance

⁵⁹ Albert Ehrhard (1862 - 1940) was a noted Catholic historian, Patrologist, and Byzantinist. He criticized both *Pascendi* and *Lamentabili* and as a result was censured by the Curia and deprived of his teaching credentials from 1908 to 1922. AOL. <http://www.bautz.de/bbkl/e/ehrharda.shtml>. Accessed December 6, 2002.

⁶⁰ Petre, "Unum," 124.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 135.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 130.

is to be defeated in reality."⁶³ This attitude will be more fully developed in The Ninth Lord Petre, and then in My Way of Faith, but Petre will consistently maintain that the business of the clergy, and by extension, the hierarchy of the Church, is in the spiritual realm, and not the temporal. The primary category here is religion, with the main theme being the nature of the Church.

Death of Tyrrell (1909)

The death of Tyrrell obviously had a profound impact on Petre, not only personally but on the topical content of her writing. For almost 10 years she had devoted a major part of her life to supporting him and his work, despite his frequent lack of appreciation - even disdain - for her efforts. His death, on July 15th, 1909 was a major personal shock, and yet in some ways a release. Ellen Leonard says, referring to Petre: "The experience of Tyrrell's death was for her, not only a terrible loss, but a moment of liberation and revelation."⁶⁴ Clyde Crews says: ". . . a new life was beginning for Maude Petre."⁶⁵ Although she felt the need to defend Tyrrell and Modernism, she was free of her self-imposed focus on Tyrrell's work and interests. She was now able to broaden her scope of interest into areas such as international relations that had not been the subject of any previous investigations.

For Petre, one of the main results of Tyrrell's death was that she developed the conviction that it was her mission to carry on with his work. "Is it possible that I

⁶³ Ibid., 136.

⁶⁴ Leonard, Transformation, 45.

⁶⁵ Crews, Modernism, 67.

may have to carry on his work to completion in a way he could not do?"⁶⁶ The question is: what did she see as that work? A large part of the answer to this question relates to Petre's perception of von Hügel's influence on Tyrrell. In her mind, von Hügel exerted a "dominating influence" on Tyrrell, because "the confluence of the two minds was, in my opinion, a most unfortunate one in regard to the true destiny of Tyrrell."⁶⁷ She acknowledges Tyrrell's propensity for trouble, beginning with his advocacy of a more original Thomism in contrast to the Suarezian version favored by the Jesuits. "He had crossed swords in the Society, with representatives of the reigning scholastic school, in favor of a more spiritual Thomism."⁶⁸ For Petre, Tyrrell's true mission was the pulpit and the confessional. "His true field of action was strictly spiritual and uncontroversial."⁶⁹ However, since he saw von Hügel as a mentor, Tyrrell tended to defer to his guidance on both topics for study and the content of what he wrote. In Petre's mind, von Hügel had led Tyrrell into not only studying the exegetical questions of the day, but also to take an active part in the debates over those questions. The result was that: "Gradually he was drawn out of the circle of those who looked to him for spiritual guidance into the company of those whose character was militant rather than apostolic."⁷⁰ Tyrrell's personality was unsuited to restraint and caution,⁷¹ the characteristics

⁶⁶ PP, Add. MS. 52374 (London: BL, September 8, 1909).

⁶⁷ Petre, *MWF*, 289.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 290.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 291.

⁷¹ For example, Tyrrell's early correspondence with Cardinal Mazzella was outside his chain of authority; his use of the press as a vehicle for airing his grievances, and of private printings of his works marks him as unwilling to stay within the rules, whether they were right or wrong.

which von Hügel espoused, and thus produced hostility in his approach to the questions he was trying to present.

Well, what I should say is that he sacrificed himself too often on other people's altars, and that I had rather he confined the oblation to his own. *I think he was intended for a spiritual and moral pioneer; one that could breathe new life into the ascetic and devotional life of the Church; one that could have faced the moral problems that beset the modern world.*⁷²

Petre states her perception of her mission.

I cherish the ambition, if I live long enough, to gather together into an accessible edition all the really spiritual and devotional passages from the whole of Tyrrell's works, and offer them thus to those who might fear the more controversial elements.⁷³

Lawrence Barmann presents another aspect of von Hügel's influence on Tyrrell, disagreeing with Petre. In his opinion, even if Tyrrell had not been led into Biblical exegesis by von Hügel, he would still have had to face the question of Scriptural accuracy. Since the problem of Scriptural accuracy was one of the main religious controversies of the time, Tyrrell would have had to come to grips with it in some way if he was to be useful as a spiritual counselor.⁷⁴ I believe Barmann's point is valid; however, he minimizes that fact that Tyrrell did see von Hügel as a mentor, and willingly accepted his guidance. As Petre says: "Tyrrell placed himself to a great extent at his feet; and though von Hügel turned to his, in certain matters, as to a priest, he also undertook, though unostensibly, a large part in the direction of his studies."⁷⁵ Tyrrell was not going in a direction he did not want to go.

⁷² Petre, *MWF*, 292. Italics added.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 296.

⁷⁴ Lawrence F. Barmann, *Baron Friedrich von Hügel and the Modernist Crisis in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 166-7, n. 5.

⁷⁵ Petre, *MWF*, 290.

Petre did, in fact, continue with Tyrrell's work, publishing Christianity at the Crossroads after Tyrrell's death, and presenting the whole person whom she knew in the Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell; however, her main efforts in continuing Tyrrell's work appear to have been in her defense and advocacy of Modernism. She may have disagreed with von Hügel's actions, but remaining faithful to what she perceived as Tyrrell's mission, and to her friendship with Loisy and von Hügel left her with no alternative. If she had denied or criticized Modernism, she would have been denying Tyrrell, as well as her other friends.

The Conflict with Bishop Amigo (1909 - 1942)⁷⁶

The importance of this aspect of Petre's life and writing is that it was the tinder that ignited her open attacks in the press against ecclesiastical authority, which marks a major shift in the focus of her writing.

Petre's battle with Bishop Amigo has its roots in the tensions that developed between her, Tyrrell, and the Premonstratensian Prior of Storrington, Fr. Xavier de la Fourvière. The Prior had originally welcomed Tyrrell to Storrington in 1906 and demonstrated apparently genuine friendship, allowing him to live in the Priory. Then, after *Pascendi* was published in 1907, believing it his duty to stamp out the heresy described in the encyclical, he turned on Tyrrell and before his death made every effort to convince both Petre and Tyrrell to leave Storrington, even going so far as to send a letter directly to Tyrrell complaining about his presence in Storrington and Petre's refusal to comply with

⁷⁶ Bishop (later Archbishop) Peter Amigo, Bishop of Southwark, a London suburb which included Storrington.

his wishes: ". . . *elle ne le comprend pas et ne veut pas le comprendre.*"⁷⁷

Having been unable to convince either Tyrrell or Petre to leave, the Prior turned to Bishop Amigo for help. Both the Bishop and the Prior felt that the continual visits of "Modernists" in Mulberry House were a cause for scandal,⁷⁸ and finally Amigo wrote to Cardinal Merry del Val for assistance.⁷⁹ The Cardinal responded that if Petre continued to protect and defend Tyrrell, she should be denied the sacraments.⁸⁰

After Tyrrell's death, Amigo had refused permission for Tyrrell to have a Catholic burial, unless there was definite evidence that he had retracted his Modernist ideas, and Archbishop Bourne had managed to avoid the whole issue by spending the weekend in Rheims, effectively out of touch.⁸¹ In order to forestall any attempts by Tyrrell's detractors⁸² who might claim that Tyrrell had renounced his "apostasy" on his deathbed, Petre sent letters to both the Times and the Daily Mail giving an eyewitness account of his last hours and death,⁸³ and clearly stated that Tyrrell had not recanted, but had received absolution from

⁷⁷ "She does not understand, and does not want to understand." As quoted in a letter to the editor, "The Deathbed of Father Tyrrell", London Tablet (July 31, 1909).

⁷⁸ Leonard, Transformation, 55.

⁷⁹ Rafael Cardinal Merry del Val, Vatican Secretary of State.

⁸⁰ It should be noted that there was never any formal excommunication action taken against Petre. The denial of the sacraments was completely an action of Amigo, acting as the Ordinary of the diocese, on the recommendation of Merry del Val. His action seems highly questionable under canon law. Amigo also consulted with Bishop Whiteside of Liverpool, who left the matter up to Amigo, and Bishop Hedley of Newport, who recommended Petre be left alone. Leonard, Transformation, 55, quoting the minutes of the Vigilance Committee of Southwark for December 1, 1908.

⁸¹ Bishop of Westminster and senior prelate of England. He had gone for the canonization of Joan of Arc. Leonard, Transformation, 59-61.

⁸² The Telegraph was particularly hostile to Tyrrell.

⁸³ Her "Letters to the Editor" on this matter consisted of five letters written between July 16, 1909, and November 2, 1910. Two were to the London Times, one to the Guardian, and one to the Tablet. They are all concerned with the death of Tyrrell, and the circumstances surrounding his last days and death.

both "Fr. D."⁸⁴ and from Abbè Brèmond, as well as Extreme Unction from the Prior of Storrington, despite Petre's reluctance to call him in because of his hostility. Both she and von Hügel⁸⁵ wanted to make it very clear that Tyrrell had not retracted his opinions, and that he had died considering himself a good Catholic. There is little or no theological content in these letters; they are strictly the attempt by friends to protect Tyrrell from those who sought to use his death for their own ends, either in support of Modernist ideas, or opposed to them.

Petre attempted to clarify Amigo's reasons for his actions, meeting with him on one of his visits to Storrington. After Tyrrell's death, she devoted a long section in her journal to the conflict. Some excerpts include:

Visit of the bishop at Storrington - I do not go to see him there but dine at Oppington to meet him - next morning a talk -he objects to my receiving 'modernists.' . . . A letter from Margaret⁸⁶ and the bishop has repeated our conversation to Mrs. Wilfred Ward (a private and confidential conversation) and wants her to put pressure on me to leave Storrington. I write to the bishop, complaining of breach of confidence (Nov 15) and asking him to deny the reports that he has forbidden me to go to communion, since he said the very opposite. He answers evasively and tells me I should consult my confessor. I answer that I want the answer from him and not from my confessor.⁸⁷

The problem was never resolved. Petre coped with the prohibition by going to the adjacent diocese of Westminster for daily Mass and communion,⁸⁸ but the "irregularity" of her status continued to concern her. In 1939, shortly after the election of Pius XII, she wrote him, apparently in an attempt to clarify her

⁸⁴ Petre, *MWF*, 429. Fr. D. is Fr. Charles Dessoulavy, a priest of the Southwark diocese. Leonard, *Transformation*, 59.

⁸⁵ A letter to the Editor from von Hügel supporting Petre's denunciation of the Prior was also published in the London *Tablet* for July 31, 1909, immediately following hers.

⁸⁶ Her youngest sister, Margaret Clutton.

⁸⁷ PP, Add. MS. 52374 (London: BL, December 1, 1908). Original underlining and parentheses.

⁸⁸ Crews, *Modernism*, 65.

status. She received a polite, but non-committal reply from Cardinal Maglione, the Vatican Secretary of State, which at least implied that if she would submit all would be well (“ . . . invoking upon them light and *docility of spirit* . . .”).⁸⁹ Leonard cites a conversation between Amigo and Petre’s nephew, Sir George Clutton, in 1934, attempting, without avail, to remedy the situation. In another conversation, after Petre’s death, Amigo referred to her as “that stubborn old heretic.”⁹⁰ For Petre, the taking of the oath was a matter of conscience, and her conscience would not allow her to take it without reservation.⁹¹

Selected Writings

“An Open Letter to My Fellow Catholics” (1910)⁹²

This letter is extremely significant in any analysis of Petre’s writing. Amigo had continued his attempts to force her to sign the anti-Modernist oath, and when he refused to respond to her request that he guarantee that every item of both condemnations was and would always be *de fide*, she took her case to the public. It is the first time that she explicitly and publicly supports Modernism and attacks the leadership of the Church over the promulgation of *Lamentabili* and *Pascendi*. She is responding directly to both Amigo’s attempts to force her to

⁸⁹ A copy of the Cardinal’s letter, apparently translated by Canon Lilley, is in PP. Add. MS. 52381. Petre’s original letter is not included. Italics added.

⁹⁰ Crews, *Modernism*, 129, n.24, and Leonard, *Transformation*, 136, n.29. Clutton’s account of the conversation in is PP, Add. MS. 52381. April 1934. It is not sympathetic to Amigo. Crews also cites a secret letter from the Holy Office to Amigo referring to Petre and insisting that “measures must be taken against this ‘sinful woman’.”

⁹¹ Maude Petre, “Conscience and Subscription.” *Tablet* (London), November 12, 1910.

⁹² M.D. Petre, “An Open Letter to My Fellow Catholics,” *Times* (London), November 2, 1910, 6. This letter was printed by the *Times* under the title “The Pope and Modernism.” Unless otherwise noted, all quotes in this section are taken from this letter.

sign the anti-Modernist oath, and an editorial in the London Tablet⁹³ criticizing her for not signing it.

This letter can be seen as a major turning point in Petre's position as a public intellectual. She now adds the dimension of becoming an apologist for Modernism. Her presentation is so direct and clearly stated that analysis is best served by reproducing several paragraphs directly. Consider her opening paragraph:

It is with a certain wonder that I find myself writing publicly on such matters as I have set forth in the following letter. Not only am I a simple lay person, possessed of no official dignity or authority whatsoever, but, furthermore, I am a woman, with no advanced theories in regard to my sex, and little disposed, as my past testifies, to public life or action.

Her Cisalpine heritage permeates large portions of the letter:

We old-fashioned Catholics used not to be troubled for subscription to ecclesiastical pronouncements, and I strongly suspect that, if some of our fathers had been asked to sign professions of the faith which was to them a matter of daily practice, they would have answered, with more energy than sweetness, that they had never departed from the faith and did not need to prove it.

The next paragraph cuts even closer to the source of her anger:

If the type has changed, we have surely enough independence left to make us, while completely loyal to the recognized authority of the Church, object to anything in the nature of tyranny, or to any action on the part of authority that might force subjects into untruthful conformity.

She relates how pressure had been brought to bear on her to sign the anti-Modernist oath - to which she replied: "If therefore my life did not testify to my faith my signature would be entirely vain."

⁹³ Editorial. "A Regrettable Letter." Tablet (London) November 5, 1910, 721-22.

Petre argues that there are three ways that a person could respond to the requirement to acknowledge *Lamentabili* and *Pascendi*: 1. A person might agree strictly as a matter of blind obedience, without any regard for the veracity of the matter in question. 2. A person might agree in the manner of a theologian, qualifying, explaining, and distinguishing various meanings. 3. A person might embrace genuine inward and outward total acceptance. This last option is the one that she sees as the only valid option for her, but she lays an awkward qualification on the Church. She says, repeating her previous correspondence with Amigo:

This would be a solemn action, and before giving my answer, which shall be a truthful one, I hope that I may, without presumption, ask for the assurance, that every condemnation or proposition of these two documents, without a single exception, is *de fide* now, and will always be in the same sense *de fide*.

Petre's argument concludes with her rationale for writing the letter:

I have spoken boldly, yet I feel a hope that what I say will not be wholly unacceptable, even to a few in high ecclesiastical positions; who are forced to administer regulations for which they have but little sympathy. Perhaps among our Bishops some might be glad to see a firm, though loyal, resistance opposed to a system which is humiliating local Sees and crushing the life out of local churches.

Petre has now made her antipathy to the practices of the Church hierarchy vis-à-vis *Pascendi* and *Lamentabili*, as well as the anti-Modernist oath, a matter of public record. She has completely rejected the requirement for her to sign the anti-Modernist oath, except on her terms. The Tablet came out very strongly in criticism of her letter, citing her as having "placed herself publicly in sympathy with a system which has been solemnly condemned by the Holy See as the

synthesis of all heresies."⁹⁴ However, the Church hierarchy seems to have been in somewhat of a quandary as to what actions to take. Amigo was in communication with Merry del Val, as well as the senior bishops in England, and the consensus seems to have been a position of watchful waiting. Since Petre and von Hügel were laypersons, they were not subject to obedience in the sense of Tyrrell or Brémond, and in Petre's case there was strong reluctance to appear as persecuting a lay woman, particularly a member of the aristocracy.⁹⁵ Archbishop Bourne did not want to provide an opportunity for Petre or von Hügel to pose "as martyrs for a cause."⁹⁶

Looking again at the letter, Petre has raised a number of specific issues that would have been perceived as attacking Church authority, and thus been cause for ecclesiastical irritation. First, she questions the actions of the hierarchy (although she says "ecclesiastical authorities, she is obviously referring to Amigo) in asking her, "a lay person and a woman", to provide a written submission to *Pascendi*. Second, although she mentions, with some sorrow, being deprived of the sacraments herself for non-compliance, her main point in this section is that priests are faced with the choice of complying or losing their means of livelihood. Thus, in the case of those who might disagree, they would be violating their own conscience and supporting repression. Third, she criticizes *Pascendi* and

⁹⁴ As cited in Crews, *Modernism*, 64. As an aside, Petre received a letter from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, a former Catholic, supporting her stand. PP. Add. MS. 52381 (BL. London, October 24, 1910).

⁹⁵ Two of Amigo's advisors disagreed. Fr. McCoy, S.J. claimed that *Pascendi* and *Lamentabili* were infallible and that he wanted nothing to do with Petre. Dr. Scannell pointed out that she was a lay person and not subject to ecclesiastical discipline, and that as a woman it was inappropriate for her to be persecuted by men. Vigilance Committee minutes, as quoted in Leonard, *Transformation*, 74, n.26.

⁹⁶ Letter. Bourne to Merry del Val, August 15, 1909. As quoted in Leonard, *Transformation*, 64.

Lamentabili as seeming to "condemn writers like Cardinal Newman and Father Tyrrell, who had been our greatest Catholic apologists." Further, the documents "seemed to hamper the mind in the acceptance of historical and scientific facts, and . . . advocate a line of action contrary to general notions of charity." Finally, she specifically attacks the actions of the hierarchy: "it is not, so far as I know, against any doctrine of the Catholic Church to hold that even our ecclesiastical superiors may exceed their rights; and that every form of resistance is not *ipso facto* unlawful." Later, when she was criticized by the editorial in the London Tablet for her refusal to sign the oath, she responded:

. . . it is, I most positively maintain, as impossible for anyone else as it is for myself to *adhere with one's whole soul* to any statement of whose entire and lasting truth one is not absolutely certain and convinced. . . . I can only assume that I am required to give complete internal assent to every word of the documents concerned, without the counter-assurance that the Church herself regards them, in their entirety, as absolutely *de fide*.⁹⁷

Petre's attack on Amigo is a strong indicator of her independence. Although she was technically incorrect in asking for assurances that the items of the condemnations and encyclical were *de fide*,⁹⁸ since none of the contents were dogmas, she refused to compromise her beliefs by accepting what she saw as a false oath. Certainly Amigo was without grounds in canon law in asking her to sign the oath, and her insistence that he provide her with an episcopal guarantee that *Lamentabili* and *Pascendi* were basically infallible, on a level with

⁹⁷ Maude Petre, "Conscience and Subscription." Tablet (London), November 12, 1910. Original italics.

⁹⁸ The condemnations and contents of the encyclical were not matters of dogma, requiring an assent of Divine Faith. According to the Catholic Encyclopedia of 1910: "When the definition commands an irrevocable assent of Divine faith as well as of ecclesiastical faith, the defined dogma is said to be *de fide* in the technical sense of this phrase." America On Line: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04675b.htm>. Accessed 15 May 2003.

the Apostle's Creed, placed him in an impossible position. He could not state they were *de fide*, because they weren't, and if he said they were not, he had no grounds for forcing Petre to sign the oath. Petre, in effect, was attempting to force Amigo to withdraw his prohibition on her receiving communion. The fact that he did nothing was probably the least damaging action he could have taken. Petre took a calculated risk; if Amigo had said that the documents were *de fide*, she would have been forced to sign the oath or leave the Church.

Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell (1912)

Petre had begun work on this book in 1901, convincing a somewhat reluctant Tyrrell to write the first volume - the autobiography, which covers his life to 1884. Tyrrell says, in response to Petre's urging: "Still I will go on with it, and no doubt, if you persist, you will often wish I had been less candid; for I mean to flay myself ruthlessly."⁹⁹ She saw the books as her chance to continue Tyrrell's work, without the constraints that Tyrrell faced because of his position as a priest: "Is it possible I may have to carry on his work to completion in a way he could not do? A question that has come to me! In the biography so much may be done!"¹⁰⁰ Despite von Hügel's concerns that the work could cause additional problems with Church authorities, Petre decided to publish it before anyone could portray him in a less accurate manner than she felt qualified to do.¹⁰¹ "He was no sooner gone from among us that he was claimed and repudiated; praised or

⁹⁹ Petre, *Life I & Life II*.

¹⁰⁰ PP. Add. MS. 52374 (BL. London, September 8, 1909).

¹⁰¹ Leonard, *Transformation*, 75.

blamed; quoted, misquoted, discussed on every side."¹⁰² Reaction to the book was mixed. The Vatican placed the Life on the Index of Forbidden Books; Alfred Fawkes,¹⁰³ in The Quarterly Review, praised it; the Tablet claimed that her objectivity was colored by her emotions.

Although she later claimed in MWF¹⁰⁴ that her intent had been to gather Tyrrell's spiritual and devotional works together, the content of the Life was much broader than that. The first volume, written by Tyrrell as an autobiography, covers his life up until he completed his novitiate in 1884. Petre characterizes it as "nearer to the 'Confessions' of St. Augustine than to the 'Apologia' of Cardinal Newman,"¹⁰⁵ and in many ways, Tyrrell may have intended it as just that. "I began the story of my paltry life a few days ago. . . ; I am writing so principally for my own sake, in order to piece together this battered personality of mine into some flattering semblance of unity and coherence . . ." ¹⁰⁶

Petre acknowledges a certain selectivity in the letters she used as supporting documentation in Volume I,¹⁰⁷ but overall the volume can be considered as almost exclusively Tyrrell's work.

The same cannot be said for Volume II. What she basically did in Volume II was to portray Tyrrell as a prophet, continually restrained by both the Society of Jesus and the Church hierarchy. Referring to a comment in one of Tyrrell's

¹⁰² Petre, Life I, vii.

¹⁰³ Alfred Fawkes (1850-1930). A former Anglican cleric who became a Catholic priest and then returned to Anglicanism. A Modernist sympathizer and writer well known to Petre, Tyrrell, and Loisy.

¹⁰⁴ Petre, MWF, 296.

¹⁰⁵ Petre, Life I, ix.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, vi.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, x. She does not mention that she destroyed a great deal of correspondence.

letters to her, she says: "This example of Moses, moving ever forward with his people towards the land that he himself was not to enter, recurs often: . . ."¹⁰⁸

Tyrrell himself had written a similar quote in his breviary in 1896: "Thou shalt see from afar the land which the Lord God will give to the children of Israel, but thou shalt not enter therein."¹⁰⁹

As his biographer and literary executor, Petre was free to pick and choose the topics and quotations as she saw fit. She not only presented Tyrrell's major theological positions, she added her own comments when she felt it necessary to defend his position. Crews points out several instances where she did so:¹¹⁰ for example, Tyrrell was severely criticized for publishing his views on *Pascendi* in the London Times and the Italian *Giornale d'Italia*. Petre pointed out that criticism of the Pope was nothing new in Catholicism; Sts. Catherine of Siena and Robert Bellarmine were well known for public criticism of papal failings.¹¹¹ In a rather dubious further argument, she proceeds to try to justify Tyrrell's actions on the grounds that, while it would be inexcusable for a priest in ordinary circumstances to attack the Pope in his official capacity, since Tyrrell was a priest without a bishop, "he made use of his state of outlawry to say what a protected citizen could not have said."¹¹² The following sections discuss some of Tyrrell's major theological positions as presented by Petre's vision of him as a prophet.

¹⁰⁸ Petre, Life II, 4.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Crews, Modernism, 66.

¹¹¹ Petre, Life II, 335.

¹¹² Petre, Life II, 336.

Papal Authority and Church Councils: On the issue of papal authority and the validity of an Ecumenical Council, she reported his position by quoting a letter from him to Bishop Herzog, one of the prominent leaders of the Old Catholics:¹¹³

Needless to say that I entirely deny the ecumenical authority of the exclusively Western Councils of Trent and the Vatican and the whole medieval development of the Papacy so far as claiming more than a primacy of honour for the Bishop of Rome; . . . Also I hold to the inherent autonomy of each diocesan Church, subject only to the authority of a truly ecumenical Council.¹¹⁴

She supported his position with her own comment: "And he was, of course, aware that our proximity to the later councils enables us to see difficulties in their history which might be as apparent in that of the earlier ones were we as familiar with it."¹¹⁵ This particular position is in keeping again with her Cisalpine attitude toward papal authority; in this case, although she is supporting Tyrrell's position, her ideas pre-date her association with him. Tyrrell's position on the question of papal infallibility predates his letter to Bishop Herzog and is based on his conviction that the First Vatican Council was invalid.¹¹⁶ Even as early as 1901, he shows dissatisfaction with papal authority when he writes to Rooke Ley:

¹¹³ An heretical sect organized in German-speaking countries to combat the doctrine of papal infallibility. They also eliminated confession and priestly celibacy, while services were in the vernacular. AOL. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11235b.htm>. Accessed 21 April 2003. Tyrrell was attempting to promote a fusion of Anglican and Old Catholic ideas. Petre, Life II, 384. Bishop Herzog published the letter immediately after Tyrrell's death.

¹¹⁴ Letter from Tyrrell to Herzog, November 8, 1908. Petre, Life II, 383. As an aside, later in this same letter, Tyrrell describes his view of Modernism: "I need not say that I am a Modernist, i.e. that I believe that Catholicism can and must assimilate all that is best in the scientific and democratic tendencies of the age.

¹¹⁵ Petre, Life II, 385.

¹¹⁶ George Tyrrell. Medievalism (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1908). Chapter VI. "The Vatican Definition." 79-86. The entire chapter sets out his reasoning for claiming Vatican I was invalid.

"*L'Église c'est moi* is literally the Pope's attitude. He is the steam-engine; the episcopate is the carriages; the faithful are passengers."¹¹⁷

Development of Doctrine: In two articles, "Semper Eadem I" (Month, January, 1904) and "Semper Eadem II" (Catholic World, September, 1905) Tyrrell had attempted to contrast Newman's ideas on the development of doctrine with those of the scholastic theologians.¹¹⁸ In the first article, he was commenting on a collection of essays in which Wilfred Ward attempted to find a middle ground between the liberals and the scholastics.¹¹⁹ Rather than being accepted as leaning toward Newman, as Tyrrell intended, the article was interpreted as an attack on the liberals, i.e. Ward, while the ultra-conservative school felt that Tyrrell had come out in support of their position. "Semper Eadem II" begins by attempting to correct the situation:

The purely critical and non-committal character of the previous article was not understood by certain theologians of the ultra-conservative school. Regarding Mr. Ward's very moderate and reluctant liberalism with suspicion, and finding in my article what they considered a very just exposition of their own view, together with a criticism of the extreme opposite, they concluded that my intent was to attack him as identified with that extreme, and to identify myself with the other.¹²⁰

Ultimately in "Semper Eadem II" Tyrrell comes out in favor of development of doctrine:

¹¹⁷ Letter from Tyrrell to Rooke Ley, April 27, 1901. As quoted in Life II, 160. Frank Rooke Ley was the editor of the Weekly Register.

¹¹⁸ Both articles were subsequently published in Through Scylla and Charybdis (London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1907).

¹¹⁹ Wilfred Ward, Problems and Persons (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1903). Ward was one of the prominent advocates of Newman's thought.

¹²⁰ George Tyrrell. "Semper Eadem II," Through Scylla and Charybdis (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1907), 133.

Does thought grow architecturally or biologically? If the former, then the problem arises: Does the "deposit of faith" and do the infallible definitions of the Church bind us absolutely to the proper values of the categories and thought forms of the age in which they were framed. That they do, would seem to be indicated by the ceaseless polemic aforesaid between theology and profane philosophy, science and history consequent on the indirect jurisdiction which the Church claims over the whole realm of man's thought - a claim which would be unnecessary did she hold these categories to be of but a relative and symbolic value which they retain irrespective of the fluctuations of thought, and did she not treat them as finally assured, not as amendable results.¹²¹

Petre supports Tyrrell and gives her own definition of liberal theology as that:

. . . which walks hand in hand with science, and works according to its principles; the principle of science being that of unfettered growth, can theology admit, in itself, a like principle, while remaining faithful to the laws of its own nature? The answer is, *No it cannot*, theology is bound to the past, science has to do with the present; the task of theology is to preserve, the task of science is to discover; theology has for its subject matter the record of realities beyond the reach of reason, science is dealing with facts in front of it, that control its action at each movement in its progress.¹²²

Christology: Turning to Tyrrell's position on Christology, Petre emphasizes that Tyrrell was not an exegete, but still felt obliged to face the question of the nature of Christ and Christianity in order to develop his own thinking in the relationship between Christ and the Church. She criticizes those who avoid the question: "But of other advanced religious writers, it is to be remarked how many, ready to criticize church authority, the doctrine of infallibility, the rigidity of dogma, etc., have quietly shut their eyes and passed the Scripture question by."¹²³ She continues her own critical commentary:

¹²¹ Ibid., 153.

¹²² Petre, Life II, 212. Original italics.

¹²³ Ibid., 389.

It is easy enough, in these days, to renounce definite Christianity altogether; it is yet easier to lock out troublesome questions and thus preserve the old beliefs; the hard task is that of those who, from sincere conviction, abandon neither, and, without any outward assurance, without any recognized authority, die, like their Master, on the Cross Roads.¹²⁴

This particular quote appears to be exclusively Petre's own thoughts and commentary - her own evaluation of the current view of some of those of her time concerning the nature of Jesus is plainly stated:

Christ has been shaped to popular fancy in the past, as a certain school is endeavouring to shape Him to popular fancy in the present; He has been made, in convent chapels, to lead the life of a pious nun, as He is made just now, by certain philanthropists, to lead the life of a modern socialistic reformer.¹²⁵

As an example of Tyrrell's thinking on Christology, she devotes several pages to a description of Tyrrell's 1902 pamphlet, The Civilizing of the Matafanus. This pamphlet is basically a long allegory likening the development of Christianity to the civilizing of a mythical tribe of savages.¹²⁶ A member of a savage tribe receives an hypnotic suggestion from a member of a more advanced race and attempts to convince his tribe of this message through apparent miracles (which are, in reality, the result of his access to information outside the tribe) and through his own moral integrity. Ultimately the prophet is murdered by the tribe's shamans. Centuries later, the tribe has progressed, and the prophet's followers survive as a sect within the overall tribe, basing their beliefs on a document left them by the prophet, which is poorly understood

¹²⁴ Ibid., 390.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ George Tyrrell, The Civilizing of the Matafanus (London: R.B. Johnson, 1902). Published in collaboration with A.R. Waller, who appears as the author. Some of the language is similar that used by Adolph Harnack in Das Wesen des Christentums. Leipzig: 1900, e.g. references to "the shell and the kernel" in connection with the belief system of the Matafanus.

because of language difficulties. Tyrrell's attack on literal interpretation of the Bible is evident in the following:

In sticking to the *whole* of Shisi-Bamba's [the prophet] legacy - shell and kernel, sound and sense - they were infallibly right; and it was only when, following the false lead of their opponents, they claimed an equal authority for each part, torn away from the whole, which gave it its life and meaning, that they made themselves ridiculous.¹²⁷

She continues her discussion of Tyrrell's Christology with a description of a correspondence between her and Tyrrell in 1907, as well as extensive quotes from letters to von Hügel, Fawkes, and Lilley in 1909 concerning the relationship of Christ to the Church and the development of the Gospel.¹²⁸ Tyrrell's conception of the nature of Jesus is best reflected in his last book, Christianity at the Crossroads,¹²⁹ which Petre, as his literary executor, had published after his death. In her "Introduction" to the book, Petre comments on her position:

The Church has fulfilled her end, because she has kept for us the Christ of the Gospels; not a modernized Christ, made up to meet the latest requirements, but the Christ who spoke in the categories of His place and time, while His message was for all places and all times.¹³⁰

Tyrrell's basic position is that the message of the Jesus of the first century was lost and replaced by a construct developed by the Church over the centuries. For Tyrrell, Jesus is very much immanent:

This then is the special characteristic of Christianity. It does not look back on Jesus, as a Franciscan might look on S. Francis, or a Moslem on Mohammed, as being the founder of a society to which he belongs and the first example of that system of spirituality which has been

¹²⁷ As quoted in Petre, Life II, 393.

¹²⁸ Petre, Life II, 396 ff. Referring to a letter from Tyrrell to "V", March 21st, 1907. Letters to the others mentioned are between April and June 1909.

¹²⁹ George Tyrrell, Christianity at the Crossroads (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1909). Published posthumously. Hereafter Crossroads.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, xi.

handed down to him. It looks back on Jesus as being the Divine Spirit revealing itself in human form; as Himself as the revelation of God; as communicating, not His ideas or His doctrines, but His very self, His spirit and personality to the soul, through the sacramental power of the Gospel and the Church; as constituting the salvation of the soul, its communion with God, its eternal life, by His personal indwelling.¹³¹

Tyrrell feels that his previous work had been dominated by the Liberal Protestant view of Jesus. Petre explains his view and at the same time her own:

"It is not a modern Christ, with modern theories, nor a socialistic Christ, with a scheme of civil renovation."¹³² Amplifying this by her choice of texts, she quotes from Christianity at the Crossroads:

Those for whom He is a living, indwelling spirit, . . . It is no more for them that He was a first-century Jew in His mental outlook than that He was a man and a carpenter. What they live by is not His human mind, but His Divine Spirit and personality, revealed in conflict with His human limitations and with ours, and with those of all generations to come. . . . This idea of Jesus as the Divine indwelling and saving Spirit seems to me the very essence of Christianity. Faith in Christ never meant merely faith in a teacher and his doctrine, but an apprehension of His personality as revealing itself within us.¹³³

This choice of quote indicates not only Petre's liberal attitude, but her strong belief in Jesus as God's presence to humanity.

Throughout Volume II, in keeping with her stated goal of portraying Tyrrell as he really was, Petre devotes a large portion of her writing to explaining the conflicts between Tyrrell and both the Society of Jesus and the Vatican. For example, referring to Tyrrell's time in Richmond and his use of pseudonyms: "To him it never seemed greatly to signify whether he said a thing in his own name, or in that of another, or a fictitious one. . . . The difficulties that now beset any

¹³¹ Tyrrell, Crossroads, 267.

¹³² Petre, Life II, 401.

¹³³ Tyrrell, Crossroads, 269 - 71.

kind of publication . . . drove him into anonymity and pseudonymity but not into silence."¹³⁴ Again, referring to Tyrrell's motives for writing "Letter to a University Professor," the ultimate cause of his dismissal from the Jesuits, she points out that it was intended as spiritual guidance for an unnamed individual:

Father Tyrrell was much more true to those who depended on him than to those on whom he in any way depended; the Society could look after itself, the troubled souls that turned to him were in very much greater need of his allegiance.¹³⁵

In Chapter XI, "Inner History of the Parting", Petre uses Tyrrell's letters to her to lay out his pain at his separation from the Jesuits, and in Chapter XIII, "Militant Action," she states, referring to Tyrrell:

. . . we are now about to follow his career when deprived of that protection [of the Jesuits] and exposed to the very hostility of that same Order, while, on the other hand, there was literally no power in the Church responsible for him, to which he might make his appeal.¹³⁶

By her support of Tyrrell, Petre had reinforced her "heretical" status with Rome and in 1913 The Autobiography and Life was placed on the Index.

As might be expected, given the diversity of opinion on Petre's role in the overall scheme of Modernism (see Chapter I), there is some controversy among scholars as to the level of Petre's objectivity in this work. Crews states that she "objectively report(ed) George Tyrrell's beliefs."¹³⁷ Leonard says: "there is no doubt that she painted her own picture of this brilliant man. . . . Petre tried to continue the second volume in such a way as to reveal the man with his faults as

¹³⁴ Petre, Life II, 138.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 140.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 282. Tyrrell had been dismissed, not secularized, but since no bishop had incardinated him, he was effectively outside the organization of the Church.

¹³⁷ Crews, Modernism, 66.

well as his virtues."¹³⁸ Looome takes a more negative view: "It must be stressed that almost everything we know about Tyrrell is what Miss Petre permitted us to know and what was filtered through her (i.e. what *she* was able to understand concerning him, what *she* thought important and worth publishing).¹³⁹ Although Sagovsky, in his life of Tyrrell,¹⁴⁰ does not specifically address the Life, his generally negative attitude toward Petre leaves the overall impression that he feels she was biased in her writing. In one case, referring to Storrington, he writes: "Maude Petre was away, so one cause of friction was removed."¹⁴¹ In another, he says, referring to Petre: "When she and Tyrrell read together in the evenings, she was too passive, too serious, she did not stimulate."¹⁴² Although each of the authors has his or her own perspective on the issue, Petre's own stated purpose was to paint an objective picture of Tyrrell and his characteristics:

(I)t has been the objective of the compiler of the second [Vol. II] that its subject should move through its pages just as he was, with his strength and his weakness, his greatness and his littleness, his sweetness and his bitterness, his utter truthfulness and what he himself calls his "duplicity", his generousness and his tenderness, and his hardness, his faith and his skepticism.¹⁴³

Regardless of her stated objective, her deep feelings for him were bound to accentuate the positive aspects and minimize the negative ones. For example, referring to his selflessness, she says:

¹³⁸ Leonard, Transformation, 76.

¹³⁹ Thomas Michael Looome, "Revelation as Experience: An Unpublished Lecture of George Tyrrell," The Heythrop Journal 12 (April 1971), 125, n. 5. Looome also points out some inconsistencies in the Life concerning Petre's descriptions of Tyrrell's relationship with the Shelleys and the Cluttons. See above n. 6.

¹⁴⁰ Sagovsky, On God's Side.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 211.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 185.

¹⁴³ Petre, Life II, 2.

This self-detachment was perhaps the chief source of that personal attractiveness, recognized by most of those who came into immediate contact with him; but it was also the cause of trouble with his friends, in so far as it made him very uncalculating of the weight of his own words.¹⁴⁴

Regarding his sense of humor, she says:

He had, indeed, a fund of sheer merriment, but his was, in general, the humour (sic) of the tragic, and not of the cheerful temperament; the humour that is associated with a sense of sin and sorrow, and that is not bestowed on the innocent and happy.¹⁴⁵

Referring to his early writings, she says:

It must be plainly admitted that, in spite of his youthful agnosticism, partly, indeed, by reason of it, George Tyrrell passed through that phase of militant orthodoxy, during which a man will be as vigorous in the repression of his own mind as he is intolerant in his disputes with others.¹⁴⁶

Petre has repeatedly referred to Tyrrell in the context of a prophet.¹⁴⁷ In the "Conclusion" to MWF, referring to the Church's reaction to Tyrrell's attempts at correction, she says that: His answer would have been, not, I am right but: *Ich kann nicht anders*; the answer which the prophet must ever give, though men may call him true or false.¹⁴⁸

Walter Brueggeman poses a possible description of a prophet that fits this concept well: "The task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us."¹⁴⁹ Tyrrell was certainly attempting to change the nature of the Church with regard to the culture of the time, and as Petre says,

¹⁴⁴ Petre, Life II, 4.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁴⁷ See p. 176, n. 104, and pp. 177ff.

¹⁴⁸ Petre, MWF, 449. She is obviously comparing Tyrrell's position to that of Martin Luther.

¹⁴⁹ Walter Brueggemann, The Prophetic Imagination (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1978), 13.

referring to a comment by Loisy that Christianity at the Crossroads contained ". . . a prophesy of revolution rather than reform."¹⁵⁰

Rome's true evil was that she had inverted her destiny; being made to serve mankind, she was asking mankind to serve her. . . . She had lived for herself, and not for the people; now it was time for her to die for them.¹⁵¹

This indicates her support for Tyrrell's prophetic role, and continues her own thoughts from "Black but Comely," which she had written in 1907.¹⁵²

With regard to whether Petre portrayed Tyrrell accurately, I believe that she thought she did. Her efforts to show both positive and negative sides to his character indicate that she tried. Did she leave personal items out - yes. For example, Tyrrell's relationship with Norah Shelley and her mother is barely mentioned. The presence of Kitty Clutton and Norah Shelley at Tyrrell's death is mentioned only as "friends came and went."¹⁵³ Even though as Tyrrell's literary executor, she destroyed much of his correspondence, she leaves an impression that more was available than she actually used. "It was obviously desirable to carry it on [Volume II], as far as possible in his own words, for which purpose, happily, many letters and a few documents were available."¹⁵⁴ As far as his conflict with the Church, she portrays Tyrrell as embattled and embittered by the actions of the Church authorities. However, in support of this claim she includes appendices with copies of his original correspondence with various censors, the

¹⁵⁰ Petre, MWF, 353. Quoting Loisy in "*Revue Critique d'Histoire et de Littérature*," July 15, 1911.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 404.

¹⁵² M.D. Petre, "Black but Comely," C & J, 55 - 70.

¹⁵³ Petre, MWF, 433.

¹⁵⁴ Petre, Life I, ix.

Superior General of the Jesuits, Cardinal Ferrata, and Cardinal Merry del Val as well as her own discussion in the text. Tyrrell's arrogance and impatience with restraints are evident, but by the same token, the inflexibility of the authorities also stands out clearly.¹⁵⁵

The War Years (1910 - 1918)

This period covers roughly from the end of 1910 through the end of the First World War. The war had its effect on Petre, as it did on countless others throughout the world. It also changed the topical content of her writing. She would continue to defend Tyrrell and Modernism, most notably in Modernism: Its Failures and Fruits¹⁵⁶, which will be covered in the next chapter; however, she wrote on a variety of social topics, such as the women's movement in England, using a letter to the editor of the London Times as a vehicle for her opposition to the suffrage movement.¹⁵⁷ She wrote on her attitude toward the war, as discussed below.¹⁵⁸ Her article on "The Advantages and Disadvantages of Authority in Religion" in the Hibbert Journal is both an apologetic for Modernism and a polemic against the abuse of authority.¹⁵⁹ Appendix D provides a list of the main works during this period with their general themes.

Petre became involved in humanitarian efforts during the Great War. In the early days of the war, she took a group of Belgian refugees into her home at

¹⁵⁵ Petre, MWF, Appendices, 451 - 506.

¹⁵⁶ Petre, MFF.

¹⁵⁷ M.D. Petre, "The Women's Movement," Times (London), (October 29, 1913), 51-4.

¹⁵⁸ M.D. Petre, "Confidence and Strength," Times (London), (October 26, 1914), "Christianity and War," The Edinburgh Review 222 (October 1915), 294 - 311.

¹⁵⁹ M.D. Petre, "The Advantages and Disadvantages of Authority in Religion" Hibbert Journal 12 (January 1914), 295 - 305.

Storrington, and later, she spent at least two periods of time working in a military hospital in Pontigny, France, some eighty kilometers SE of Paris.¹⁶⁰

Petre's attitude to war is a very pragmatic and at the same time spiritual one. Possibly the best way to characterize her is as a patriotic, pragmatic, semi-pacifist. On the intellectual level she believes war is contrary to the teaching of Christianity.¹⁶¹ In "Christianity and War" she makes it clear that she sees a contradiction between Christianity and war. For her there is no such thing as a Christian war. On the practical level, however, she takes a very pragmatic view of the possibility of eliminating war:

If it is human to fight, while it is Christian to lie down and let our enemies walk over us; if it is human to love the land of our birth, and Christian to care just as much for the land of the enemy's birth; then humanity and Christianity are somehow themselves at war, and it is humanity that will win.¹⁶²

For Petre, war is an evil, and yet she realizes that the fallen nature of humanity precludes the total elimination of war. Until human beings can reach the perfection of the eschaton, there will always be those who will resort to war for their own political or national ends, as well as those who will provoke war by inherent evils such as oppression of the poor, ethnic cleansing, invasion of neighboring countries, etc. While elimination of war is a goal, Petre does not condemn all war, but tempers her pacifism with patriotism. Quoting from an

¹⁶⁰ PP. Add. MS. 52375 (London: BL, September 30, 1914). The periods were from November 5, 1915 to February 23, 1916 and from April 6 to July 5, 1916. Petre, *MWF*, 305-6. Her association with Pontigny will be covered in Chapter VIII.

¹⁶¹ M.D. Petre, "Christianity and War," *Edinburgh Review* (October 1915), 294-311.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 298.

apparently unpublished article,¹⁶³ she discusses what would happen if a nation unilaterally disarmed. She then comments:

Well, of course, such sentiments at an international congress would sound as foolish as the most unconditional pacifism; though the idea is totally different from that of conscientious pacifism. The latter has always seemed to me to imply a detachment from the country and community to which we belong that is, in its own way, inhuman.¹⁶⁴

There is one very prominent change in Petre's writing during this period. Whereas before Tyrrell's death her writing was more theologically abstract, e.g. Catholicism and Independence, it now becomes more focused and explicit. The Autobiography and Life, while primarily an historical record of Tyrrell's life, contains specific references to theological issues.¹⁶⁵ After the death of Tyrrell and her own controversy with Bishop Amigo and the Church, she openly and directly attacks what she sees as inconsistencies and abuses within the Church, e.g. "An Open Letter to My Fellow Catholics." She now sees Tyrrell's mission as hers - to carry on in an attempt to reform the Church in spite of the Papal condemnations, and in that mission she has become the advocate of Modernism. Since *Pascendi* and *Lamentabili* had effectively silenced the clerical advocates of Modernism, she became the sole major advocate of Tyrrell's attempts to reconcile the Church with the 20th century. Loisy had been excommunicated and left the Church and von Hügel had retreated to safety after Tyrrell's death.

Looking at the nature and scope of Petre's writing during this period, it is possible to detect a distinct change in her subject matter and in her style. In the

¹⁶³ MWF, 303. She mentions an anti-war article she submitted to the Crusader in July 1923; however, I have been unable to locate a copy.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 303-4.

¹⁶⁵ For example, Chapter XX of MWF deals with "The Christological Problem."

early part of the time period, prior to the Vatican condemnations and Tyrrell's death, she writes primarily on spiritual topics, with her approach more centered on pastoral guidance and ascetics ; e.g. Catholicism and Independence, as well as the other works listed in Table 6-1, ending in 1906,. After *Lamentabili* and *Pascendi* her work becomes more focused and direct. As pointed out above, "An Open Letter to My Fellow Catholics," in 1910, contains direct attacks on what Petre perceives as unjust practices within the Church, as well as on episcopal authority. With the exception of the Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell, her work from 1910 through the end of World War I is primarily concerned with what will later be described as socio-political topics - patriotism, international relations, the suffrage movement, etc. In her 1915 book, Reflections of a Non-Combatant,¹⁶⁶ God or spirituality are not even mentioned except in Chapter VIII. Even then it is only in the context of whether God should be considered as a neutral, when two Christian countries are at war, both of whom are praying to the same God for victory, and both claiming their cause is just. Although fundamental Christian principles are contained in most of her works, e.g. the idea that modern states cannot ignore the theories of Machiavelli until true Christian principles are accepted by humanity,¹⁶⁷ her main focus has shifted to the secular world. She continues to defend Modernism and Tyrrell's ideas, e.g. "The

¹⁶⁶ M.D. Petre, Reflections of a Non-Combatant. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1915).

¹⁶⁷ M.D. Petre, "Machiavelli and Modern Statecraft." The Edinburgh Review 226, July 1917, 93-112.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Authority in Religion"¹⁶⁸ but her theoretical speculations on spirituality are minimized.

This chapter shows that, during this period, Petre has further expanded the scope of her writing, as well as her approach. She began by focusing on the category of religion, concentrating on the themes of pastoral concern and asceticism; however, after Tyrrell's death she moves to the category of apologetics, dealing with the topics that were condemnatory of the Modernists, such as Christology and development of doctrine. She strongly supports her positions by polemics against what she sees as abuse of Church authority. Petre's next accomplishment was her statement on what she saw as the roots and nature of Modernism - Modernism: Its Failure and Its Fruits, the subject of the next chapter.

¹⁶⁸ M.D. Petre, "The Advantages and Disadvantages of Authority in Religion." Hibbert Journal 12, January 1914, 295 - 305.

CHAPTER VII

MODERNISM: ITS FAILURE AND ITS FRUITS

Introduction

Modernism: Its Failure and Its Fruits¹ is a comprehensive analysis of the entire Modernist controversy from Petre's perspective. She says: "My task is . . . seeking to lay bare the most intimate characteristics of the movement; of describing its chief manifestations; of explaining its difficulties and acknowledging its failures; of indicating its aims and justifying its hopes."² By this time the Vatican Vigilantes have been suppressed by Benedict XV: "Certain vexatious measures have been arrested; but the anti-Modernist oath is still exacted."³ Tyrrell has been dead for almost 10 years, von Hügel is quietly pursuing his own scholarship, and Loisy has left the Church and is teaching and writing while holding the chair of the History of Religions at the *Collège de France*.⁴

Petre has three distinct purposes in writing this book. First, she uses it as an apologetic to explain and defend her perception of the nature of Roman Catholic Modernism as she saw it first hand. As part of her apologetic, she describes the Modernist viewpoint on the major theological issues that brought the movement in conflict with the papal and episcopal magisterium, and her

¹ Petre, *MFF*.

² *Ibid.*, 4.

³ *Ibid.*, xiii.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 157.

analysis of the Church's defense of its position on those issues as reflected in *Lamentabili* and *Pascendi*. By doing so she is carrying on and amplifying Tyrrell's work and that of the other Modernists – not so much in the sense of any original theology, but rather in the apologetic context of clarification and explanation. Her theological positions in this book are derivative in almost all cases, the exception being her ideas on ecclesiology, particularly the proper use of papal authority.

Second, she uses the book as a polemic vehicle to attack the external as well as the internal factors that led to Modernism being suppressed, and to attack both the abuse of authority within the Church, specifically *Sacrorum Antistitum*, the anti-Modernist oath discussed later, and the Church's refusal to accept both scientific and historical critical advances when dealing with doctrine and dogma.

Finally, she sees it as part of her continuing effort to support her vision of Tyrrell's role as a prophetic figure that she first began in the Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell.⁵ The "Dedication" clearly indicates this belief:

TO GEORGE TYRRELL

I dedicate this study of a cause which has been declared hopeless to the memory of one of its leaders, from whom I learned that life may be well spent in sowing what we shall not reap, and that it is enough to see the Promised Land from afar though it be not given us to enter therein.⁶

This investigation will show that Petre uses this book to explain the movement and defend her friends, to attack what she sees as abuses of authority within the Church, and as an extension of Tyrrell's attacks on neo-scholasticism. From her perspective, as one of the principals, she addresses the

⁵ See Chapter VI.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Dedication. Also see Chapter VI, note 106.

overall content and reasons for failure of the Modernist movement from a point in time when it has effectively died away under pressure from the Church authorities, as well as her own position on the theological issues and the Church's response. As she moves further away in time from Tyrrell's death, and as Modernism fades into a kind of intellectual twilight, she becomes more independent and pro-active, both as a polemicist and an apologist. She expands her own identity as a public intellectual, and further develops the pastoral concerns that date back to her time in the DHM. Much of her continuing growth is due to her involvement with the intellectual community at Pontigny, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

The Apologetic Purpose

In this book, Petre will continually refer to Modernism as a movement, although much later, she will clarify her choice of terminology.⁷ She says: "It is a movement within the Church, but not a Church movement; . . . It is a religious movement, yet the official representatives of religion repudiate it."⁸ The changes in society and science at the end of the 19th century led many Catholics, particularly among the intellectuals, to feel the need for changes within the Catholic Church. However, the Church leaders, clinging to the authoritarian, hierarchical mode of the past, considered any change as a threat to authority.

⁷ In Von Hügel and Tyrrell (1937), she defines Modernism as a movement and not a cult. Therefore, she considers Modernism a valid term, whereas Modernist is not. See Chapter I, n.27.

⁸ Petre, MFF, 1.

In her efforts to explain the movement, Petre continues to stress a theme that has become more and more prevalent in her writings⁹ - that of the Church as "subservient to the religious and spiritual needs of humanity."¹⁰ "Modernism . . . has also attempted . . . to make religion paramount and the Church secondary; to restore the Church to her position of guardian, but not mistress, of religious faith and life."¹¹

The Structure of Modernism

In explaining the nature of Modernism, Petre first divides it into two categories. The first, which she calls "unconscious Modernism", refers to the great mass of Catholics who were not involved in the Modernism controversy, and to whom Modernism was seen as nothing but arguments between intellectuals over topics that had no bearing on the average person. These she identifies as "the unlearned." The second, "conscious Modernism," refers to the intellectuals who are seen to be doing the arguing. This distinction makes sense, considering that only an extremely small percentage of the Catholics in Europe and America would have been involved in any of the active controversy. She maintains that the first group, the "unlearned," still had unfulfilled needs as Catholics and whether they realized it or not, Modernism was an attempt to address their

⁹ E.g. "Obedience Spiritual But not Military," or "Personal Responsibility." See Chapter VI.

¹⁰ Petre, *MFF*, 3. She sees the Church of her time as what Avery Dulles would call the "Institutional Model," i.e.: "the view that defines the Church primarily in terms of its visible structures, especially the rights and powers of its officers." However, she believes that the Church should be structured in his model of "The Church as Servant" in which, rather than seeing the Church as the active subject, acting upon the world, it ". . . seeks to serve the world by fostering the brotherhood of all men. . . ." Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church*. Expanded edition (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 34, 92.

¹¹ Petre, *MFF*, 3.

needs. This allows her to introduce a pastoral dimension into her apologetic, an attitude that pre-dates her involvement with Modernism.¹²

In keeping with her positive emphasis on her friends,¹³ she also portrays Loisy as concerned with the care of the average Catholic:

. . . not referring to the rare attainments of the scholar . . . but to the common education and everyday wits of the simple faithful. . . Their minds are not bewildered by too much knowledge, but by the conflict between two forms of instruction, to both of which they have to submit.¹⁴

Petre's view of Loisy as being pastorally concerned is dubious. His concerns are much more focused on the abstractions of theology and historical criticism than on the effects of theology on the ordinary Catholic. Neither L'Évangile et l'Église or Autour d'un Petit Livre are particularly directed at pastoral applications. For example, L'Évangile et l'Église discusses the Church only in terms of its history and organizational structure rather than showing any concern for the needs of individuals.¹⁵ Petre is trying to portray her friends in a positive light in contrast to the individuals within and outside the Church who, in her mind, caused the failure of Modernism.

Before she begins her analysis of the second group, Petre draws a contrast between opposing viewpoints among the "learned" as to the nature of the concern, in relation to the "needs of the unlearned."¹⁶ To the first group,

¹² Her concern for individuals, in this case the slaves, is evident as early as 1886, in AS.

¹³ None of her discussions in this book portray any Modernists in other than a positive light.

¹⁴ Ibid., 17. These comments are Petre's. She is referring to Loisy's position in Autour d'un Petit Livre.

¹⁵ Alfred F. Loisy. The Gospel and the Church (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1988). First published as L'Évangile et l'Église (Paris: Alphonse Picard et fils, 1902), Part IV.

¹⁶ Petre, MFE, 10. This focus on "the unlearned" is one shared with Tyrrell. E.g. see "The Relation of Theology to Devotion," in which Tyrrell refers to the "peasant" and the "vulgar" mind, in contrast to that of the philosopher.

Modernism was a purely intellectual exercise, and the Church, with all good intentions and disinterested policy, was primarily concerned with protecting "her little ones"¹⁷ against the excesses of the scholar who attacks traditional teaching. In the second view, the Church is primarily concerned with defining its intentions and policy, and is less interested in the effect on those who might be threatened by Modernism. *Pascendi* presents a combination of both viewpoints. In the first case it refers to how the Modernists phrase their doctrines ". . . so craftily that they easily lead the unwary into error . . .," and in the second devoting the last 15 paragraphs of the encyclical to Vigilance Committees, censorship, the study of scholasticism, etc.¹⁸

When Petre turns to what she calls "conscious Modernism" - the intellectual roots of the movement itself, she uses extensive quotes from some of the significant persons involved, as well as references to philosophers and theologians outside the controversy rather than developing her own thoughts.¹⁹ Most of her theological discussion of the problem areas can be seen as derivative, although she does amplify some quotes with her own thoughts.²⁰

She supports her consistent theme²¹ that true spirituality involves the whole person by quoting Laberthonnière: "The characteristic of *moral dogmatism* is its maxim that we cannot attain truth save by a living movement of the whole

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ *Pascendi*, paragraph 2, paragraphs 44-58.

¹⁹ E.g., she uses long quotes from Tyrrell, Loisy, and von Hügel, but also quotes from Maurice Blondel and Lucien Laberthonnière.

²⁰ When discussing Laberthonnière's *Essais de Philosophie Religieuse* she turns to her own belief that religious faith required a total commitment of the whole person.

²¹ E.g. "In My Father's House," *Orbit*, 193; or "The Sacrament of Love," *Saints*, 57.

self."²² Her own position is: "Faith is no mere acceptance of certain doctrines, it is our total attitude towards them."²³

She clearly states her own opinion on what she believes to be the obvious and necessary corrective action by the Church:

A text, however precious to theology, that is proved to be an interpolation, or that is discovered to hold a different sense from that which has traditionally been ascribed to it, must be frankly acknowledged to be an interpolation, or to possess that ascertained meaning, whatever the consequent inconvenience to the theologian.²⁴

This is one of the few times that Petre comments on historical criticism per se. Her own previous writings have generally avoided the topic, and it is rarely mentioned in her Journals. In The Soul's Orbit, the portions written by Tyrrell are replete with Scriptural quotes and analyses, while those she wrote have almost none. She even writes in her Journal: ". . . I feel in some ways more convinced of the good of the Church than of the Gospel."²⁵ Although she may agree with Loisy's criticisms, Scripture for her was less important than personal spirituality.

In her defense of Loisy, she lays out the main points that led to his conflict with the Church: "Jesus did not formally establish the Church, nor her theology, nor her cult; nor did He teach the Catholic doctrine as to His own Divinity; and so forth in regard to other truths."²⁶ By extension, these points can be seen as root conflicts in the whole controversy, perceived by the Church hierarchy as direct challenges to their authority, particularly regarding inerrancy of the Bible.

²² Petre, MFF, 35. Taken from L. Laberthonnière. Essais de Philosophie Religieuse (Paris: P. Lethielleux, nd), 126. Original italics.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 47.

²⁵ PP. Add. MS. 52373 (London: BL, July 24, 1905).

²⁶ Petre, MFF, 50.

Problems in History and Christology

For Petre the main theological problems involved with Modernism are centered around the nature of revelation *vis a vis* history, and "the difficulty that arises from the relation of Christ, as an object of history, to Christ as an object of faith."²⁷ Most of her discussion in this area consists of extensive quotes from von Hügel, Tyrrell, and Loisy, with very little amplification of her own. Her lack of contradictory argument supports the conclusion that she is, in general, agreeing with them when she places theology and revelation both within history, and on the other independent of it, depending on whether the area in question has an actual historical context, and thus would be affected by an historical discovery.²⁸

In the realm of Christology, she maintains that: "To the Modernist the Christological problem is the culminating point of the historical problem. . . . It is of the very essence of Modernism to unite, with the belief in Christianity, a recognition of the main actual data of science and history, . . ."²⁹ There are four main problem areas to discuss - the fundamental issues that, on one hand, the Modernists attempted to raise, and the Church authorities, on the other, absolutely refused to discuss. First, was the Resurrection an historical fact? Second, did Christ definitely affirm His own Divinity? Third, in virtue of the Hypostatic Union, did Jesus possess, even as man, Divine omniscience? Fourth, was the Church His direct foundation; were her hierarchy and her

²⁷ Ibid., 74.

²⁸ Ibid., 75.

²⁹ Ibid., 83.

sacraments His direct institution; was every one of her definitions, explicitly or implicitly, included in His Teaching?³⁰

She chooses Loisy as her authority in developing her arguments on these items, quoting from L'Évangile et L'Église,³¹ his "Letter to an Archbishop on the Divinity of Christ",³² and Autour d'un Petit Livre,³³ in which he counters each of the problem areas mentioned above. Her choice of quotes and the lack of any contradictory argument again indicate that she agrees with Loisy that each of the statements must be answered in the negative.

Petre turns from quotations to her own commentaries as she critiques various attempts to resolve the problems. Addressing those who made an effort to draw a ". . . distinction between Jesus as an historical figure and Christ as an object of faith,"³⁴ she believes that viewing Jesus as an historical figure stresses the connection between the Divine Jesus and the Jesus of history, while seeing Christ as an object of faith emphasizes primarily the Divine, and minimizes or eliminates the historical record. This second approach almost totally eliminates the immanent Jesus; "Christ becomes the soul of the Church in such sense that He is nothing else but her soul, and Christianity is made independent of Christ. She obviously prefers the first approach, since for Petre the immanence of Jesus

³⁰ Ibid., 84-5.

³¹ Alfred F. Loisy, The Gospel and the Church (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1988). First published as L'Évangile et L'Église (Paris: Alphonse Picard et fils, 1902).

³² Alfred F. Loisy, "Letter to an Archbishop on the Divinity of Christ." As quoted in MFF, 87.

³³ Alfred F. Loisy Autour d'un Petit Livre (Paris: Alphonse Picard et fils, 1903).

³⁴ Petre, MFF, 90.

is a major component of her spiritual life, predating her involvement with Modernism.³⁵

The Polemic Problem

Lack of Social Concern

In this, the greater portion of the book, Petre first returns to her concern for people by critiquing the position of the Church hierarchy on social programs and politics. Although she acknowledges that the Church played an important role in social programs in the Middle Ages, she points out that society has progressed, and that the needs of the poor and the working class are different in her time. The failure of the Vatican to acknowledge these changing needs has led to the growth of organizations within Catholicism that attempt to fill the gap. She specifically addresses organizations such as the Christian democratic movement in Italy, and asks the question: “. . . whether both democracy and socialism could find a place in the Church.”³⁶ She answers her own question in the negative, referring to the same Church: “she had no place for democracy, nor democracy any use for her.”³⁷ Petre uses as an example of this attitude the condemnation of the French social movement, the “*Sillon*,” by Pius X in August 1910 in a letter to the French bishops. Pius’ condemnation specifically described the distinction of social classes as having been given by God. “. . . [it was] in conformity with the

³⁵ See note 38. She also takes this position as early as 1885, well before meeting Tyrrell, in “Carlyle on Religious Ceremonies,” 318.

³⁶ Petre, *MFF*, 69.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 70. Quoting a *motu Proprio* of Pius X, 18 December 1903, “A Fundamental Rule for Popular Christian Action.”

order established by God that there should be, in human society, princes and subjects, patrons and proletariat, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, nobles and plebeians . . .³⁸ Her argument fits with the mindset of the Church of the time - democracy implies such ideas as freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, and separation of Church and State - all liberal ideas that were anathema to the ultramontanists in Rome. Catholic social groups that accepted governance by Vatican authorities could be approved, but ". . . any concerted Catholic action, independent of ecclesiastical authority, was, by various regulations, rendered illegitimate."³⁹

Finally, as an adjunct to her social concern, in an era when Catholicism was considered by the Church authorities as the only road to salvation, she takes a stand on plurality of religion by supporting salvation for all.

Our difficulties begin when Jesus Christ must not only be to us the chief manifestation of the Divinity, but must be it in such a way that those who are without Him are without any such revelation. The mystical Christ of the Church is God, and *God belongs to all men, and is revealed in a greater or less degree in every religion.*⁴⁰

Here she agrees with Tyrrell, who says in Christianity at the Crossroads: ". . . it seems intolerable that only those who have heard the name and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth should attain eternal life; that two-thirds of present humanity, and nine-tenths or far more of past humanity, should fail of salvation."⁴¹

Her attack on Church officials and their attitude toward social action is not completely justified. Although the instances she cites are certainly evidence of

³⁸ Ibid., 71.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Petre, MFF, 95. Italics added.

⁴¹ George Tyrrell, Christianity at the Crossroads (London: Longmans, 1909), 272.

the negative attitude of the Vatican under Pius X toward any organization that might be seen as liberal, and therefore a threat to authority, she would certainly have been familiar with *Rerum Novarum* and the position of Leo XIII toward social justice. A blanket condemnation of the hierarchy's attitude toward the poor and working class is overstated. By attacking the Church on social issues, she is reinforcing her argument that Rome does not really care about the average person other than as the *ecclesia discens*.

Lamentabili and Pascendi

As might be expected, given the impact on her and her friends, Petre is severely critical of the position of the papacy and Curia toward Modernism in the decree *Lamentabili* and the encyclical *Pascendi*. She believes that Modernism was an attempt to convince the Church to recognize the need for intermingling of human and divine knowledge stemming from the advances in science and criticism, and maintains that the Church saw religion as separate from human knowledge, but with dominion over it.⁴² Specifically, she claims that:

In the first place, the Church had never acknowledged the complete autonomy of science and history, even in their own domains. . . . The modernist attitude in this matter was so incomprehensible to Rome that their respect for the rights of science was taken to imply, not only that science was independent of faith, but that faith was dependent on science.⁴³

She includes other examples of statements within *Pascendi* with which she takes issue: "[referring to Modernism] the most pernicious doctrine which

⁴² Petre, *MFF*, 115.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 117-8. Her reference is to *Pascendi*, paragraph 17, which specifically attacked this point.

would make the laity a factor of progress in the Church,⁴⁴ and the objection to the Modernist call for reforms in external trappings among the hierarchy.

Since the end of the Church is entirely spiritual, the religious authority should strip itself of all that external pomp which adorns it in the eyes of the public. And here they forget that while religion is essentially for the soul, it is not exclusively for the soul, and that the honor paid to authority is reflected back to Jesus Christ who instituted it.⁴⁵

This aspect particularly angered the Pope and the Curia, who were still smarting from the loss of the Papal States, since it was seen as a further example of the attempts by the Modernists to introduce democratic ideas into the Church and undermine papal authority.

Given her feelings for Tyrrell, and her conviction that she is continuing his mission, it is not surprising that Petre supports Tyrrell's attacks on *Pascendi* in his letters to the editor of the London Times.⁴⁶ He had provided his arguments against a variety of the points made by Pius X, such as the encyclical statement that it is "most absurd" that God reveals Himself through subjective experience or through the voice of conscience.⁴⁷ Tyrrell claims that if this were allowed, the admission would then support the Modernist tenet that: "The religious conscience is a universal law, on a par with revelation, to whom all, even the head of the Church should be subject."⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Ibid., 120. *Pascendi*, paragraph 27. Her attitude toward this topic can be seen as early as 1907, in the "Epilogue" to Catholicism and Independence.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 121. *Pascendi*, paragraph 25.

⁴⁶ George Tyrrell, "Letter to the Editor" (London Times, September 30th and October 1st, 1907).

⁴⁷ Petre, MFE, 125.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Even though she does consider Modernism a movement, Petre attacks the position in *Pascendi* that it was an organized and orchestrated movement; she believes:

Problems of science, history, theology, and philosophy pressed forward, singly and *en masse*; organization was impossible; each force struggled for itself, and it would have been as impracticable to shape them all to one issue as to concentrate the force of an earthquake.

But had such organization been possible; had it been feasible for the different sections of Modernism to unite in the insistence on one point, which should be vital to all, that point would have been the character and limits of ecclesiastical authority.⁴⁹

Here again, Petre is overstating her case. If the Modernists had managed to proceed in a purely scholarly vein, without attracting the attention of the hierarchy, ecclesiastical authority would have taken a back seat to more academic subjects such as historical criticism and development of dogma.

She makes an apparent capitulation to the result of the actions of the Church. "It may be said in brief that the blow, to all appearances, went home. . . . The general verdict has been that Rome triumphed and Modernism succumbed."⁵⁰ However, the overall impression she presents here and in some of her concluding arguments is that she concedes that Modernism lost the battle, but that she is not willing to concede that it lost the war. In her opinion, Modernism arose during a crisis, i.e. the ability of the Church deal with modern scientific discoveries. When the Church copes with that problem, the rationale for Modernism will no longer exist because the problem will have been absorbed,

⁴⁹ Ibid., 153.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 130-1.

Modernism and Authority

This area is perhaps Petre's strongest complaint - the abuse of authority by the hierarchy, primarily the Pope. She takes great issue with an article by Msgr. James Moyes⁵¹ that appeared shortly after *Pascendi*, attempting to make the case that the neither *Pascendi* nor the leaders of the Church had any problem with democracy when it came to purely political matters. However, in *Pascendi*,⁵² the whole idea of separation of Church and State is among the ideas held to be Modernist errors, and the encyclical says: "The principles from which these doctrines spring have been solemnly condemned by our predecessor Pius VI, in his Constitution *Auctorem fidei*."⁵³ Moyes holds to the party line that the Catholic Church was personally founded and commissioned by Jesus, and therefore all of her powers in teaching, ministry, and government are derived from Christ, and any form of spiritual democracy, if applied to the Church would be a perversion and inversion of the divine order.⁵⁴ Petre disagrees and maintains that this concept of Divine origin for ecclesiastical government is inconsistent.⁵⁵ Basing her discussion on Tyrrell's argument in The Church and the Future⁵⁶ that the official position of the Church: "Christ and His Apostles are held to have delivered the complete *Depositum fidei* (i.e. the dogmas,

⁵¹ Msgr. Moyes was theological advisor to both Cardinal Vaughn and Cardinal Bourne, and editor of The Dublin Review until 1903. The article she quotes appeared in Nineteenth Century Magazine in December 1907.

⁵² *Pascendi*, paragraphs 23 and 24.

⁵³ Petre, MFF, 133. Referring to *Pascendi*, paragraph 24. It should be noted that Pius VI's experiences with the Napoleonic version of democracy after the French Revolution would hardly have made him pro-democratic.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 134-5.

⁵⁶ George Tyrrell, The Church and the Future (Privately printed in 1903 under the pseudonym Hilaire Bourdon). Reprinted under Tyrrell's name by Priory Press, London, in 1910).

sacraments, and other essential institutions of Catholicism as now existing) to St. Linus and the episcopate united with him; . . ."⁵⁷ leads to the concept that the disciples were purely passive recipients of His teaching and guidance. Petre accuses the Church authorities of maintaining that a similar distinction exists between the *ecclesia docens* (the Pope and the bishops) and the *ecclesia discens* (the laity). Here she agrees with Tyrrell that the hierarchy is forced to support this distinction or acknowledge that the laity might have a contribution to make toward the religious thought of the Church.⁵⁸ Both she and Tyrrell are condemning the Church authorities for their absolute refusal to admit anything that smacks of anti-clerical European style democracy or of evolution of doctrine. Their opposition to the democratic governments of Europe blinds them to any sort of democracy, or even lay involvement in the governance of the Church. *Pascendi* even specifically condemns lay participation. ". . . that most pernicious doctrine which would make of the laity a factor of progress in the Church."⁵⁹

Tyrrell had taken the position that historical criticism has indicated that the Church has developed from what was in the sub-apostolic era:

. . . a loose federation of loosely organized communities of a strongly democratic type, into the present highly centralized ecclesiastical empire, in which all the teaching power has been vested in the Pope, and practically taken away from the episcopate and the Ecumenical Council. . . . the brain of the Church is not considered to be diffused over the five continents, but to be concentrated in the Vatican.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Petre, *MFE*, 135-6. Quoting Tyrrell in *The Church and the Future*, 29-31. Hereafter *CF*.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 136. Quoting Tyrrell in *CF*. See also note 43 on her position on the place of the laity.

⁵⁹ *Pascendi*, paragraph 27.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 136-7. Quoting Tyrrell in *CF*.

Petre limits her supporting comments in this case to the somewhat sarcastic remark that: "If this be a just estimate of ecclesiastical authority, then there is a Divine Right of Popes as truly as there is a Divine Right of Kings."⁶¹ Both Tyrrell and Petre obviously felt that Vatican I had severely limited the collegiality of the episcopate, and that the Pope alone was the *de facto* arbiter of morality.⁶² However, for Petre, the role of the Pope in the salvation of humanity is not that of God, but only as the representative of God. "We absolutely need God's assistance in the work of salvation; we only relatively need that of the Church."⁶³

She acknowledges the need for authority in human society, even religious authority, and states her opinion as to the place of the authority issue in Modernism: "The more we consider this question the more it would appear as though it had been the fundamental one in the whole recent controversy."⁶⁴ To her, the Pope is a means, not an end - someone who rules the Church, but is not vital to its existence.⁶⁵ "Meanwhile, the Pope is there, and it is not his person or his office that constitutes the difficulty, but the idolatry which is offered to the first, and the abuse which is made of the second."⁶⁶ She continues her polemic against abuse of the papal office, quoting Tyrrell on the decline of the episcopate:

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁶² For Tyrrell's opinion see his letter to Bishop Herzog, Chapter VI, note 111, for Petre, see "An Open Letter to My Fellow Catholics."

⁶³ Petre, *MFF*, 140.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* Although this is her opinion, it is doubtful that Tyrrell, Loisy, or von Hügel would have seen it as the paramount issue.

⁶⁵ Petre, *MFF*, 142. She supports papal primacy of honor but not necessarily primacy of governance. God could decide on another method to rule the Church.

⁶⁶ Petre, *MFF*, 142.

The episcopate singly and collectively has passed over to the *Ecclesia discens* and the Pope alone is the *Ecclesia docens*. The Pope is the only monarch who has called himself the *Servus Servorum Dei*; and if the office has not been true to the name, that is because the office has not been true to itself.⁶⁷

Petre is overlooking the fact that many of the European bishops had become agents of national states, being often appointed by the states under the terms of various Concordats between the state and the Vatican. This necessarily caused a certain amount of conflict of interest within the episcopate. She also ignores the possibility that the definition of papal infallibility reduced the power of a national state to influence bishops on doctrinal matters.

Petre makes no bones about her opinion concerning abuse of power within the papacy: "If authority seek its own ends, and not the good of those for whom it exists, it does wrong."⁶⁸

The authority issue, although related to the Vatican I definition of papal infallibility, developed among the Modernists in response to the perceived pressure from Church authorities. Here Petre is responding from her own Cisalpine background - the Church has no business in secular matters. As far as the existence of any organization, each of many disparate intellectuals pursued his or her own research, mostly independent of the other Modernists.

In addition to her pastoral concerns, and foreshadowing her own developing sociological interest, Petre condemns the effect of *Lamentabili* and

⁶⁷ Ibid., 144. Original italics. Quoting from George Tyrrell, *Medievalism* (Chicago, IL: Christian Classics, 1994), 62. Originally printed in London by Longmans in 1908. She considers the Vatican I definition of papal infallibility as a direct blow at the power of the episcopate. She has expressed similar sentiments earlier in "An Open Letter to My Fellow Catholics." See Chapter VI.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 146.

Pascendi on the growing Catholic intellectual and social movements in France and Italy. The intellectual movements founded magazines and newspapers, while the social movements attempted to better the conditions of the working classes. She maintains that the former was doomed to extinction because they tried to bring modern thought into Church teaching, and the latter because they tried to institute modern democracy. She again uses the example of the *Sillon*,⁶⁹ claiming it was an apostolic in nature, “. . . for the *raison d'être* of its existence was not democracy or socialism, into the structure of the French Church, but the union of Catholic Christianity with democracy and socialism . . .”⁷⁰ The anti-clerical and anti-religious nature of France at this time certainly supports the need for such attempts; however, from one aspect the actions of the Vatican and of the secular movements may have been nothing more than competing strategies to deal with the problem of anti-clerical/anti-religious France. The Church hierarchy would unfortunately have seen the secular movements as attempts to undermine their authority, and therefore had to bring pressure to bear to defeat such a perceived threat. However, the Vatican actions were intended to protect the Church from an anti-clerical, anti-religious state. The liberals in France were willing to take their chances that they would succeed, while the Vatican was not. Thus we see the attempts to enlist the aid of other nations, e.g. Germany, with whom relations had been mended in spite of Bismarck's failed *kulturkampf*, as allies in the struggle against liberalism.

⁶⁹ See note 37.

⁷⁰ Petre, *MFF*, 170-1.

Sacrorum Antistitum

Petre develops a major attack against the anti-Modernist oath.⁷¹ Not only does she consider it as blatantly unfair to the clergy, she sees it as another example of the abuse of papal authority. She continues the arguments that she used in "An Open Letter to My Fellow Catholics" some eight years before, but now her arguments are more pointed, and her tone certainly less polite. Her comments in this case are mainly her own thinking - by the time of the *Motu Proprio* Tyrrell is dead, Loisy has left the Church, and von Hügel has taken the quiet stance he considers as prudent if he was to remain within the Church. Petre is expressing her specific concerns that the oath was required of bishops and priests throughout the world, whether or not they had been associated with Modernism, i.e. unfair papal dogmatism. Again with some degree of sarcasm, she makes the point that not only had *Pascendi* overlooked the laity, the only cleric assumed to be free of heresy was the Pope himself.⁷² Building on the idea that the oath is unfair, she expresses her concern that any sincere Catholic can interpret various sections of the oath according to his or her own idea of the meaning, while other sections allowed no interpretation. "Thus any Catholic could declare his adhesion to *the truths defined, affirmed, and declared by the infallible Magisterium of the Church, particularly those points of doctrine directly opposed to the errors of the time.*"⁷³ She stresses the word infallible because she

⁷¹ She is referring to the *Motu Proprio, Sacrorum Antistitum* promulgated by Pius X on September 8, 1910, which expanded and reinforced the control actions against Modernism that had been contained in *Pascendi*. Hereafter SA.

⁷² Petre, MFF, 179.

⁷³ Ibid., 180. Original italics and underlining.

feels that there are situations where the Church is infallible.⁷⁴ Her concern now is with “. . . the nature, the domain, and the limits of her infallibility.”⁷⁵ She uses several examples to develop her views on these characteristics. First, quoting SA, she says: [It is declared that:] God . . . can be known, and consequently demonstrated, with certainty, by the natural light of reason, by means of the things that have been made . . . as a cause by its effects.”⁷⁶ Her response reflects her continuing belief in God's immanence in that this statement is “. . . contrary to that philosophy which would seek God inwardly, rather than outwardly; which would seek Him with the whole being, and not only with syllogistic logic.”⁷⁷ Although her position on immanence may have been influenced by Tyrrell, her own earlier writing continually reflects her belief in Jesus as personally involved in the salvation of humanity.⁷⁸

Second, regarding the institution of the Church, she quotes: “[It must be declared] that the Church . . . was directly and immediately instituted by the true and historic Christ Himself, during His life among us. . . .”⁷⁹ Her response is:

This is an assertion contrary to that critical position according to which the Church was a consequence of the teaching and life of Christ, but not founded by Him in the way that Leo XIII founded the Biblical Commission, or Bonaparte the French Empire.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ E.g., she would accept infallibility in matters of faith or morals.

⁷⁵ Petre, MFF, 180. Although Tyrrell considered Vatican I as illicit, Petre does not specifically state her own position on the definition of papal infallibility.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* Quoting SA, Section II, “The Form of the Oath.” First item.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ E.g. “The Temperament of Doubt,” or “The Sacrament of Love.”

⁷⁹ Petre, MFF, 181. Quoting SA, Section II, “The Form of the Oath.” Third item.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

Although this stance may have its roots in Loisy's beliefs, the wording bears the stamp of Petre's stress on real world examples, rather than Loisy's more abstract thought.

Petre finds it impossible to comply with the requirement for total internal acceptance of both *Pascendi* and *Lamentabili*. Quoting SA, she says: "[Next comes a declaration of] adhesion of the whole soul to all the condemnations, declarations, and prescriptions contained in the encyclical *Pascendi* and the decree *Lamentabili*; especially in all that concerns the history of dogma."⁸¹ She replies: "This declaration could not be made without an implicit condemnation of the Modernist leaders; nor could it be made by one who had himself taken any part in the movement, without disavowing his own action." This is the same argument she used in "An Open Letter to My Fellow Catholics."⁸²

Enemies within the Church

Petre steps up her polemical attack even further when she deals with what she calls "anti-Modernism" within the Church. She defines the first characteristic of the anti-Modernist as ". . . a devotional attitude to the Papacy which is akin to personal idolatry."⁸³ She uses two examples of this attitude, an Italian devotional card and a French pamphlet. In her analysis of the pamphlet she says:

⁸¹ Ibid., 182. Quoting SA, Section II, "The Form of the Oath," Sixth item.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² See Chapter VI.

⁸³ Ibid., 189. She cites as examples an Italian devotional picture bearing the double inscription: *Gloria Mariae Immaculatae! Gloria Pio Decimo!*, and a French pamphlet, published in 1904, (which she refers to as "this treatise on papolatry") entitled *De la Dévotion au Pape* that equated love for the Pope with love for God, since the Pope is God's representative.

Here the Blessed Eucharist and the Papacy are compared, not only as fundamental doctrines, but even as fundamental *objects of devotion*. . . . To hold a false dogma is heretical; to cultivate sincerely and believingly a false devotion is to be idolatrous and to worship strange gods.⁸⁴

These examples demonstrate the worst aspects of devotionism of the time. The second characteristic of the anti-Modernist is that of timidity and fear. She condemns the attitude inspired by *Pascendi* and SA that causes a priest to be more concerned with avoiding the label of modernist than he is for the spiritual care of the people in his charge.⁸⁵ This is a combination of her admiration for Tyrrell as a pastor and her Cisalpine belief in the duty of a pastor to the spiritual health of his congregation. The third characteristic she identifies is “. . . an overmastering solicitude for one’s own skin.” She uses the example of Abbé Brémond and his actions at Tyrrell’s funeral as a case of the exact opposite.⁸⁶ The final mark of anti-Modernism is “. . . its spirit of suspiciousness and its keenness for the denunciation of others.”⁸⁷ In addition to her contemptuous attacks on the anti-Modernists, her arguments in this whole discussion have been intended to support her contention that abuse of authority is the primary danger within the Church.

As she looks to the future, Petre continues her bitter attack on the anti-Modernists, whom she refers to as a “waspish sect,” using examples of their conduct like “. . . [someone] that, in Catholic newspapers, indulges in currish yapping at the heels of great men, or even at their graves.” or a group “. . . that

⁸⁴ Ibid., 192. Original italics.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 194-5.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 196. Brémond was censured for preaching over Tyrrell’s grave.

⁸⁷ Her various descriptions call to mind the actions of the NKVD in Stalinist Russia.

spits venom, in fact, at every religious ideal that is beyond its understanding, and still more, beyond its moral and spiritual capacity.⁸⁸ She believes that anti-Modernism will disappear, and that it would not have survived as long as it has if it were not for the great mass of the "simple and devout," who believe whatever they are told by Church authority.⁸⁹ She believes that Modernism will also perish, because it rose during a crisis, and will be absorbed with that crisis into whatever the future holds.⁹⁰ She restates her basic concept of the nature of Modernism - her belief that it was a movement that insisted that religious faith must accept the results of scientific investigation, and not interfere with such investigations when they remain within their own realm of knowledge.⁹¹ From our twenty-first century perspective, in the aftermath of Vatican II, it appears she was right.

Her final blow is contained in a note at the end of her chapter on this topic:

The struggle between two conflicting conceptions of authority is surely very similar to the contest between the political ideals of the Allies and those of Central Europe. The respect shown, by the Vatican, to German protests is not unlike symptoms that have manifested themselves during the war. Altogether, a certain sympathy is apparent between the representatives of absolute ecclesiastical authority and those of autocratic militarism.⁹²

Possibly this is a harsh criticism, but from her perspective on how her friends were treated, an understandable one.⁹³ In all fairness, we must consider that MFF was written and set in type in 1914. The quote above is a Note, obviously added after the War, with its attendant negative attitudes toward Germany.

⁸⁸ Petre, MFF, 200. Obviously containing a reference to the press's treatment of Tyrrell's death.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 200-1.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 201. Referring to the controversy over exegesis and modern science.

⁹¹ Ibid., 201.

⁹² Ibid., 154. She also mentions two other non-Modernism related occasions when the Vatican had deferred to German civil authority.

⁹³ See comments in Chapter VI on "Obedience Spiritual But not Military."

Support of Tyrrell

As discussed in Chapter VI, after Tyrrell's death, Petre decided that her ministry was to continue Tyrrell's prophetic work. In this book, her main approach to that vision is in her support of his positions in two areas, the conflict between theology and science, and his attacks on neo-scholasticism.

Although she quotes Tyrrell extensively on the issue of science and theology, her own position is also clearly stated: "Theology has, then, a subordinate and not a primary use and end; it subserves the life of prayer and devotion, which in its full and true sense, is the life of spiritual action." This attitude again fits with her Cisalpine roots. Science is a secular discipline, therefore theology has no rights in its investigations.⁹⁴ She also supports her own pastoral concerns by her use of Tyrrell's statement in "Revelation as Experience:"

The plain man is not wrong when he treats the creed as practically and equivalently the Word of God. . . . He is wrong when he ceases to be a 'plain man' and tries to be a theologian; when he deduces conclusions from the articles of the creed, considered as divine statements, and imposes their categories on the whole realm of human knowledge in the name of God.⁹⁵

In a similar manner, she develops Tyrrell's attacks on neo-Thomism.⁹⁶ Her own position is: "As the subtleties of Eucharistic theology, forced upon them [the simple faithful] by preacher or teacher, have sometimes quenched their

⁹⁴ Petre, *MFF*, 59. See also note 43.

⁹⁵ George Tyrrell, "Revelation as Experience." *Heythrop Journal* 12 (April 1971): 117-49. An unpublished lecture given in March 1909.

⁹⁶ See particularly "The Relation of Theology to Devotion," *Heythrop Journal* (November 1999): 419, 422, 423. Reprint of Tyrrell's 1899 article.

devotion, so the historical and scientific assertions of theology have troubled their faith."⁹⁷

Her own position on neo-Thomism is not surprising, given Tyrrell's insistence that the Church needed to return to the basic *schema* of St. Thomas rather than the interpretation of such theologians as Suarez.⁹⁸

Conclusion

Petre has produced a work that some might see as the swan song of Modernism. It is at times angry, and often bitter, but it is a compendium of the theological concepts that guided the principals, as well as the external forces and internal attitudes that brought the movement to a close. Even though she speaks of the failure of Modernism, there is still a strong theme of hope for the future, when she believes that the Church will have outgrown the crisis conditions that led to the development of Modernist ideas.

This chapter has shown that Petre has moved further into developing her own opinions and abilities. Although this work belongs primarily in the category of an apologetic, it contains themes from religion, such as her pastoral concern, and concerns over abuse of Church authority. She continues to support the goals of the Modernist movement, as she perceives them to have been developed by Tyrrell, Loisy, and von Hügel, while at the same time lashing out at the structures and individuals that she sees as having caused Modernism to fail.

⁹⁷ Petre, *MFF*, 17.

⁹⁸ Although her earlier works do not deal with Thomism per se, she is quite emphatic in *MWF* about her respect for Thomas and discomfort with neo-Scholasticism. See *MWF*, Chapter XIV.

She no longer feels obligated to find some good in everyone, as she did in her earlier writing;⁹⁹ she has found her voice as an apologist, and does not hesitate to move into polemics when she sees it as appropriate. Her overall approach is pastoral, as opposed to Loisy, and at the same time, she prefers simple, straightforward explanations, in contrast to von Hügel. She believes that Modernism was the right idea, but that it was in the wrong time, and brought down by external forces that could not have been overcome in the climate of the time.

This is the last major work on Modernism that Petre will produce for over 20 years, until her book on Loisy, published in 1944, after her death.¹⁰⁰ She will continue to defend Modernism and her friends in lectures, as well as writing articles and biographical works on Tyrrell, Loisy and von Hügel.¹⁰¹ The importance of this book is that it provides a view of how Petre saw Modernism and why it failed. Her literary style is both apologetic and polemical, and this book is the foundation for the continued support she will give Modernism and her friends for the rest of her life. However, as we will see in the next chapter, her intellectual direction will now expand beyond Modernism.

⁹⁹ See Chapter V, for her critiques of Hugo, Schopenhauer, and Wilde.

¹⁰⁰ M.D. Petre, *Alfred Loisy: His Religious Significance* (Cambridge: University Press, 1944).

¹⁰¹ Her books include: M.D. Petre, *Von Hügel and Tyrrell: The Story of a Friendship* (NY: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1937), and *Alfred Loisy: His Religious Significance* (Cambridge: University Press, 1944). The latter was published posthumously.

CHAPTER VIII

"IN HER OWN RIGHT"

Introduction

After World War I, Petre's life took a new direction. Although she continued to write articles and books defending Modernism and her friends, her life and intellectual interests changed. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate those changes both in her personal life and in the content of her writing from roughly the end of 1918 until her death in 1942. It will show that, while she continued to write prolifically for the whole time, her main written emphasis shifted from the religious context to the biographical and sociological.¹ A great deal of her attention turns to what will later be called sociology and international relations, although she will still maintain a basically Catholic outlook when dealing with the various topics that she chooses to investigate. Whereas in Modernism: Its Failure and Its Fruits her writing style had been both polemic and apologetic, it now becomes that of the biographer, historian, and social commentator in her own right.

¹ Although she never specifically says so, it is my impression from reading her journals that she had a set of well developed lectures on Tyrrell, Loisy, and von Hügel that she gave quite frequently to a variety of audiences. One of the last entries in her Journal: "Gave my lecture on von Hügel at Friends." PP. Add. MS. 52378 (London: BL, October 1, 1942).

In this chapter I will first analyze her involvement with the *décades de Pontigny*, because this formed the basis for her continued intellectual development for the remainder of her life; secondly, I will cover a brief historical chronology based on her Journals, as a framework for the remainder of her life. Third, I will analyze some aspects of three of her books, beginning with Democracy at the Crossroads,² because the subject matter in this book reflects a major interest for the rest of her life. Next, I will cover parts of The Ninth Lord Petre,³ since they bear directly on Petre's Cisalpine ecclesiology and the mindset of the Catholic recusants in England. Finally, I will touch briefly on some of the theological aspects of My Way of Faith.⁴ Although she specifically states that she does not consider it an autobiography, it is in keeping with the type of biographical writing she undertakes during these years. Her other books on von Hügel, Tyrrell, and Loisy can be grouped together, since they fall basically into the same category, i.e. biography. In conclusion, I will briefly analyze some of her lectures and essays during the period, particularly those that fall outside the scope of her previous writing. Appendix E contains a tabular overview of these works.

Pontigny

Before moving to Petre's writing for this period, it is important to take a step backward in time in order to understand her involvement with the intellectual

² M.D. Petre, Democracy at the Crossroads (London: T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., 1918). Hereafter DAC.

³ Petre, 9LP.

⁴ Petre, MWF.

community at Pontigny. Petre had met Paul Desjardins, a professor at the *Sorbonne*, and his wife Lily, in 1910.⁵ With the exception of the period from 1914 - 1922, when Pontigny was shut down, she often spent about three months during the summer with the participants of the *décades*. It is pertinent to understanding her intellectual growth and direction to review the background and context of the *décades*. The importance of her time at Pontigny cannot be overstated - it became the focus of her intellectual growth and stimulation until the late 1930s.

Pontigny itself was an ancient Cistercian abbey, *Mont St. Michel*, originally built in 1114 and mostly destroyed in the wake of the French Revolution in the late 1790s. The monastery was the third daughter house of the great Cistercian abbey of *Citeaux*, and had been known as a temporary place of refuge for three Archbishops of Canterbury, fleeing from persecution in England.⁶ In 1906, after the French government enacted laws repressing the religious orders, the entire property was purchased by Paul Desjardins, who decided to restore it as a focus for intellectual studies throughout Europe. He and his wife had the chateau and grounds restored, and developed a plan to combine the 50 day French vacation period that normally began at the end of July with English summer holidays and Catholic retreats.⁷

⁵ Although Petre places the date as 1911 in *MWF*, she is listed as a participant in the 3rd *décade* of 1910.

⁶ St. Thomas à Becket (1164-1166), Stephen Langton (1208-1215), and St. Edmund of Pontigny (1240 - ?).

⁷ Benjamin W. Bacon, "A Summer Among Modernists," *The Independent*, NY, (December 1, 1910), 1208-12.

It was in August 1910 that the first *Décades* of Pontigny opened. Closed in 1914, [at the beginning of WW I], the *Décades* were again organized in 1922, continuing without interruption until August 1939. Each summer, in this 'magic town' (Vladimir Jankélévitch⁸) of Yonne, the intellectual elite of all countries met in order to debate on varied topics. The discussion subjects included socio-political questions, philosophical-religious questions, and finally, literary issues. A stay of ten days (a decade) was adopted and every *décade* contained, on the average, a group of twenty persons before 1914, and fifty after 1922. About 1924 -1925, the discussions of Pontigny became an astonishing intellectual success, even fashionable; the August pilgrimage towards the abbey brought together men of letters, Journalists, noted academics, politicians.⁹

Various intellectual topics were chosen in advance by a *Comite provisoire parisien* that later became one of international membership.¹⁰ The initial topics chosen were:

1. Jurisprudence, or the history and progress of the institutions of national and social equity; 2. Art, and its expression of the life of the past; 3. Religion, and analysis of its psychology and history; 4. Actual Conditions of Industrial and Agricultural Labor; 5. Contemporary Poetry.¹¹

The whole point of the *décades* was to allow people with similar interests to meet in an intellectual atmosphere to discuss their ideas and listen to others. Appendix G contains a listing of the various topics that were covered at Pontigny during the years it flourished.

The list of the participants at the *décades* reads like a Who's Who of European intelligentsia, both men and women. Scholars, artists, poets, politicians, etc. all passed through the various meetings over the years. Some of

⁸ Vladimir Jankélévitch. (1903 - 1985) Philosopher and musician. Known for his work in the philosophy of music.

⁹ François Chaubet, *Paul Desjardins et les Décades de Pontigny* (Paris: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2000), 77. Hereafter PDDP1. Author's translation. See Appendix F for original text.

¹⁰ Author's translation: "a provisional Parisian committee." Bacon. "A Summer Among the Modernists," 1211. Alfred Loisy was one of the original members of the selection committee.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

the better known included four Nobel Prize winners for Literature,¹² Paul Valéry, and Paul Masson-Oursel.¹³ Others came from Germany, Austria, England, Russia, and even Japan.¹⁴ Men like Emile Durkheim, Albert Einstein, Albert Schweitzer, and Max Weber, to name only a few more, either visited Pontigny or participated in one of the *décades*.

There is little specific information available on Petre's participation in the various *décades* over the years. We know from her Journals that Pontigny was a very special place in her personal and intellectual life from 1910 until the late 1930s. At Desjardins' invitation, she also spent time there during WW I helping in the hospital that had been set up in the chateau. She devotes a short chapter in My Way of Faith to France and Pontigny, expressing her love of the French people and admiration for the scholars who attended the meetings.¹⁵ Both Petre and Loisy were involved very early in the proceedings at Pontigny. For example, the third *décade* of 1910 was organized around Loisy, while Petre herself spoke on George Tyrrell.¹⁶

¹² Roger Martin du Gard (1881-1958) novelist and dramatist, winner in 1937; André Gidé (1869-1951), author and social commentator, winner in 1947; François Mauriac (1885 - 1970) novelist and newspaper columnist, winner in 1952. Jean-Paul Sartre refused his award for 1964.

¹³ Paul Valéry (1871-1945), French playwright and poet. Considered by some to be the greatest French writer of the 20th century. Paul Masson-Oursel (1882 - 1956). Professor of philosophy at the Sorbonne. Editor of the *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger* (1940 -1952). Noted for his work with Eastern religions and philosophies.

¹⁴ Nikolai Berdyaev (1874 - 1948). Former Chair of Philosophy at the University of Moscow. Expelled by the Communists in 1922. In 1928, Prince Shuzo Kuki participated in the *décade* on *L'homme et le temps; la reprise sur le temps. Immortalité ou éternité?* Anne Heurgon-Desjardins. Paul Desjardins et les Décades de Pontigny (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964), 166. Hereafter PDDP2.

¹⁵ Petre, MWF, Chapter XXIII. There is some confusion as to her first contact with the *décades*; the reference in note 5 has her participating in 1910, while in MWF she claims it to be 1911.

¹⁶ Petre, MWF, 309.

La décade Religieuse de 1910 s'organisa autour Alfred Loisy. Quoiqu'il en récluse alors l'idée, cette reunion prend l'allure d'un petit cénacle moderniste. Il sollicite, en effet, des interlocuteurs dont les perspectives intellectuelles sont communes aux siennes, les Anglais von Hügel et Miss Petre, cette dernière disciple de Tyrrell.¹⁷

We do know, however, that Petre was accepted as an equal member of the *décades* discussions. For example, she was instrumental in steering the topic selection for the *décade* on religion in 1910 to the subject of comparison of spirituality in the West as compared to that of the East, particularly Buddhism and Hinduism.¹⁸

The importance of Pontigny for purposes of this paper is the level of acceptance and participation that Petre achieved during her years there. She was accepted on an equal footing by some of the greatest scholars of Europe, and played an ever increasing role in the overall process. Finally, in 1928, she was selected as Director of the *Foyer*,¹⁹ a group intended to establish relationships with universities, and to allow student participation in the *décades*.

Mais le lien de Pontigny avec l'Université fut consolidé par l'ouverture en 1928 du Foyer pour " étudiants et convalescents de l'un et l'autre sexe ". Paul Desjardins chercha à établir des relations avec les facultés de Dijon ; Gaston Roupnel aurait une fois par mois, pendant deux jours, contrôlé et guidé leurs études sur la Bourgogne d'autrefois ou

¹⁷ Chaubet. *PDDP1*, 77. Author's translation: "The religion *décade* of 1910 was organized around Alfred Loisy. Whatever had been the original idea, this meeting took the form of a small Modernist reunion. Indeed, it solicited speakers with intellectual perspectives similar to his, the English von Hügel and Miss Petre, the last disciple of Tyrrell."

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 133.

¹⁹ *Foyer d'étude et de repos*. Exact translation is problematic. Perhaps the best overall concept would be a Center (for study). In her eulogy for Desjardins, Petre calls it "a place of rest and quiet and sympathetic intercourse for students and writers."

d'aujourd'hui ; Jacques Copeau aurait donné des cours d'interprétation, de poésie et de théâtre. Miss Petre fut choisie comme directrice.²⁰

Petre continued her involvement with Pontigny until 1939, when she became: "Disillusioned with Pontigny - too political."²¹

Petre's Personal Life after World War I

Much of the historical data on Petre's life has been covered in Chapter II. However, there are occasional *vignettes* from her Journals that can contribute to better understanding her life and attitudes during her closing years.

Petre's Journals after World War I become erratic. She makes relatively few entries, and skips whole years.²² In some ways it seems as if she has lost interest, although there are entries where she promises herself to do better in keeping up her entries. Many of the entries are concerned with her travels and visit with her relatives and friends. There are only occasional personal references to Tyrrell, which supports the thesis that Petre may have felt freed in some sense after his death.²³

²⁰ Chaubet, PDDP1. Author's translation: "But the bond of Pontigny with the University was consolidated in 1928 by the opening of the Center for 'students and convalescents of both sexes'. Paul Desjardins sought to establish relationships with the faculties of Dijon; once per month, for two days, Gaston Roupnel supervised and guided their past or present studies on Burgundy; Jacques Copeau gave courses on interpretation of poetry and the theatre. Miss Petre was selected as director [of the *Foyer*]." Petre refers to herself as the "hostess" (MWF, 311).

²¹ PP. Add. MD. 52378 (London: BL, August 1, 1939). The sense of her journal is that she is referring to internal politics within the organization at Pontigny rather than to the beginning of World War II.

²² There are no entries at all for 1922-23, 1927-28.

²³ Both Leonard and Crews mention this possibility. See Chapter VI, notes 63, 64.

She is still concerned about the prohibition imposed by Bishop Amigo - one that had apparently been escalated by Rome. In 1919 she writes:

Fr. Mulholland told Margaret [her sister] that he would no longer give me communion - one thing that we have gained from him, viz: that there have been special instructions from Rome to bishops prohibiting me by name. I told Margaret no one could help but the Pope and that I sometimes thought of writing to him - or, some day, seeing him.²⁴

In addition to Tyrrell, there had been additional losses in her life. In 1918, Arthur Bell, who had been a close friend of both her and Tyrrell, died, and was buried next to Tyrrell. Her nephew Louis, son of her younger brother Lawrence, was apparently a drug addict, and she was unable to bring him out of his addiction.²⁵ This understandably caused her a great deal of pain.

On the more positive side, in 1919 Petre became heavily immersed in local politics, campaigning to have a woman elected to the Village Council in Storrington, and involving herself in a variety of social programs in the village. She later became one of the local leaders of the Labour Party in the area.²⁶

There is a strange entry in her Journal in 1920: "Am going through G.T.s papers and MSS, destroying some and examining others. Have destroyed the

²⁴ PP. Add. MS. 52376 (London: BL, October 16, 1919). Even though there may have been "special instructions" from Rome, there is no evidence that the prohibition against her receiving the Eucharist was applied anywhere except in the dioceses of Southwark and of Portsmouth, where her sister lived. (Barmann, von Hügel, 238. She was known to receive communion regularly in the diocese of Kensington. It is most likely that no one but Amigo and John Cahill, bishop of Portsmouth, took the ban seriously. Fr. Mulholland is unidentified.

²⁵ Ibid. Although she never identifies the actual drug, she often refers to it as coming from a doctor - possibly opium or cocaine.

²⁶ PP. Add. MS. 52376 (London: BL, March 7, 1924).

MS of the autobiography."²⁷

Much of 1921 was spent in traveling in France and Italy. She became interested in the life of Fogazzaro, following up on the interest expressed in her earlier article "Il Santo and Another Saint."²⁸

Her negative feelings toward von Hügel, although they may have publicly lessened, are still present.

Went to see the Baron by appointment for his advice re appeal to the Pope. *he did not help me as much as he could* because I could not get him to accept fully my statement that everywhere in England I should be prohibited as soon as definitely recognized. He advised me to continue as I am [illegible] - said he would do so in like case. (Would he? or, if he would, is it not because *he always manages to escape censure?*)²⁹

Despite any negative feelings, when von Hügel died in January of 1925, it had a profound effect on Petre. He had been part of her life since her early childhood. "It is, to me, like a piece of life hacked out."³⁰ Even though she had disagreed with him in the stance he had taken after *Pascendi*, and still resented what she perceived as his seduction and abandonment of Tyrrell, he was still her oldest friend, and had contributed a great deal to the growth of her spirituality. Much of her later biographical work on von Hügel was intended to counter the impression given by the English Catholic newspapers that von Hügel was not

²⁷ Ibid., March 2, 1920. She gives no reason for her destruction. It is possible that she felt it better to destroy anything such as letters that might reflect negatively on Tyrrell, but the MS. of the Autobiography should not have fallen into that category since the work was already published. Although there is no evidence, one possible explanation might be that she had edited the Autobiography more heavily than she admitted.

²⁸ See Chapter V.

²⁹ PP. Add. MS. 52376 (London: BL, May 28, 1920). Italics added.

³⁰ Ibid., January 30, 1925.

really involved in Modernism, or else that he had served as a moderating influence on Tyrrell.³¹

In 1925, she sold Mulberry House in Storrington for £1850, although she retained the cottage where Tyrrell had lived, and remained in the village until the late 1930's.³²

In 1926, and again in 1929, she was cruising the Mediterranean - visiting the typical tourist sites of an English gentlewoman - Port Said, then traveling through the Suez Canal along the East coast of Africa to Mombassa, Zanzibar, and finally to South Africa.³³

In March 1931, Loisy sent her the proofs of his memoirs for her comments. (She also proofread them again for a later revision in April 1935.)³⁴

In 1932, she again reiterated her belief in Tyrrell's true mission: "Lunch with Maisie³⁵ and Father Stewart came - much talk with him - great love of G.T. - told him von Hügel drew him off his true line - should have been a moral and spiritual pioneer. Fr. S. quite agreed."³⁶

In 1933, she was back cruising the Mediterranean again, this time visiting Lisbon, Casablanca, and Madeira.³⁷ Strangely enough, with all her travels, there is no reference to her ever visiting Palestine, or any of the traditional religious

³¹ Leonard, *Transformation*, 87.

³² PP. Add. MS. 52376 (London: BL, April 3, 1925).

³³ *Ibid.*, February 1926 ff.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, March 30, 1931, ("Re-Proofing Loisy's autobiography."), Add. MS. 52378, (April 8 - 15, 1935).

³⁵ Presumably Maisie Ward (Mrs. Frank Sheed), daughter and biographer of her parents, Wilfred and Josephine Ward.

³⁶ PP. Add. MS 52377 (London: BL, March 28, 1933). The identity of Fr. Stewart is unknown.

³⁷ PP. Add. MS 52378 (London: BL, October 1933).

sites in the Middle East. Although she never comments on the subject, it is at least possible that she would have seen such a trip as excessive devotionism.³⁸

There is an interesting entry in 1935 that indicates she was still focusing on her pastoral concerns:

Oxford - first meeting³⁹ - A Communist, Jimmy Watt, said that in Communism he sought as (sic) remedy for the troubles of the world, but had not found an answer to problems of his own life - and there was much said, in general, of surrender - the giving up of self to God's direction - a great faith in God's plan for the world and for each one.⁴⁰

She continued her friendship with Loisy until his death in 1940, often stopping in Paris to visit him on her way to and from Pontigny. As we will see later, she retained great respect for Loisy, although with some reservations about his interpersonal relations. For example, when reviewing a revision to Loisy's biography, she writes: ". . . re-proofing Loisy's autobiography - not a word of his friends or anything but his own work and ideas - very subversive and yet a faith."⁴¹

In 1938, Petre began a correspondence with Teilhard de Chardin, sending him a copy of her book on Tyrrell and von Hügel.⁴² She felt that he would form some sort of intellectual relationship with her, similar to that with Tyrrell: "Have had letter from Peré Teilhard. I think that something will be done between us -

³⁸ There are hints in *MWF*, xviii and 174 that Petre was not particularly fond of devotions at places such as shrines.

³⁹ Her entries are tantalizing for this meeting. She never says what kind of a meeting, but the overall context implies that this was a group of substance abusers. After her unsuccessful attempt to reform her nephew Louis, it is logical that working with such a group would have attracted her.

⁴⁰ PP. Add. MS 52378 (London, BL, July 19, 1935).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, October 8-15, 1935.

⁴² *Ibid.*, June 4, 1938. Referring to M.D. Petre, *Von Hügel and Tyrrell: The Story of a Friendship* (NY: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1937).

strange that a palmist told me I should have a companionship for the end of my life."⁴³ She was later disappointed when Teilhard distanced himself from her, as well as others, during his controversies with Rome.

From 1939 until her death in 1942, Petre continued her writing and speaking without letup. In 1939 she wrote two articles, "Is England Coming Down?" and "A Clue to History."⁴⁴ She also attended an unnamed conference at which Jacques Maritain spoke on "Who is My Brother?"⁴⁵ and reluctantly ended her relationship with Pontigny.⁴⁶ After the beginning of World War II she continued to write, sending an article on Loisy to Theology⁴⁷ shortly after his death in July 1940, and in 1941, at the age of 77, she volunteered to assist the London Fire Brigade during the London Blitz. In June she gave a presentation at the World Congress of Faiths.⁴⁸ Her final public appearance was in October 1942, six weeks before her death, when she: "Gave my lecture on von Hügel at Friends [illegible]."⁴⁹ Petre died on December 16, 1942, and with permission of the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Hinsley,⁵⁰ a Requiem Mass was

⁴³ Ibid., September 19, 1938. Petre apparently believed in palmistry and contact with the afterlife. She and Tyrrell had disagreed on the validity of palmistry (Add. MS. 52374, September 1, 1908) and after Tyrrell's death she has one entry asking him to give her a sign (Add. MS. 52374, September 8, 1909).

⁴⁴ Ibid., January 13 and February 5, 1939. I have been unable to locate these articles.

⁴⁵ Ibid., July 4, 1939.

⁴⁶ See note 23.

⁴⁷ M.D. Petre, "Alfred Loisy" Theology 41 (September 1940), 132 - 40.

⁴⁸ PP. Add. MS. 52378 (London: BL, June 30, 1941). The overall theme of the Congress was "World Religions and World Order." Petre's topic was "The Social Aspect."

⁴⁹ Ibid., October 1, 1942.

⁵⁰ Arthur Cardinal Hinsley (1865-1943), Archbishop of Westminster. Since Petre had died in Hinsley's diocese, Amigo had no control over a funeral Mass. This is another indication that in England only Amigo took her quasi-excommunication seriously.

celebrated at the Assumption Convent in Kensington. She was buried in the Anglican Churchyard in Storrington, next to Tyrrell, without a graveyard service.⁵¹

Petre's Writing after World War I

In the period from roughly 1920 until her death in 1942, Petre wrote seven books and over 40 essays or articles in English. She also contributed to French and Italian periodicals, and gave numerous lectures throughout Europe. However, her writing now begins to have a different character. She continues to write about Modernism, but from the perspective that the movement has ended. She is not so much advocating as explaining both the movement and her friends who participated in it. The other writings show the biggest difference, ranging across a variety of themes outside religious topics.

Democracy at the Crossroads

This book is important as a signpost for the directions that Petre will take in her writing for the remainder of her life. Published in April, 1918, while the Western World was still in the grip of World War I, Petre is facing a major social change, as England moves from a government primarily controlled by aristocrats to one of democracy, with the Labour Party gaining more and more power. This book is unique among Petre's works, because it is not primarily oriented toward religion and spirituality, but rather toward social issues - specifically the future of

⁵¹ Bishop Amigo had refused permission for a Catholic burial unless she was buried other than next to Tyrrell; Leonard, Transformation, 115, Crews, Modernism, 99.

democracy. Petre is not discussing Catholicism, or even Christianity; her only inclusion of religion at all is whether democracy should have a religion (in a generic sense). She addresses "Woman's Part in the New World," explaining her own ideas as to their role in the new democratic government. She summarizes with some overall comments, some of which might be taken from the social commentary of John Paul II. For example, she says, referring to the idea that WW I was "the war to end all war": ". . . there is yet a task before society as mighty as the abolition of militarism, and that is the abolition of unbridled commercialism."⁵²

When Petre discusses the future of democracy in Great Britain, the overall tone of her comments is that of resigned acceptance. Many of the potential government leaders of her class were killed in the war, and the whole social structure of the British Empire has changed. She obviously feels that democracy is a *fait accompli*, and that government by the aristocrats, her class, is fading away. "It is good to fight a losing battle when we are in the right, but I can never believe that it is good to fight a lost one."⁵³ She asks the question: ". . . if the world is to be made safe for democracy, must we not also insist that democracy be made safe for the world?"⁵⁴ She is making the point that over the centuries, safeguards were built in to prevent, or at least minimize, abuse of power by the ruling class, but democracy has no similar safeguards. As the working class enters into a position of power in government, they must guard against using

⁵² Petre, *DAC*, 122.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 13-4.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

their position as a means of oppressing those who have not become part of the new governors. Above all, they must learn to place the welfare of others in the country above their own in the course of their duties.

One of Petre's major themes is the warning that with the decline of the aristocracy as the ruling class, democracy must consider that men who were trained in the English public school system developed a set of skills which naturally lent themselves to government and politics. Those who replace them in government (presumably men and women of the Labour Party), need to develop those same skills of selflessness and devotion to humanity that Petre attributes to men of her social class. "An aristocratic training, in spite of its many defects and lapses, did often prepare men to take into consideration other interest than their own; a democratic training must not achieve less."⁵⁵

Petre's opinions toward the role of women in democracy would have been very unpopular with the suffragettes of the time. In her chapter on "Woman's Part in the New World," she comes down hard on the suffrage movement because she feels it was the wrong direction if society were to improve the rights of women, and that "women had other and better work to do"⁵⁶ Large sections of this chapter are verbatim extracts from "Stray Thoughts on the Woman's International Congress,"⁵⁷ which Petre wrote in 1899, before meeting Tyrrell and becoming involved with Modernism. Many of her comments in DAC

⁵⁵ Ibid., 38.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 93. See also the discussion in Chapter III.

⁵⁷ M.D. Petre, "Stray Thoughts on the Woman's International Congress," Month 94 (August 1899), 186-93. Pp. 105-110 of DAC are almost verbatim from most of pp. 190-193 of this article.

and later in MWF on feminist considerations have their origin in this work, establishing her opinions on suffrage and feminism as original.

Petre deals with two situations in this chapter. In the first, she addresses women in public life. Here she is giving a warning to women in the new democratic society, now that suffrage has been passed and women have the vote. "For those of us, then, who were opposed to female suffrage the discussion is now closed."⁵⁸ She feels that women had placed too much reliance on obtaining the vote as a solution to their marginalized status - that once they had the right to vote, all their problems would be solved, without their having to take actions, either individually or collectively, against injustice.

We have been told, as an argument for female suffrage, that certain moral evils cried out for female intervention. So they did, and so they do, but the question, to my mind, has always been whether that intervention could not be much more effectually exercised by other methods than the vote.⁵⁹

Petre's first point in her argument sounds like twenty-first century equal rights rhetoric. Speaking about women in the new democratic society, particularly in government, she says: "By her individual merits a woman has then to stand or to fall; as woman she can make no claim."⁶⁰

Her second point concerns "woman as woman."⁶¹ It is perfectly clear that she sees that the better role for women to be that of wife and mother. "I take it that a woman's chief moral force is in the power of self donation."⁶² Petre feels

⁵⁸ Petre, DAC, 91.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 100-01

⁶⁰ Ibid., 98.

⁶¹ Ibid., 103.

⁶² Ibid., 104.

that by her influence on children, as a mother and teacher, a woman has a far more lasting effect on society than she might have in public life. "Marriage and motherhood - if these were a success how few failures the world would know."⁶³

Petre's main goal is for women to achieve the right to take whatever role in society they might wish - an equal opportunity with men. However, she does not advocate that they do so at the expense of those characteristics that make a woman uniquely feminine, e.g. as above, the power of self donation. She sees it as much her right to live her life as a public intellectual as it was her sisters' right to marry and have children.

It is also noticeable that Petre still feels that society is divided into the "learned" and the "unlearned" - not in the context of Catholicism that she used in Modernism: Its Failure and Its Fruits,⁶⁴ but more in the sense of an intellectual elitism. In her mind, society is divided into those who are educated, and those who are not. The poor, the unlearned, the vulgar are those who are either incapable or unwilling to engage in intellectual pursuits. Consider the following description of the poor:

The poor are merciful, but they are not generous; they have a rough sense of justice, but it coexists with much blind prejudice; they are shrewd, but they are coarse and unenlightened; they are kind, but they are also ungrateful and can be brutal.⁶⁵

⁶³ Ibid., 111.

⁶⁴ See Chapter VII.

⁶⁵ Petre, DAC, 21.

Her goal is not so much to disparage the working class, but to warn that they have to expand their horizons in a democracy: “. . . the citizen has to be formed; to be formed by intellectual education.”⁶⁶ She further says:

If I am correct in my thesis that the system of class, as a domestic counterpart of the international balance of power, is to disappear under the democratic *régime*, then the ignorant and irresponsible citizen becomes daily a more urgent danger to the community.⁶⁷

It is important to realize that Petre is still operating from the mindset of a Victorian aristocrat. She grew up in a society where class bias was a fact of life. The aristocracy, the upper class, ran the government and ruled the Empire. They were the ones with education who formed the intellectual elite of England. The middle class, while they might have acquired money during the Industrial Revolution, and thereby gained access to education, were still seen as having a lower social status. The lower class was seen as generally poor and uneducated. World War I had changed the social structure. Many of the hereditary aristocracy had died in the trenches, and the lower and middle classes had become more literate and more willing to break out of the strictures of the past and move into positions of more responsibility within government.

Along with her warnings about the loss of the aristocracy as a ruling class, Petre displays her own feelings about the leadership characteristics of the aristocracy. For example, regarding their objectivity, she says: “The nobleman possesses, or did possess, one very important characteristic of the good ruler;

⁶⁶ Ibid., 58.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 55.

his position rendered him independent. He could afford to do what he thought right, having nothing to lose nor to gain thereby.⁶⁸

At first glance, it might seem that Petre's negative attitude toward democracy is at odds with her ideas about freedom in the Church. However, Petre has consistently maintained the need for authority within the Church.⁶⁹ What she objects to is the abuse of that authority by those who insist on seeing the Church as not the means of salvation but the end in itself. For her those who abuse authority are denying the "uneducated" their right to find their own way to salvation, but are insisting that they can only be saved by following the dictates of the Vatican. Her Cisalpine thinking separates the social concept of democracy and secular government from the need for authority and spiritual guidance within the Church.

The Ninth Lord Petre

In 1928, Petre completed the biography of her great-great-grandfather, Robert Edward, the Ninth Lord Petre (1742 - 1801). It is much more than just a biography of a relative. As she says:

I have long wished to place on record some description of a religious type which has almost disappeared and will soon be forgotten. It is a type with which some of us possessed early and long familiarity; but we are a rapidly diminishing number.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Ibid., 30-31.

⁶⁹ E.g. see "Personal Responsibility and Expert Authority," 99ff, and "The Advantages and Disadvantages of Authority in Religion," 295, 299.

⁷⁰ Petre, 9LP, xiii.

This passage in her Introduction tells the real story of her work; she is concerned with portraying the character of the old English Catholic nobility - the recusants⁷¹ - those who had maintained their faith in spite of legal (and illegal) persecution by the English government. She is describing those men and women who had placed their faith above worldly position, but still maintained their loyalty to their sovereign. Her choice of language definitely identifies Petre as considering herself as a Cisalpine, with the attendant belief in the separate duties and responsibilities of the clergy and the laity. This theme has been present in her past writing (e.g. DAC), and will continue to be reflected in her future work (e.g. MWF).

The Ninth Lord Petre contains, in addition to the historical background, the story of how Petre's ancestors fought, within the law, to gain Catholic emancipation in the late 18th century. It is a long, scholarly work, and Petre has no hesitation about providing her own analyses of the actions of the principal characters - including her own relatives. For example, she devotes an entire chapter to the 9th Lord's tenure as Grand Master of the English Freemasons, in spite of the Bull of Clement XII excommunicating Masons.⁷² Although Petre declines to pass judgment on Freemasonry as a whole, her Cisalpine relatives would most likely have seen Freemasonry as a secular matter, and none of the Pope's business.

⁷¹ A recusant is a Roman Catholic who refused to attend Church of England services.

⁷² Petre, 9LP, 30 ff. Petre herself visited the Masonic Temple in London and was favorably impressed. She feels that the prohibitions were unjustified as long as such things as the oath of secrecy did not violate a person's conscience.

This book is Petre's first move into the realm of purely historical writing. It is a well written record of her ancestors' lives as well as a good overview of the attitudes of the old English Catholics and how they maintained their faith during the persecutions, and the persistent attempt by men like the 9th Lord Petre to gain full recognition for Catholics as loyal subjects of the Crown in the 18th century. As a member of Lord Petre's family, she had access to far more than public records in her research, enabling her to bring out both positive and negative aspects of her ancestors.⁷³ What we are primarily concerned with here is the attitude of the old English Catholics toward the papacy and to religious authority in general vis-à-vis secular authority, particularly concerning the tension between the duty owed the Pope and the duty owed the King. Petre describes their attitude well:

They were men who would have died for their King, but they would also, if need were, have withstood him to his face; they were men docile to their ecclesiastical superiors, but not tolerant of any intrusion of such into the rightful domain of personal liberty.⁷⁴

The difference between the Cisalpine and Transalpine or Ultramontane Catholics is very important, and becomes relevant in further understanding Petre's attitude toward authority. Petre has an extensive discussion, quoting Charles Butler, in 9LP,⁷⁵ but she summarizes the main differences, at least in the late 19th century, later in MWF as follows:

⁷³ E.g. the 1st Lord Petre served as Cromwell's main agent in the suppression of the monasteries.

⁷⁴ Petre, 9LP, xvi.

⁷⁵ Charles Butler was the secretary to the Catholic Committee, working for emancipation of Catholics in the 1790s. Petre, 9LP, Chapter XXIII, *passim*.

Cisalpinism is the English form of Gallicanism, and both stand for certain main principles: (1) the independence of the State in civil matters, with a consequent repudiation of ecclesiastical interference in civil affairs; (2) the corresponding independence of the Church in her own domain, and hence the rejection of anything in the nature of Erastianism;⁷⁶ (3) a certain autonomy of each national Church . . . an autonomy not inconsistent with profound submission to the Holy See.⁷⁷

This is a much milder version than Butler's definition, written over 100 years earlier. Butler says:

The great difference between the transalpine and cisalpine divines, on the power of the pope, formerly was, that the transalpine divines attributed to the pope a divine right to the exercise, indirect at least, of temporal power, for effecting a spiritual good; and, in consequence of it held that the supreme power of every state was so far subject to the pope, that when he deemed that the bad conduct of the sovereign rendered it essential to the good of the Church that he should reign no longer, the pope was authorized by his divine commission, to deprive him of his sovereignty, and absolve his subjects from their obligation of allegiance.⁷⁸

Butler's definition cuts to the real root of the suspicion and persecution. One of the main reasons for the persecutions of the English Catholics over the centuries had been the fear that the Pope would attempt to overthrow the English monarchy. There was certainly justification for this concern, since Pius V, in 1570, had published a Bull declaring Elizabeth I to be excommunicated and deposed and ordering subjects of the realm to rebel and overthrow her. The rationale for the suspicion is very similar to that existing in the United States when Al Smith sought the Presidency in 1928 - how could a man carry out his duties to the secular State, when he also supposedly owed allegiance to a foreign ruler?

⁷⁶ Used here in the sense of undue subservience of the Church to the State.

⁷⁷ MWF, 18.

⁷⁸ Petre, 9LP, 301.

The Cisalpines of the 18th century held the opposite of the positions Butler states above. They held that the Pope was not supreme over the State, or even supreme within the Church. He was subject to canon law, and to the decisions of a General Council. They went even further by claiming that bishops held their authority directly from God, not from the Pope, and that the Pope was not infallible. Given that the definition of infallibility by Vatican I was hardly the consensus of the council members, the Cisalpines had some justification for their stance.⁷⁹ Since Butler wrote in the late 18th century, well before the First Vatican Council, it is understandable that Petre would not have included any statement about infallibility in her post-Vatican I definition. However, the idea that bishops hold their authority directly from God fits with her often expressed concern about the decline of the episcopacy.⁸⁰

The attitude that the old Catholic aristocracy held toward the clergy is directly related to these ideas. In their worldview, the clergy were the intermediaries and arbiters between God and man - in the spiritual realm, and the spiritual realm only. The clergy had no more business involving themselves in secular affairs than the laity did in interpreting doctrine.⁸¹ Other than those members of the clergy who might be aristocrats in their own right, or the

⁷⁹ Even though almost all the Council members eventually signed an agreement on infallibility, the definition was by no means a popular one, with many of the minority members leaving before the final vote.

⁸⁰ See Chapter VI, "An Open Letter to My Fellow Catholics," and Chapter VII, note 102. This belief also flies in the face of *Pascendi*, paragraph 23, which claims episcopal authority "emanates vitally from the Church itself." It should be noted that Vatican II says that bishops exercise the power which they possess in their own right, and personally in the name of Christ. (*Lumen Gentium* III, 27)

⁸¹ At that time there were few, if any, lay theologians.

hierarchy, who were considered as aristocracy by virtue of their position, the English nobility saw the clergy in a position of a specialist who gave advice and counsel in his own particular field. As Petre says earlier:

[These ancestors] had deep reverence for a priest as administrator of the sacraments, but did not habitually look to him for intellectual light and guidance nor even, to any great extent, for spiritual direction. ... Within a certain province, those earlier Catholics paid the priest the sincerest respect, but this province was very strictly circumscribed and limited.⁸²

The Pope was respected as the head of the Catholic Church, but any attempts on his part or that of the Curia to interfere with the governance of the realm was inappropriate in the minds of the old Catholic nobility, and should be ignored.

For Petre, this reflected the controversy between the Pope and the Modernists. By insisting that theology had the right to pass judgment on the findings of science, including historical exegesis, the Pope was moving from his proper position in the governance of spirituality, and interfering in temporal matters that were not his domain. If, for example, the Pope were to redefine that Jesus was, in fact, co-equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, well and good. If he were to define that Jesus owned a house in Capernaum, when no archeological or historical evidence exists to justify such a claim, he would be exceeding his authority.

Petre makes a good summation of her attitude in her "Epilogue":

Cisalpinism was, whatever the other side may say of it, one of the finest testimonies to the value of the Papacy that the Church has seen, because it stood for a faith and loyalty blended with criticism and discrimination; it

⁸² M.D. Petre, "The Order of Melchizedek," C. & I. First published in the Monthly Register in October 1902.

was the belief that the thing itself was holy and essential in spite of its vices and faults.⁸³

One final fact should be kept in mind when evaluating the attitude of the old English Catholics. The Cisalpine beliefs were almost exclusively related to the aristocracy. In the mid-nineteen century, many Irish Catholics had immigrated from Ireland during the Famine; however, the majority were uneducated, even illiterate, and would not have involved themselves in such a discussion.

My Way of Faith

In 1937, Foyles, a large London bookstore, selected this book for its Religious Book of the Month Club.⁸⁴ Reaction in the Catholic press, both in England and America, was mixed, tending toward negative,⁸⁵ although much more positive in the Protestant and Anglican press.⁸⁶ Even though *Pascendi* was 30 years old, it was by no means forgotten. In many ways, this is an unusual book. Although Petre claims it is not an autobiography, it is a primary source for information about her childhood and adolescence. It contains biographical information, but at the same time it is an apologetic for her spiritual beliefs, both in childhood and maturity. It is a blend of frank opinions and deeply expressed emotions - of her feeling for Tyrrell and her frustrations at some of his actions. Many of the biographical aspects have already been covered in other places in

⁸³ Petre, *9LP*, 324.

⁸⁴ PP. Add. MS. 52378 (London: BL, January 25, 1937).

⁸⁵ *Blackfriars* attacked Petre, while *America* titled the review "Prefers Tyrrell to Holy Father." Leonard. *Transformation*, 104.

⁸⁶ Canon Lilley praised the book in the *Modern Churchman*. *Ibid.*

this dissertation, but in this section I will focus on those parts in which she addresses some of her religious beliefs and her conclusions about totalitarianism.

Spiritual Responsibility: One specific area that Petre addresses is one in which she disagreed with Tyrrell and von Hügel - the question of spiritual responsibility.

And here we touch on one characteristic of a good many of those who took part in the Modernist movement, a characteristic which I never could share. Men like Laberthonnière, men like Tyrrell, and von Hügel was not without the same tendency, were ever inclined to make men more responsible for the happenings in which they took part than, to my mind, they ever actually were.⁸⁷

In Petre's mind, responsibility was a function of both human action and the circumstances surrounding the action. She would thus see sin as not a question of black or white, but rather as shades of grey, depending on the circumstances; thus turning a possibly serious sin into something less serious. Although in Chapter V of MWF, she dwelt at some length on her scrupulosity as a child, and her terror of mortal sin, as an adult she has managed to put a broader perspective on the issue, in keeping with the concern for people that she has consistently displayed in her writing.

Thomism: In dealing with Thomism, Petre agrees with Tyrrell, although her own position was developed during her studies of St. Thomas in Rome, prior to her joining the DHM. Even though she refers to Laberthonnière, Maritain, Bergson,

⁸⁷ Petre, MWF, 176.

and Blondel in her writing, she says, concerning scholasticism: "I can do it best, as I am doing all else in this place, by working from the personal standpoint."⁸⁸

She mainly discussed the question of faith versus certainty.

After all, it is a doctrine of faith that faith itself is a supernatural gift, that man cannot acquire by his own unaided power; and it is curious to see how forgetful some theological writers seem to be of this dogma when they speak as though religious truth were mentally irresistible.⁸⁹

This agrees with Petre's own consistent position, as expressed as early as 1901 in The Temperament of Doubt, that we can never prove the existence of God with certainty through our own unaided human abilities. It also shows that she still retains her basic disagreement with *Pascendi*,⁹⁰ which insists that the existence of God can be proved through human reason. She states her own position clearly. "With my mind I have craved for certainty - for such proof as no sane mind can deny - and this I have not found."⁹¹

Even though she has great respect for St. Thomas, and enjoyed the logical *schema* of scholasticism, she still holds out reservations, so that she is neither scholastic nor neo-scholastic; she says: ". . . morally I am with the great thinkers from St. Augustine to Pascal and his modern followers."⁹² For Petre, the great distinction is between faith and certainty. ". . . it seems to me that the disagreement between the two schools I have been considering would have been lessened had they made the distinction to which I have continually

⁸⁸ Ibid., 177.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 179.

⁹⁰ *Pascendi*, paragraph 6. The fundamental idea that the existence of God can be proved through unaided human reason derives from Vatican I. ("Constitution on the Catholic Faith", II)

⁹¹ Petre, *MWF*, 187. She takes the same position in "An Deus Sit" in 1926.

⁹² Ibid.

appealed - between certainty and faith."⁹³ In her mind the primary road to God is through faith, and that faith must always be an internal factor, assisted by grace. Petre differentiates her concept from the neo-scholastics: "For the scholastic the proof is independent of the individual; it has an objective validity."⁹⁴ Later, she expresses her own belief: "The desire for certainty is the impatient demand of the reason alone; the desire for faith is the longing for an assurance - not of heart alone, but of heart and mind and the whole soul - that is more than reasoned certainty."⁹⁵

God and Humanity: When Petre turns to her discussion of God and humanity, her intense pastoral concern for others becomes clearly evident. She takes great issue with the teaching of St. Augustine or the Jansenists that humanity is wretched and useless. She sees no problem with human dependence on God, but: ". . . dependence is consistent with dignity. It is good to be *humbled*; to know our own true place, which is not on the throne of God; but is it good to be *humiliated*?"⁹⁶ Petre sees an "inalienable dignity" in humanity. In many ways her comments fit well with the teaching of the Church ever since Leo XIII, on basic human dignity, and carry on her concern for the "unlearned."⁹⁷

Some of Petre's ideas about the relationship of God to humanity might be interpreted as pantheism. "The word Pantheism is one of ill savour, and yet how

⁹³ Ibid., 187-8.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 186.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 188.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 192. Original italics.

⁹⁷ See Chapter VII.

near are the effusions of the mystics to some hint of pantheism."⁹⁸ She speaks about the union of the mystics to God, particularly the comments of John of the Cross, referring to the soul: ". . . at this point of union with God and absorption in Him she has become God by participation."⁹⁹ However, for Petre, the presence of God's Divinity throughout the universe, and yet above and beyond it, is consistent with the transcendence and supremacy of God.¹⁰⁰ Her conception is really closer to panenthism than pantheism; she does not consider the presence of God in every human as diminishing God in any way. Her recurring insistence on the immanence of God is clearly stated: "I find it more and more difficult to think of God as ever outside and beyond us; and the notion of separateness becomes to me increasingly the rock of offense on which spiritual belief is shattered."¹⁰¹

Totalitarianism: The last area of this book that I intend to discuss is that of Petre's attitude toward totalitarianism. In both DAC and MWF she indicates some sympathy toward communism; in DAC , she comments that:

In spite of contrary influences and surroundings, I was democratically disposed from my early years; I even had a romantic attraction for a purely communistic form of society, in which all men should be equal, and, still more, all men should be friends.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ Petre, MWF, 195.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 195. Quoting from St. John of the Cross. The Living Flame of Love.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 197.

¹⁰² Petre, DAC, 11-12.

However, she qualifies her statement in MWF by referring it to religious communities, thus drawing a distinction between true communism and dialectic materialism.¹⁰³

Most of her attacks on totalitarianism are contained in her essays and articles, which will be covered in the next section, but here she addressed the Totalitarian State in comparison to the Church, returning to her concern over the abuse of authority. She compares the action of the Church in condemning Modernism to the action of a Totalitarian State in repressing disaffection. Petre says that a Totalitarian State, commenting on the Church's action, would say: "She did well. If people wanted to belong to her they had nothing to do but obey her commands and echo her teaching. And this, in our domain, is what we expect of our subjects."¹⁰⁴ The one significant difference she sees between the Church and the Totalitarian State is that the Church still believes in the value of the individual and the human soul, whereas for the Totalitarian State the citizen is nothing more than a unit of the State, with no individual rights. Petre is thus claiming that the action of the Church authorities in suppressing the "dissent" of Modernism falls in the same category as the Church suppression of the Cathars in the early thirteenth century.¹⁰⁵ The number of deaths was certainly different, but the principle of authoritative repression of individual beliefs was the same.

¹⁰³ Petre, MWF, 152.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 314.

¹⁰⁵ The Church brutally put down the Cathars, sometimes called the Albigensians, from 1208 through 1226. The number of dead has never been estimated. See Joseph R. Strayer, The Albigensian Crusades (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1992).

Biographical Works

Petre's two main biographical books during this period, other than 9LP and MWF, are Von Hügel and Tyrrell: The Story of a Friendship¹⁰⁶ and Alfred Loisy: His Religious Significance.¹⁰⁷ Petre is not trying to advance the cause of Modernism in these books as much as she wants to leave a record of how the three of them really interrelated with each other and how they reacted during and after the Modernist controversy.

Von Hügel and Tyrrell: The Story of a Friendship

In vHT, Petre is reacting to attempts by some of von Hügel's followers to portray Tyrrell as the one who drew von Hügel into the Modernist conflict, and pictured von Hügel as ". . . a kind of broken-hearted guardian angel, vainly endeavouring to keep his friend on the straight path."¹⁰⁸ She chooses to refute them by publishing a variety of the personal correspondence between the two men, her goal being to establish the real nature of the relationship. She has done this earlier in her articles: "Friedrich von Hügel: Personal Thoughts and Reminiscences" [1925]¹⁰⁹ and in "George Tyrrell and Friedrich von Hügel in Their

¹⁰⁶ M.D. Petre, Von Hügel and Tyrrell: The Story of a Friendship (NY: E.P. Dutton & Sons, 1937). Hereafter vHT.

¹⁰⁷ M.D. Petre, Alfred Loisy: His Religious Significance. With an Introduction "Maude Petre" by James A. Walker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1944). Published posthumously. hereafter AL.

¹⁰⁸ Petre, vHT, 5.

¹⁰⁹ M.D. Petre, "Friedrich von Hügel: Personal Thoughts and Reminiscences," Hibbert Journal 24, (October 1925), 77 - 87.

Relation to Roman Catholic Modernism." [1927]¹¹⁰ Her basic position is that von Hügel was, in fact, the originator of Modernism, and led Tyrrell into areas where he did not belong. "This is the point on which I have ever maintained against many - the friends of von Hügel and some friends of Tyrrell - that their friendship was a misfortune to the latter."¹¹¹ She describes their character differences quite well when she says, describing their approach to authority: "Both endeavoured to pursue their course without provoking direct intervention. But von Hügel's measures were diplomatic and Tyrrell's were, when he saw no other way, militant."¹¹² They also differed in their intellectual interests. Tyrrell, in keeping with his pastoral abilities, was always interested in moral problems, while von Hügel "had a horror of such problems."¹¹³ This indicates another aspect of the dichotomy between them - Tyrrell was concerned with human problems and failings, von Hügel was concerned with the abstract. He was loyal to his friends, by his own standards, but the pastoral aspect was not on von Hügel's horizon. This is another reason Petre felt distanced from von Hügel - both she and Tyrrell were concerned with people, while von Hügel appeared distanced from them.

Alfred Loisy

AL was written after Loisy's death, and published after Petre's. Her purpose in writing it was more than memorial or biographical. She wanted to lay

¹¹⁰ M.D. Petre, "George Tyrrell and Friedrich von Hügel in Their Relation to Roman Catholic Modernism," Modern Churchman (17 June 1927), 143-54.

¹¹¹ Petre, vHT, 8.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid., 9.

out what she saw as Loisy's attitude toward religion, so in that sense it can be seen as an apologetic. When Petre speaks of his attitude toward religion, she is not limiting her topic to Roman Catholicism, but opening it to the whole subject of Loisy's position on religion in general. This is exclusive of his work in exegesis, in which he consistently maintained, even after leaving the Church, that:

- the literature of Scriptures is the work of faith and not its cause and origin; Christianity has created its own literature, historical and scientific to a point, but only secondarily; the Church has preserved this literature, not as proof of her teaching but as its outcome.¹¹⁴

There is a great deal of biographical data in this work, but also a great deal of admiration as well as criticism. Petre is not trying to judge Loisy for his actions in leaving the Church or forsaking Modernism, but rather to explain how his fundamental beliefs in humanity led to those actions. The main criticism comes from her observations on the nature of the conflict between Loisy and von Hügel. She makes a very cogent comment, including Tyrrell in her judgment: ". . . von Hügel was cautious, but he was also correct. Loisy was, on the whole, correct, but he was only cautious in detail, not in his general policy; and Tyrrell, of course, was neither cautious nor correct."¹¹⁵ As she has pointed out in the past, von Hügel was horrified by any concept of the immanence of God, and this caused a rift between him and Loisy. However, she attributes the tension not so much to the nature of the argument, but to the individual natures of the two men. Von Hügel comes in for the greater part of the criticism, because of his tendency

¹¹⁴ Petre, *AL*, 19.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

to be more concerned with a cause than with the people involved.¹¹⁶ Petre's portrayal of von Hügel in this last work has him as a chess player, who reacts poorly when one of the chess pieces' opinion or writing did not conform to the game plan he had in mind. Vidler takes a kinder overall approach toward von Hügel in A Variety of Catholic Modernists.¹¹⁷ He affirms von Hügel as the leader of the Modernists, constantly writing and traveling - keeping his friends up to date on each others actions and encouraging and critiquing their writing. However, he does point out von Hügel's tendency to push people when he considered them to be deviating from what he thought was the correct path. The biggest criticism Vidler lays out is von Hügel's obsession with the Transcendence of God, particularly later in life.

Possibly the most cogent comment on von Hügel and Modernism is a quote from a letter he wrote to Petre in 1918, that Vidler describes at some length:

He [von Hügel] then distinguished between "Modernism" as the necessary and ever-recurring need and duty to interpret "the old Faith . . . according to what appears the best and most abiding elements in the philosophy and the scholarship and science of the later and latest times" and "Modernism" as the particular series of attempts to do that during the pontificate of Pius X. While he hoped still to contribute to the former, he had revised his attitude to the latter which was a closed chapter.¹¹⁸

Loisy, on the other hand, is seen as unable to brook any contradiction to his ideas. Even though the two remained on friendly terms, there was still

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 32.

¹¹⁷ Alec R. Vidler, A Variety of Catholic Modernists (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 123-4.

tension in their relationship. Petre's main concern in discussing Loisy was to explain his attitude toward religion. "It was not with religion that his quarrel consisted; it was not with the Church as a purely religious organ. He was religious as a Catholic, and he never ceased to be religious."¹¹⁹ "Loisy believed to the end in religion as the essential moral and spiritual factor of life, and he also believed in Christianity as far its noblest presentation."¹²⁰

Although Loisy continued his work in exegesis, he became more and more preoccupied with the concept of religion itself. In his mind, it was impossible for a human being to comprehend God, and therefore, any religious doctrine attempting to explain God was an impossibility. He believed in the existence of God, but also that it was impossible for any human definition could be adequate.¹²¹ What Loisy believed in was humanity, and human faith. He maintained that the promise of eternal life was a myth, promised by Christianity as a reward for living a good life. As Petre says: "Loisy was resolute in his exclusion of all that cannot be based on any form of human experience."¹²² He believed that the source of human spiritual faith lay within humanity itself. His religion was faith. However, "he persistently recognizes the impact on mankind of something greater than man can comprehend. Every religion is, for him, the expression of faith in this unseen, indefinable mystery."¹²³ He believed that the

¹¹⁹ Petre, *AL*, 61.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 91.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 93.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 94.

moral and spiritual future of humanity depended on religion, but not on any specific religion.

Loisy did not believe that one religion was as good as another, since he saw Christianity as the highest achievement of religion. What he did believe was that every human being had an inherent need for religion, and that:

. . . religion is basically faith in mankind, which implies faith in something higher and greater than mankind, but present to mankind; while morality, the inseparable co-worker with religion, is, in its essence, the effort of man to pursue, though never to fulfill, the spiritual ideal of faith.¹²⁴

As to how much of Loisy's position Petre supported, it is difficult to say with any accuracy. She certainly remained Catholic, although her own ideas on the importance of individual faith as the path to God can be seen as a specific subset of Loisy's position on faith as a prerequisite to religion. Both Petre and Tyrrell believed that God is personally and immanently present in the salvation journey of every human being, rather than isolated and unapproachable in total transcendence. Petre seldom mentions the hereafter, not in terms of the *eschaton*, but she often mentions her deep belief in the Creed, which would indicate that she disagreed with Loisy's position on the afterlife. In most cases, Petre presents Loisy's positions on the nature of religion as a function only of human faith in an explanatory manner, without any attempt to interject her own opinions. In that sense, the book is a memorial.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 103.

Other Writing

Appendix E contains a table listing most of Petre's major essays, lectures, and articles for this time period, with a statement of their overall themes. However, there are a few that stand out because they reflect the changes in her intellectual interests. Before looking at some specifics, there are a few general comments that will set the stage.

Petre was still determined to carry on as an apologist for Modernism and for her friends. In addition, she has moved into a prophetic role in the face of the growth of totalitarianism, warning of the danger of ideologies that set the rights of the individual below the welfare of the State. Of the 33 works listed in Appendix E, 17 are directly concerned with biographical material.¹²⁵ Of the remainder, 11 deal with some form of political or sociological topic, and the rest are a mix of theological topics, from Christology to proving the existence of God through reason.

Much of the material in her biographical works is pointed at maintaining the image of her friends in the face of some revisionist literature that she considered as tarnishing the image that she saw. For example, after his death in 1925, the Catholic press¹²⁶ attempted to portray von Hügel as either not really involved in Modernism, or as a moderating factor on the more radical elements. Her response in "Friedrich von Hügel: Personal Thoughts and Reminiscences"

¹²⁵ Tyrrell, von Hügel, Loisy, Desjardins, de Lammenais, Laberthonnière, Lawrence.

¹²⁶ E.g. the Telegraph.

makes it very clear that she considers him to have been the driving force, at least in the initial stages:

. . . von Hügel was nothing if not a leader in any cause in which he took part; and if he thought it his duty to check some of the later developments of Modernist thought, he was certainly an initiator in the first stages of the movement.¹²⁷

Later she says: ". . . I would maintain that he was not only a leader but an arch-leader of Modernism in its early history."¹²⁸

With regard to Tyrrell, she often focuses on Tyrrell's mission as a pastor of souls, and his disregard for his own welfare. In "George Tyrrell and Friedrich von Hügel in Their Relation to Catholic Modernism," and in "New Wine in Old Bottles" she continues the approach that she began in the Autobiography and Life of trying to portray the weaknesses in Tyrrell's character as well as his strengths.

. . . he was inspired by extraordinarily little regard for his own personal welfare, here or hereafter; for his indifference to his own fate was such as I, personally, have never met with in anyone else. It almost amounted to a vice, for it was the root cause of his extraordinary recklessness, and of many injudicious words and actions.¹²⁹

. . . Tyrrell was reckless in his methods of attack just because he had no care for his own reputation, and his personal disinterestedness kindled affection while its manifestations roused irritation.¹³⁰

In Petre's social commentary, there are two major themes that she repeats in her warnings about the various "isms." The most dominant is her

¹²⁷ M.D. Petre, "Friedrich von Hügel: Personal Thoughts and Reminiscences," Hibbert Journal XXIV (October 1925-July 1926), 83.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹²⁹ M.D. Petre, "George Tyrrell and Friedrich von Hügel in their relation to Catholic Modernism," Modern Churchman 17 (June 1927), 151. Although she acknowledges his illness, Petre neglects the possibility that his constant pain and the buildup of ureic poisons in his brain may have contributed to Tyrrell's instability. See Chapter IV.

¹³⁰ M.D. Petre, "New Wine in Old Bottles," Modern Churchman 22 (July 1932), 217.

concern that people must see Bolshevism, for example, as an anti-religion rather than a religion. She warns that, unless people view a totalitarian ideology as a religion, where the state has taken the place of God, it will never be possible to combat it effectively. The second theme is that of the negation of personal liberty by totalitarian states. In "The Individual and the Collective," she condemns Marxism and National Socialism:

National Socialism has no more room than Bolshevism for any original contribution to its theory and character. . . . the totalitarian State . . . maintains that the only way of salvation for the collectivity, and for all individuals belonging thereto, lies in total subjection of mind and will to its teaching and behests.¹³¹

Only in one instance does Petre slip back into the harsh polemic that she demonstrated previously toward the Church. In "Fascism in Its Relation to Freedom," she compares Fascism to the Church:

Fascism is the definite negation of liberty. . . . Its aim is a homogeneous State, and its political ideal is extraordinarily like the ecclesiastical ideal of the Roman Catholic Church: once more let me quote the chief dogma of its creed - *Extra Fascismum nulla salus*.¹³²

There is no doubt that during this period Petre continued and expanded her role as a public intellectual. The number and diversity of her published works, as well as her public appearances, indicate that she had expanded well beyond the scope of an historian for Modernism. Even though more than half of

¹³¹ M.D. Petre, "The Individual and the Collective," *Adelphi* 17, No. 4 (1941), 105. She also uses the example of German and Russian concentration camps as an example of deprivation of personal liberty, which indicates that the existence of such camps was far more widely known than Allied governments were willing to admit.

¹³² M.D. Petre, "Fascism in Its Relation to Freedom," *Nineteenth Century* 202 (October 1927), 490. The obvious comparison is to the Catholic doctrine of the time: "*Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*."

her published works were apologetics for Modernism, she consistently maintained her position that Modernism was the right movement at the wrong time, and that it failed, not only because of the unfair actions of the Church, but also because of the apathy of the great mass of Catholic laity. Viewed through the lens of 21st century Catholicism, she appears as someone who stayed with her principles despite the actions of the Church, many of which have since been relegated to the category of unfortunate errors, e.g. authorship of the Scriptures. Petre deserves much better than Amigo's comment after her death that she was: "that stubborn old heretic."

This chapter concludes the analysis of Petre's works. It shows how she expands her horizons into biographical, social, and political thought, while still maintaining her perceived mission of continuing Tyrrell's pastoral work by defending Modernism.

CHAPTER IX
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of the Analysis

Most scholars have looked at Maude Petre only through the lens of Modernism. She has generally been seen primarily in her relationship to Tyrrell, von Hügel, Loisy et al, whereas in reality she is a much more multi-dimensional person. She said: "Tyrrell was definitely not a saint, but he was a martyr, von Hügel was definitely a saint but not a martyr." We might categorize Petre as a combination of both. She was a deeply spiritual person, with her share of human weaknesses and shortcomings, and despite the actions of the hierarchy against her, and the doubts as to the certainty of her faith, she remained loyal to her Catholic faith until her death. In a sense we might say that Petre achieved the martyrdom about which she fantasized as a child.

If we look at Petre's writing in terms of the four periods of her adult life, a clear picture emerges. In the first period, the pre-Modernist, before she became involved with the Modernist movement, the primary focus of her writing lay in the categories of religion and social thought. During this period, prior to 1900, she focused mainly on spirituality and pastoral concern, although she displayed the first inclinations toward sympathy with what would later become Modernism in her review of Tyrrell's Hard Sayings. She also showed the first dissatisfaction

with what she perceived as the attitude of the hierarchy that authority is to be unhesitatingly accepted, not questioned. This dissatisfaction, which had its roots in her Cisalpine background, continued and grew throughout her life.

She ventured into literary criticism with "Victor Hugo" and "Carlyle on Religious Ceremonies," but she was still fundamentally writing about religious topics. Her writing derived from her own ideas, and with Aethiopum Servus she began to develop unique themes that recur often in her writing, those of suffering and of asceticism. The theme of suffering is not surprising, given the prevalent idea of the time, in both the secular and religious realms, that suffering was a means of building personal and/or moral strength. The theme of asceticism is logical based on Petre's work with the poor and marginalized while she was a member of the DHM, and fit well with her developing interest in social thought, particularly her difficulties with the "professional philanthropists" who neglect any religious considerations in their attempts to alleviate suffering.

In her early Modernist Period, even as early as 1900, when Petre originally wrote the "Temperament of Doubt," the question of how to cope with uncertainty in religious faith was a subject of concern. For her, faith became a key theological category, and in her mind, doubt was a basic component of that faith. She saw it as an ingredient in the very experience of believing. She asks herself the question: "How do you have faith in the face of doubt?" Her fundamental answer was that not only can a person legitimately doubt in matters of faith, but also may be morally required to express doubt when faced with a conflict between the tenets of faith as defined by Church authority and individual

conscience. However, she does not limit her questioning to the doctrines and actions of the Church hierarchy. Her approach goes much deeper than just the external conflict that may arise between an individual and the *magisterium*. She finds the need for questioning at every level of faith, including the interior beliefs a person may have about his or her relationship with God. Through her continual questioning, she is attempting to live the faith that she inherited from her Cisalpine ancestors, balanced against the crisis of belief still prevalent in Victorian intellectual society, resulting from the Enlightenment, Darwinism, etc.

Victorian society's attitude toward the crisis of belief is reflected in Matthew Arnold's poem, "Dover Beach," which sees faith, like the tide, as "Retreating, to the breath of the night-wind . . ." ¹ Petre's approach, on the other hand, by placing doubt as an essential part of faith, was in direct opposition to the Victorian controversy on the nature of belief and established her unique position in the theological and philosophical thinking of the Victorians. In her mind, only someone who doubts can have genuine faith, because the presence of doubt indicates an active faith - the person is working at their faith. In her own words: "For the faith that knows no doubt is a faith of circumscribed dimensions; the faith that reaches out beyond sense and reason is inevitably subject to the gnawing of doubt and uncertainty." ²

One of the themes of social thought that Petre began to develop was her attitude toward feminism, specifically the women's suffrage movement. In her

¹ Matthew Arnold, "Dover Beach," *The Collected Works of Matthew Arnold*, Miriam Allott, ed. (London: Longman, 1979), 256.

² Petre, *MWF*, 66.

mind, the suffrage movement was the wrong answer to righting the marginalization of women of the time, because it only addressed the issue of gaining the vote for women, and not how to cure the evils of oppression. Her position toward women's rights derives from her observation of the gross marginalization of women in Victorian England. However, once women did gain the right to vote, she supported the process, and became deeply involved in the local politics of Storrington. She believed that women should have the right to choose their path in life, just as did men. She did not advocate women's equality with men, if it would cause women to lose those characteristics that made them feminine, such as nurturing.

In this period, she was often pre-occupied with the stresses generated by her emotional attachment to Tyrrell, but her writing still remained within the category of religion (e.g. asceticism, pastoral guidance) with occasional ventures into literary criticism. As time progressed, Petre moved more and more into the status of a public intellectual, and found her own literary voice. Of the five essays she wrote during this time, four can be classed as literary criticism, and in "Human Love and Divine Love," she was sure enough of her own analyses to disagree publicly with Tyrrell. Even though these works may be literary criticism, they were still rooted in her themes of pastoral concern, as evidenced by her attempts to find some good in all of those with whom she engaged, and of spirituality in that her critiques and comments were basically derivative from her own deep spiritual beliefs and values.

Of her two books during this time, Where Saints Have Trod was her major work on Christian ascetics, and her attempt to provide an alternative, practical viewpoint to the formal ascetic manuals of the time. The Soul's Orbit, even though it was mostly Tyrrell's work, showed her ability to work with and synthesize his theological ideas, and is particularly interesting when comparing those chapters that can be specifically identified as her work with those of Tyrrell. Her writing was pastoral in nature, with minimal Scriptural content, while Tyrrell's was far more abstract, heavily reliant on Scripture. This indicates that she was willing to move in the world of academic theology and exegesis, but still kept her own counsel.

As Petre moved into the time period before and after the Vatican condemnations, her writing became more controversial, and focused more on the themes and concepts of Modernism. Catholicism and Independence, written in 1907, just after *Pascendi* and *Lamentabili*, was denied an *imprimatur*, and dealt with two primary themes - the right of a person to doubt in religious matters, and the primacy of individual conscience vs. the authority of the Church. Her Cisalpine background began to become more evident in this book, primarily from the aspect that Church authorities had no business involving themselves in secular matters. "The Temperament of Doubt" appears again in this book as an indication of her continuing concern over the question of the relationship between faith and religious doubt.

The Vatican condemnations and the death of Tyrrell mark a major shift in the style and content of Petre's writing. Whereas before she was writing mainly

as a public intellectual, proposing alternatives to what she saw as spiritual problems within society and Catholicism, she now shifts to polemics and apologetics. The attacks of the Vatican authorities on Tyrrell, Loisy and Brémond, which she believed to be unfair, and the portrayal of Modernism as "the synthesis of all heresies" roused Petre's anger and a certain amount of bitterness. This, coupled with her de facto persecution by Bishop Amigo, at the instigation of Cardinal Merry del Val, led to a direct confrontation in "An Open Letter to My Fellow Catholics," in which she explicitly and directly supported Modernism and attacked the leadership of the Church for *Pascendi* and *Lamentabili*.

After Tyrrell's death in 1909, Petre felt that her ministry was to somehow continue Tyrrell's work by putting herself in the place she thought Tyrrell should have stayed, i.e. in a pastoral role. One way she chose to do this was by publishing the Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell in 1912. In this book, she had two goals. First, she wanted to lay out Tyrrell's life as she perceived it, in order to prevent any revisionists from portraying him as either a great saint or a great sinner. Second, she used Volume II, the biography, to describe and comment on some of Tyrrell's theological beliefs, e.g. Papal authority, and Church councils, development of doctrine, Christology, etc. Her approach was to describe Tyrrell as honestly as she could, with all his faults as well as his strengths. Whether or not she was totally objective is still a matter of scholarly

debate, but her intention, as she stated it regarding the book, was that he ". . . should move through its pages just such as he was"³

During World War I, Petre dealt with a variety of social topics, continuing her opposition to the suffrage movement, but also writing on the war and international relations. She condemned war as an evil, but took a pragmatic approach that patriotism was still required, and that war is inevitable as long as the world is made up of imperfect human beings. In almost all of her writing, however, her spirituality is still evident; she based her positions on fundamental Christian principles, and continued to display her concern for ordinary people.

After World War I, Petre published Modernism: Its Failure and Its Fruits, which she had actually written before the war. It was both an apologetic and a polemic. She sought to explain the nature of Modernism and of her friends that were involved in it, and she attacked the people and organizations both within and outside the movement that led to its failure.

In her apologetic, she described the theological issues that brought the movement into confrontation with Church authorities, and provided her own analysis of the validity of the Vatican arguments. In this she was amplifying and explaining the work of the other Modernists rather than providing any original theological positions. In the polemic aspect she was particularly strong in her attack on the anti-Modernist oath and the instructions for implementation issued by Pius X in 1910. This led to expression of her concern about abuse of Papal

³ Petre, Life II, 2.

authority, and the refusal of the hierarchy to accept modern advances in science and history when dealing with Scripture and doctrine.

After 1918, Petre's direction changed again. She had accepted that the Modernism of the reign of Pius X was a lost cause, but she still felt that it was her mission to continue as an apologist for her friends and for the goals of Modernism. In addition to this support, her writing moved into history, biography, and social thought.

Another of the major factors in Petre's life was her association with the intellectual community started by Paul Desjardins at Pontigny, in France. For twenty years she was associated with some of the greatest intellectuals of Europe, and was accepted as an integral part of the community. This acceptance is another indicator of her status in the upper levels of Victorian *intelligentsia*.

Her first book during this period was Democracy at the Crossroads, which reveals several interesting facets of Petre's beliefs. First of all, it is primarily in the category of social thought, rather than religion, describing her concern for the future of democracy in the post-war era. Secondly, it reveals how deeply her aristocratic heritage was ingrained in her social consciousness. Faced with the change from management of the government by the aristocrats of her class, she took the attitude of resigned acceptance to democratic rule, but warned that those of the Labour Party who were moving into control of the government could not govern effectively without adopting some of the management practices of the hereditary aristocrats who had ruled the country and the Empire for centuries.

Her discussion of the needs of democracy reveals that her thinking was still class oriented, with those of the upper class as the political and intellectual elite of the country, those of the middle class in a supporting role, and the great majority, the lower class, to be cared for and educated. Lastly, her Cisalpine attitudes were very much in evidence. In her mind, abuse of Church authority and position was as much to be condemned as the failure of a gentleman of her class to make good on a promise. It was equally evident in her mind that the clergy had no business meddling in secular matters, nor should the laity attempt to determine Church doctrine. The two worlds should be maintained separately, with each respecting the expertise of those in the other. Her Cisalpine background was explained very well in The Ninth Lord Petre. She and her ancestors clearly saw no dichotomy between their allegiance to their sovereign and their faith.

My Way of Faith, according to Petre, is not an autobiography. She described it as having been written to “. . . explain how and why I have ‘kept my faith’⁴ She covered not only her own spiritual development and mature beliefs, but also the problems she experienced in coming to those beliefs, and the pain and frustration she experienced in maintaining them. This book is an apologetic for her life, her faith and beliefs, and her friends, and reflects the extent to which the importance of faith permeated her life.

Even in her seventies, she still admitted to being troubled by doubt, but considered that doubt as one of the major issues in maintaining an active faith. The fact that she continued to doubt and question meant to her that she was

⁴ *Ibid*, xi.

consciously working at her faith. Modernism was a factor in her doubt; the issues raised by Loisy, Tyrrell, and von Hügel called into question the traditional teachings and structure of the Church. Her ability to deal with these questions, and still remain a member of the Catholic Church, reflects her unique approach to her faith. If she had not questioned and criticized, she could not have been true to her way of faith and to her background.

Another of the themes Petre addressed in My Way of Faith was the dangers of totalitarianism, a topic that she dealt with often in her later writing. She often warned about the problems in dealing with Bolshevism, fascism, communism, or any other form of totalitarianism. One of her main points was that these ideologies have replaced worship of God with worship of the State, and unless people began to see totalitarianism as a form of religion, they could not combat it effectively.

As she continued her apologetic for Modernism, she still maintained that its fundamental principles were valid - that the Church hierarchy must eventually accept that advances in science and history will have to be considered in the future development of Catholicism. Even her polemics were intended to correct what she perceived as injustices or abuse within the Catholic Church.

CONCLUSIONS

There are two main conclusions that can be drawn from this research - one concerning the Petre's status as a public intellectual, and the other

concerning the nature of her faith. The question also remains as to whether she was truly a Modernist.

With regard to her status as a public intellectual, I have shown that the work of other scholars in portraying Maude Petre as the biographer and historian of Modernism is correct as far as it goes. She did write biographies of Tyrrell, von Hügel, and Loisy, and she did produce an overall apologetic for the Modernist movement, Modernism: Its Failure and Its Fruits. I have also shown that this portrayal is inadequate as an evaluation of the full scope of her capabilities. Not only did she chronicle and describe the people and the events of the relatively short life of the Modernist controversy, she also took on the role of a public intellectual in a time where very few women were writing outside the fields of fiction or poetry. Her works in literary criticism, social commentary, and pastoral guidance fall well outside the scope of Modernism. I maintain that in order to appreciate the whole scope of her abilities, she must be viewed outside the lens of Modernism.

I have also argued that Petre is a significant, English, Catholic, Victorian female intellectual. She was obviously an English, Catholic, Victorian woman. I maintain that the quantity, quality, and variety of her work qualify her as a significant intellectual. My research has not uncovered any other English Catholic women, writing in the early twentieth century, who qualify as public intellectuals - those writing for publication in books and scholarly journals on intellectual topics.

Her background as an aristocrat shaped much of her writing. Class distinction was part of who she was, and in many ways contributed to her theme of pastoral concern. She felt it was her obligation, as one of the upper class, to care for those she saw as less fortunate.

As a part of her intellectual status, but also closely related to her spirituality, another significant theme pervades all of Petre's works, regardless of the time when they were written - pastoral concern. Whatever category she chose, she invariably injected her own deep religious beliefs, either implicitly or explicitly. Faith in God and belief in prayer were foundations of her entire life. Given her deep faith, it follows that one way she would express that faith was in her concern for others. Her pastoral concern often took the form of spiritual guidance, directed at those she perceived to be the "unlearned" who needed practical advice on how to deal with the various problems of life. She believed that the liturgy and doctrines of the Church were intended as a means to salvation, not to be an end in themselves. The major factor in Petre's spirituality was her deep and abiding faith, characterized by her belief that faith must be active, not merely accepting of direction, and that part of that action must be the willingness to question, and if necessary, criticize real or perceived errors or injustice. In her opinion, true reform was more likely to come from outside the Church authorities, by those who question, rather than from within.

The question then arises - if Modernism was not the focus of her intellectual life, what was? This leads to the second, and possibly the most significant, conclusion. I suggest that the answer is her unique faith, rooted in

her Cisalpine heritage, and developed through her own spiritual questioning. In My Way of Faith she stresses the religious doubts that haunted her childhood and even persisted into her later life. Her intense spirituality enabled her to cope with doubt, allowing those doubts, as an integral part of her faith, to serve as a means of strengthening that faith. The questions raised by Modernism became a part of her religious life, but instead of leading to the destruction of her faith, as happened in the case of others, she made them a part of it, and used them as an apologetic, focused on her goal of continuing Tyrrell's prophetic vision. She accepted that doubt, rather than certainty, is a basic component of faith.

Closely tied to this was her Cisalpine heritage, which influenced her attitude toward abuse of authority within the Church and the need for the clergy to remain in their own area of expertise and not interfere in secular matters. This background also had a significant impact on the nature of her faith. For her to betray her Catholic heritage would have been as unthinkable for her as it would have been for her ancestors to betray their secular monarch. Just as they maintained their Catholic faith in the face of secular persecution, so she maintained her faith in spite of religious persecution. Her attribution of Luther's comment to Tyrrell in MWF can be equally applied to her. "*Ich kann nicht anders.*"

One of the hardest decisions in these conclusions was whether or not to describe Petre as a Modernist. She did not consider herself to be one, as reflected in 1937, in Von Hügel and Tyrrell, when she said that there is no such thing as a Modernist, because the "ist" implies that it was a sect. She was

certainly a liberal, but she never describes herself as a Modernist, and from one aspect she is correct. She was not a creator of Modernist ideas; she was a consumer and a reporter of those ideas, but did not herself originate any of them. Rather than being defined by method, as were Tyrrell, Loisy, and von Hügel, Petre was defined by her focus, i.e. pastoral. The major spiritual themes of Petre's writing - asceticism, suffering, the aspect of doubt as inherent in the nature of faith - are outside the topical content of the writings of the others involved in Modernism.⁵

From another aspect, again using her own thoughts from Modernism: Its Failure and Its Fruits, she was someone who believed that it was possible to not only achieve a synthesis between modernity and religion, but also to achieve a synthesis between modern religion and Church thinking. This reflects her belief that true faith involves questioning, and that spirituality must have a dimension of *praxis*. To ignore scientific discoveries because they might conflict with previous pronouncements of religious authority was to refuse to apply the ability of the human mind to grow with change.

From the perception of the rest of the world, particularly the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, she was a close associate and apologist for condemned Modernists and for Modernism itself, the "synthesis of all heresies" and therefore herself a Modernist, or as Amigo put it: "that stubborn old heretic." Even her associates in the literary world of Pontigny saw her as a Modernist and "the last disciple of Tyrrell."

⁵ The only possible exception is Tyrrell's "Gospel of Pain" in Hard Sayings (1900); however, Petre's concern with suffering predates this and can be seen in Aethiopum Servus (1885).

However, regardless of conventional wisdom, and ignoring Tyrrell's criterion that a Modernist had to be a member of the clergy, I maintain that Petre was not a Modernist in the sense of someone who actively contributed to the development of the ideas that led to the Vatican condemnations. As I have mentioned before, she was a consumer of Modernist ideas, not a producer. She supported the positions of her friends, and was a vocal advocate of their beliefs, but she did not develop new ones of her own. Petre contributed no major theological input to the ideas of Modernism, but rather mainly defended those who did. She attacked problems like abuse of Church authority, true - but much of her thinking in this area was derivative from her own background as a Cisalpine aristocrat. Her concept of doubt as an inherent part of faith is original, and falls outside the scope of Modernism. In addition, I am unaware of any other Victorian intellectual who finds doubt, rather than difficulties, an inherent part of faith.

Possibly the best way to describe Petre is not as a Modernist - in the context of the Modernism of the reign of Pius X, but as a modernist in the sense of someone who believed in human progress, in both the spiritual and temporal realms. Whether or not she deserves the title of "The Last Modernist" is problematic. She was certainly the last survivor of the controversy labeled as Modernism during the reign of Pius X; however, she has her own prophetic voice. She believed that opposition to Modernism would disappear, because the conditions that generated Modernism itself would disappear. If we look at the status of the Catholic Church today, the Modernist "heresy" is far from anyone's

mind. This supports Petre's belief stated in MFF that Modernism arose in response to a crisis within the Church, and that as the conditions that caused it were corrected, the ideas of Modernism would be absorbed.

Her comment that My Way of Faith was her explanation as to how she had "kept the faith" can be taken in two ways. The most obvious one is that she did, in fact, remain in the Catholic Church throughout her life. The second fits more with her mentality as an aristocrat and a Cisalpine. She remained true to her faith, just as her ancestors did in the face of persecution and in spite of her treatment by Church authorities.

Her writing outside of religious topics - on social thought, literary criticism, history, and politics - are unquestionably outside the scope of Modernism, and her involvement with the literary world of Pontigny, although occasionally crossing into the realm of Modernist apologetics, is another significant facet that defines her unique status.

Further Work

As a result of this research, I found several areas that deserve further study. Primary among these is Petre's level of involvement with the intellectual community at Pontigny. She often speaks of it in her writing, and even dedicated MWF to: "Paul and Lily Desjardins and My Much Loved Friends at Pontigny." I have been able to find very little information in the United States, and most of what I have found has been in French. A study of the whole process and the level of involvement of some of the greatest scholars of Europe could provide

valuable insight into the intellectual climate of Europe between the World Wars, and could further strengthen my argument that Petre was a significant intellectual.

Another interesting topic would be the background of the hostility between Maude Petre and the other two prominent women in Tyrrell's later life, Kitty Clutton and Norah Shelley. It is possible that they saw Petre as controlling and manipulating Tyrrell, while she saw them as attempting to do the same thing, forcing her out of the picture. Another possibility is that Tyrrell saw Petre as someone with whom he could relate on an intellectual level, while Clutton and Shelley provided a less demanding, social relationship. A deeper investigation may contribute to a better understanding of Petre's relationship with Tyrrell.

As an aid to a better understanding of Tyrrell, and thereby Petre, it would be interesting to revisit the question of whether Tyrrell was actually a homosexual. Although Loomé has presented a strong case to the contrary, it would be informative to investigate Tyrrell's pastoral letters to André Raffalovich in light of present understandings of the nature of homosexuality.

An investigation into how Petre was received in the United States could add another dimension to her literary abilities. I find it strange that, with all her love of travel, she never visited this country. Analysis of reviews of her work in U.S. periodicals could be extremely interesting.

Finally, I would also like to see a deeper investigation into Petre's activities during the time she was in the DHM. I believe that it would be very revealing as an insight into the development of her character. However, given the length of

time that has passed, and the reluctance of the DHM to provide access to personnel records, this seems a remote possibility.

APPENDIX A

Topical Content of Where Saints Have Trod

Chapter/Title	Theme
Preface (Tyrrell)	True development calls for continuity with the past; asceticism is still as valid as in medieval times, but should be updated.
Prologue	If past religious systems are not applicable to the present, they should be changed.
I "Commandments and Counsels"	The evangelical counsels are not an end in themselves, but rather a way some choose to accomplish more completely the will of God.
II "The Buried Life"	It is necessary to distinguish between external spiritual exercises and that form of continuous prayer that is the life of the soul and union with God.
III "Devotion and Devotions" (Rewrite of 1901 series in <u>The Weekly Register</u>)	Devotions should be subordinate to devotion; they should actively contribute to spiritual growth, not be a mere habit based on antiquity.
IV "Catechism and Catechists"	There is a difference between religious learning and faith; the true faith of a catechist should be evident to a student and will positively shape the student.
V "The Chastisement of Our Peace"	The community needs to actively share in the suffering of Christ through the Mass; suffering is necessary for true union with God.
VI "The Sacrament of Love"	In the Eucharist, Christ gives His strength to weak humanity; it is necessary to support those in the Mystical Body who are alone and suffering.
VII "Felix Culpa"	Penance is a vehicle for restoring the balance between God and humanity; we must learn to forgive ourselves as well as others.
VIII "Death Before Dishonour"	How do we cope with the contradiction between Church teaching that we must despise our own reputation and the need to give good example by leadership.
IX "Spiritual Ennui"	Spiritual dryness can only be remedied by blind faith in God.

Topical Content of Where Saints Have Trod: continued

X "Not Peace but the Sword"	There is a dichotomy between the philosophy that says true life is a continual struggle and the spiritual teachers who claim that peace is the inheritance of those of good will.
XI "Self Will and Freedom"	Those in monastic life, even though they submit to obedience in an effort to curb self-will, still retain personal freedom and conscience to follow their own path to God.
XII "Deus Mea et Omnia"	See the previous discussion of "Human love vs. Divine love."

APPENDIX B

Structure and Composition of: The Soul's Orbit

Chapter/Title	Author	Theme
Prologue	Petre	Aim of the book
I.(a) Preparation - Need of Initiative	Tyrrell	The Holy Spirit will only be revealed through human actions, not passive debate.
I.(b) Preparation - Need of Guidance	Tyrrell	The sinner must wander in the dark until realizing that God is the only true light.
II.(a)The Goal Defined - In Relation to Myself	Tyrrell	Faith alone can lead us to act as divinely as possible in loving God in heart and conduct.
II.(b) The Goal Defined - In Relation to My Surroundings	Tyrrell	We must always try to do the right thing in whatever circumstances we find ourselves.
III. "I Am the Way"	Tyrrell	In order to come to the Father it is necessary to grow in our relationship to Christ.
IV. "Art Thou a King?"	Tyrrell	Jesus assumed His spiritual role as Messiah in terms of the Jewish understanding of His day.
V. "In Spirit and in Truth"	Tyrrell	The content of our religion is primarily mystical and spiritual, not focused in human institutions.
VI. "He was Subject to Them"	Tyrrell & Petre	Mechanical obedience has no place in the spiritual realm; honest doubt is always valid.
VII. "If Thou be the Son of God"	Tyrrell & Petre	Jesus' temptations were as human as ours; His strength was in not exercising His Divine power to overcome them.
VIII. "The Devil and His Angels"	Tyrrell & Petre	The Devil actually exists; we can only overcome him by believing in his existence and turning to faith to overcome him.
IX. "What will It Profit?"	Tyrrell	Christianity is an outgrowth and development of Judaism; we must love righteousness for its own sake, not fear of punishment.
X. "Love not the World"	Petre	Our true task of self-growth requires developing unselfish love.

XI. "Christ Crucified"	Tyrrell	Growth of the Kingdom on Earth depends on establishing a God centered conscience and the love of righteousness for its own sake.
XII. "The Valley of the Shadow"	Petre	Surmounting life's trials will enable us to see death as a victory; suffering allows the soul to grow in spirituality.
XIII. "I Have Risen"	Tyrrell & Petre	The deeper and more spiritual the love, the more it is detached from worldly existence; our whole being should strive to be joined with Christ.
XIV. "The Spirit and the Bride"	Tyrrell	It is through the Holy Spirit that Christ lives in us; the Church developed gradually into its present form as inspiration faded; all believers are members of the Church.
XV. "In My Father's House"	Petre	God is the human birthright; the Kingdom must be a fulfillment, not an exchange of existence, and we must consciously strive for God, through a deliberate effort of will and choice.

APPENDIX C

Main Themes of Catholicism and Independence

Title	Previous Source	Main Theme
"Prologue"	n/a	Conscience is the ultimate arbiter in matters of faith and morals. Truth has nothing to fear from conscience.
"The Temperament of Doubt"	London: Catholic Truth Society, 1901.	Acceptance of an article of faith must be based on fundamental personal acceptance that it is true. Doubt is an essential component of faith.
"Obedience Spiritual "and not Military"	Written in 1905 but publication delayed.	There is sometimes a duty to disobey even the Church. Reform must be spiritual, not military style discipline.
"Black but Comely"	unknown	The visible Church has not the same claim to eternity as the spiritual Church.
"The Order of Melchisedech"	<u>Monthly Register</u> - October 1902	Every priest is not at the same level in both intellectual and spiritual characteristics.
"Personal Responsibility and Expert Authority"	unknown	Personal responsibility and conscience may take precedence over Church authority when it steps outside its proper realm.
"Before and After Conversion"	<u>Weekly Register</u> - April 12, 1901, as "Inquiry and Belief"	Even devoted converts may find the need to continue to question within the Church.
"Underground Forces"	<u>Weekly Register</u> - March 14, 1902, as "Alma Mater"	Catholics too often focus on visible, worldly successes rather than spiritual progress.
"The One Thing Needful"	<u>Monthly Register</u> - September 1902, as "Unum Necessarium"	The secular and religious worlds must cooperate for the best growth of culture and society
"Minorities"	unknown	Truth cannot be subject to the outcome of a vote. Minorities have a right to be heard.
"The Fallacy of Udenominationalism"	unknown	Indifference in religion is not the same as tolerance. Indifference will not advance the search for truth.

Main Themes of Catholicism and Independence: (continued)

"'Il Santo' and Another Saint"	<u>Commonwealth</u> - June 1906	Sometimes obvious saints are not those who accomplish the most good.
"Epilogue"	n/a	Paternalism no longer has a place in the Church.

APPENDIX D

Petre's Works: 1910 - 1918

Title	Date	General Theme(s)
Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell (Book)	1912	Vol. I - Tyrrell's autobiography through 1885. Vol. II - Petre's biography of Tyrrell through his death
Reflections of a Non-Combatant (Book)	1915	Discussion of the nature of war and of various forms of pacifism. Necessity of patriotism even in the face of the horrors of war. Pragmatic view of the unlikelihood that war will ever be eliminated. Advocacy for international laws, enforced by an international force.
The Women's Movement: Neglected Opportunities	October 1913	Anti-suffrage. Most of the social evils of the day are common to both men and women, and women gaining the vote will not change that. Most of the problems can be traced to women themselves failing to act in unity.
The Advantages and Disadvantages of Authority in Religion	January 1914	Apologetic for Modernism. Necessity for the principle of authority in the Church. True nature of obedience as set out by St. Ignatius of Loyola. A superior only stands in God's place when he claims no honor for himself.
Confidence and Strength ¹	October 1914	Nationalistic appeal to the British people to support the French and to treat German prisoners humanely
Christianity and War	October 1915	There is a contradiction between Christianity and war, but wars will not end until humanity becomes perfect in the eschaton. Patriotism must be a factor in a person's position on war. Criticism of Benedict XV's lack of a stance on WWI.
Machiavelli and Modern Statecraft	July 1917	No modern state will be able to totally ignore the principles of Machiavelli in either governance or in waging war until true Christianity is accepted by humanity.

¹ Although Petre refers to this article as "Let Us Be English", it was published by the Times as "Confidence and Strength."

He That Loveth His Life Shall Lose It	1917	Speculations on the post-war nature of religion and a call for understanding and tolerance between different denominations.
Divine and Human Faith	October 1918	Comparison and critique of <u>La Religion</u> by Alfred Loisy, and <u>God the Invisible King</u> by H.G. Wells. Highly critical of Wells, unfriendly to Loisy.
Religion and Patriotism	October 1918	Apologetic for Catholics as good citizens, whose loyalty to England is not in conflict with their loyalty to the Church. In response to anti-British activities by Irish clergy. Defense of the Old Catholics.

APPENDIX E

Thematic listing of Petre's Essays and Articles: 1920 - 1942

Article/Essay Title	Date	Theme(s)
The City on Earth, the City in Heaven and the League of Nations	April 1920	Plato's ideal city can never be achieved through political means alone, but only through the guidance of religion. The League of Nations must have a religious dimension in order to succeed.
Still at It: The Impasse of Modern Christology	April 1922	Apologetic for the immanence of Jesus - the Christological question in the Anglican Church - the possibility of Jesus' being revealed in other ways in other religions.
The Roman Catholic Church and Reunion	April 1923	The Roman Catholic Church can never reunite with the Anglican, since the Roman Catholics cannot accept compromise.
An Open Letter to Lord Halifax ²	June 1923	Comments on the difficulties involved in a reunion between the Roman Catholic and Anglo-Catholic Churches
Religious Authority	July 1923	Update and re-statement of two of her previous articles on the question of lawful authority within the Catholic Church. ³
The Church in Its Relation to Religion	September 1923	The place of the Church is to put its members in touch with God, as a means, not an end. The Catholic Church does not contain all religious guidance.
The Moral Factor in Society	June 1924	Review of Loisy's thinking on moral responsibility and humanity as a religion - comparison with Bertrand Russell's humanism.

² Lord Halifax (Sir Charles Lindsay Wood) 1839 - 1934, was the driving force behind the English Church Union. His hope was to facilitate a reunion between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglo-Catholic portion of the Anglican Church. This reunion was seriously set back in 1896 when Leo XIII declared Anglican ordinations to be invalid.

³ "Obedience Spiritual but not Military," and "Advantages and Disadvantages of Authority in Religion." See Chapter VI.

Thematic listing of Petre's Essays and Articles: 1920 - 1942: (continued)

Friedrich von Hügel: Personal Thoughts and Reminiscences	October 1925	Eulogy for von Hügel - his reluctance to involve himself in moral questions - his position as one of the early initiators of Modernism - his antipathy toward immanence.
An Deus Sit?	April 1926	Argument against the possibility of proving the existence of God through reason alone - a person can only find God through personal faith.
George Tyrrell and Friedrich von Hügel in Their Relation to Catholic Modernism	June 1927	Differences between Tyrrell and von Hügel - Tyrrell's focus on the needs of the human soul - his indifference to his own fate - von Hügel's concern with history and mysticism.
Fascism and Its Relation to Freedom	October 1927	The dangers and evils of Fascism - Fascism can only be combated if it is seen as a religion - comparison between the tyranny of Fascism and that of the Church in the negation of personal liberty.
The Creative Elements of Tyrrell's Religious Thought	March 1929	Tyrrell's insistence on truth in the face of condemnation- his reaction to what he saw as intellectual and moral tyranny in the Church during the Modernism controversy - religious doctrines have value only in relation to life.
Some Thoughts on the Career of Feli de Lamennais	January 1930	Commentary of de Lamennais' idea that Church authority had no place in religion - his attempt to eliminate the element of doubt in religion.
Feli de Lamennais II: <i>Essai sur l'Indifférence</i>	February 1930	Critiques of de Lammennais' <i>Essay on Religious Indifference</i> - his insistence on the importance of civil authority is overstated.
George Tyrrell and Alfred Fawkes ⁴	1930	Eulogy for Alfred Fawkes - contrast between he and Tyrrell on the question of Church authority.

⁴ Alfred Fawkes was a convert to Catholicism, who became a priest, and then returned to Anglicanism in 1909 as a result of the Modernism controversy.

Thematic listing of Petre's Essays and Articles: 1920 - 1942: (continued)

Ignorance and Wisdom	January 1931	Review of a Pontigny <i>décade</i> on the relation of the learned to the unlearned ⁵ - difference between the methods of science and the truths it arrives at - only in religion can we arrive at truth without being learned.
Bolshevik Mentality	April 1931	Letter to the Editor of the <u>Dublin Review</u> arguing that Bolshevism must be fought as a religion rather than an anti-religion.
M.Loisy's Autobiography	July 1931	Commentary on Loisy's autobiography - his controversy with the Church - his search for a religion based on humanity - the Church's failure to make proper use of his talents.
Von Hügel and the Great Quest	December 1931	Von Hügel's greatness was in the nobility of his quest for truth - his insistence on transcendence vs. immanence - his tendency to choose the safer path, not necessarily the easiest one.
New Wine in Old Bottles	July 1932	Tyrrell's lack of concern for his own reputation - his hostility to theology when presented as a science - theologians are more concerned with preserving the form than spreading the content.
Bolshevist Ideas and the "Brave New World" ⁶	October 1932	Commentary on Aldous Huxley's <u>Brave New World</u> in light of her own views on the dangers of Bolshevism.
Père Laberthonnière	April 1933	Discussion of Laberthonnière's philosophy - especially his ideas on vital immanence, condemned by <i>Pascendi</i> - most believers are the unlearned.

⁵ See also Chapter VII. She uses the same terminology in her apologetic for Modernism.

⁶ A greatly expanded version of "Bolshevist Mentality."

Some Reflections of D.H. Lawrence from the Catholic Point of View	1933	Commentary and critiques of D.H. Lawrence - critical of his attitude toward sex and human relationships, chauvinism - his human descriptions fail through lack of relationship to a personal God.
Babel and Anti-Babel	January 1937	Plea to support the League of Nations by ascribing to the intellectual and social ideals being developed at Pontigny.
Anti-Babel Society	June 1938	Further support for Pontigny - the anti-Babel society now admits students as well as established scholars.
Commentary on M. Loisy's Articles	July 1938	Article in support of Loisy's efforts to prove that Jesus was an historical person - attack on those who would forget the realities of history
Parliament and Peace	1938	Criticism of Parliament for their advocacy of war preparations after the peace Conference at Munich.
Paul Desjardins: Personal Reminiscences	July 1940	Eulogy - his background in the <i>Union pour l'action Morale</i> and <i>Union pour la Verité</i>
Alfred Loisy	September 1940	Eulogy and apologetic for Loisy - his belief that all should have some form of religion
Alfred Loisy	October 1940	Obituary article for Loisy - more biographical than the previous article
The Individual and the Collective	1941	Condemnation of National Socialism and its raising of the State over the rights of the individual
What Russia Can Teach Us	January 1942	England can learn from association with Russia - understanding what has happened within the Russian State may help to fix English society - dangers of atheistic Communism - Communism compared to Christianity
A Religious Movement of the First Years of Our Century	November 1942	Commentary on the personal and religious character of von Hügel, Tyrrell, and Brémond.

APPENDIX F

Extract from Paul Desjardins et les Décades de Pontigny

Ce fut en août 1910 que s'ouvrirent les premières Décades de Pontigny, dans le cadre d'une ancienne abbaye cistercienne rachetée en 1906 par un professeur de lettres parisien, Paul Desjardins ; closes en 1914, les Décades furent à nouveau organisées à partir de 1922, sans interruption jusqu'en août 1939. Chaque été, dans ce " village magique " (Vladimir Jankélévitch) de l'Yonne, se réunirent les élites intellectuelles de tous les pays afin de débattre sur des thèmes variés. Les sujets de discussion englobaient des questions politico-sociales, des questions philosophico-religieuses et enfin, des problèmes littéraires. Une durée de séjour de dix jours (décade) fut adoptée et chaque décade abritait en moyenne une vingtaine de personnes avant 1914, une cinquantaine après 1922. Vers 1924-1925, les Entretiens de Pontigny devinrent une étonnante réussite intellectuelle, voire mondaine ; le pèlerinage aoûtien vers l'abbaye amenait des hommes de lettres, des journalistes, de grands universitaires, des hommes politiques.

APPENDIX G
LISTE ET DATES
DES DÉCADES DE PONTIGNY
DE 1910 A 1914

1910

- 1^{re} Décade: Le sentiment de la justice (du 31 juillet au 9 août).
- 2^e Décade: Le sentiment de l'art et de la vie d'autrefois (du 10 au 20 août).
- 3^e Décade: Le sentiment de vie religieuse (du 21 août au 30 août).
- 4^e Décade: La vie ouvrière actuelle : ouvriers de l'industrie, ouvriers agricoles (31 août au 9 septembre).
- 5^e Décade: La poésie contemporaine, décade organisée par la Nouvelle Revue française, 78, rue d'Assas, Paris (6^e) (du 10 au 19 septembre.)

1911

- 1^{re} Décade: Lutttes pour le droit : l'effort des nationalités politiquement assujetties afin de se constituer une autonomie, ou afin de la maintenir (du 30 juillet au 8 août).
- 2^e Décade: Religion: questions de méthode, d'histoire, de psychologie relatives à la religion (du 9 au 18 août).
- 3^e Décade: Art et poésie: libres conversations sur le "Tragique " (du 19 au 28 août).
- 4^e Décade: Éducation: d'une "culture générale " De la nécessité actuelle d'une telle culture. Comment la définir. Comment l'instituer (du 29 août au 9 septembre).
- 5^e Décade: Travail : psychologie du travail. Le travail et l'outillage moderne. L'organisation de l'atelier (du 8 au 19 septembre).

1912

- 1^{re} Décade: Le droit des peuples (du 1^{er} 10 août).

- 2^e Décade: Éducation-travail (du 11 au 20 août).
 3^e Décade: Art et poésie - du roman (21 au 30 août).
 4^e Décade: Philosophie. Religion. Histoire : critique rationaliste, mysticisme.
 Critique mystique de rationalisme (31 août au 9 septembre).

1913

- 1^{re} Décade: Droit des peuples. Défense nationaux et impérialisme (11 au 20 août).
 2^e Décade: Éducation: La petite école. L'école de haute culture (du jeudi 21 au 30 août).
 3^e Décade: Le métier des lettres (31 août au 9 septembre).
 4^e Décade: La grande espérance (10 au 19 septembre).

1914

Decades qui n'eurent pas lieu en raison de la guerre

- 1^{re} Décade: L'education: l'ecole de commune culture.
 2^e Décade: Grande Décade du huitième centenaire de Pontigny (du 21 août au 3 septembre).
 3^e Décade: La France en 1914. Les idées et les oeuvres expliquées aux étrangers (5 an 14 septembre).

PROBLÈMES DISCUTÉS AUX ENTRETIENS D'ÉTÉ DE PONTIGNY DE 1922 A 1939

1922

- 1^{re} Décade: Éducation el liberté politique (3 au 13 août).
 2^e Décade: Miroir de l'honneur; culture de la fierté par la fiction (14 au 24 août).
 3^e Décade: La Société des Nations et les préjugés qu'il lui faut vaincre (25 août - 4 septembre).

1923

- 1^{re} Décade: Les humanités (1^{re} au 11 août).
- 2^e Décade: Encore Société des Nations (12 au 22 août).
- 3^e Décade: Le trésor poétique réservé ou de l'intraduisible (23 août - 2 septembre).

1924

- 1^{re} Décade: La muse et la grâce (8 au 18 août).
- 2^e Décade: L'acquis du XIX^e siècle dans l'ordre de l'intelligence (19-29 août).
- 3^e Décade: L'anachronisme politique (30 août -9 septembre).

1925

- 1^{re} Décade: Les risques de conflit entre les États à cette heure (5 au 15 août).
- 2^e Décade: Nous autres Européens. Europe et Asie (16 au 26 août).
- 3^e Décade: L'autobiographie et la fiction (27 août au 6 septembre).

1926

- 1^{re} Décade: L'État en 1926. S'affaiblit-il? Se transforme-t-il? (4 au 14 août).
Qu'est-il devenu pour nous ?
- 2^e Décade: L'empreinte chrétienne. A quoi reconnaissable? (15 au 25 août).
Disparaît-elle ?
- 3^e Décade: L'humanisme. Son essence. Un nouvel humanisme est-il possible?
(2^e août -5 septembre).

1927

- 1^{re} Décade: Des libertés nécessaires (10 au 20 août).
- 2^e Décade: Le romantisme en sa profondeur (21 au 31 août).
- 3^e Décade: D'un humanisme moderne et des chances d'une rénovation du
vieux monde par l'école (1^{re} au 11 septembre).

1928

- 1^{re} Décade: L'homme et le temps; la reprise sur le temps. Immortalité ou
éternité? (8 au 18 août).

2^e Décade: Jeunesse d'après-guerre, à cinquante ans de distance (1878 - 1928) (19 au 29 août).

3^e Décade: Sur l'esprit bourgeois just prorogée à l'année suivante (30 août -9 septembre). (Décade supprimée).

1929

1^{re} Décade: Le procès de la bourgeoisie devant la classe ouvrière (10 au 20 août).

2^e Décade: Sur la réussite classique dans l'art (21 au 31 août).

3^e Décade: Imago Mundi Nova. Imago Nulia. Un univers sans figure et le courage de vivre (1^{re} au 11 septembre).

1930

1^{re} Décade: De trois psychologies : l'enfant, le primitif, l'anormal (9 au 19 août).

2^e Décade: Sur le rythme dans l'art et d'abord dans la nature (20 au 30 août).

3^e Décade: Technicité et bon sens. Du clerc et du laïque dans l'ordre du savoir positif (31 août au 10 septembre).

1931

1^{re} Décade: Sur le baroque et sur l'irréductible diversité du goût suivant les peuples (6 au 16 août).

2^e Décade: Sur la colonization et ses crises actuelles (17 au 27 août).

3^e Décade: Sur les conversions religieuses dont nous fûmes témoins (28 août au 7 septembre).

1932

1^{re} Décade: La presse dangereuse. Dangereuse pour la paix (17 au 27 août).

2^e Décade: De la transmission des valeurs, d'une génération à une autre; d'une classe sociale à une autre; d'une nation à une autre (28 août -7 septembre).

1933

1^{re} Décade: Sur l'héroïsme (12 au 22 août).

2^e Décade: Sur le joisir (23 août -2 septembre).

3^e Décade: Sur le caractère révolutionnaire des événements actuels. Veut-on la Revolution? (3 au 13 septembre).

1934

1^{re} Décade: D'une restauration de l'intolérance dans les Etats totalitaires, et de l'abandon des conquêtes de l'humanisme (3 au 13 août)

2^e Décade: Est-il véritable que nos civilisations sont mortelles ? (14 au 24 août).

3^e Décade: La volonté de justice mène-t-elle nécessairement à l'action révolutionnaire? (25 août -4 septembre).

1935

1^{re} Décade: Au sujet de Victor Hugo connaisseur des choses divines (1^{er} au 11 août).

2^e Décade: Au sujet des frontières imaginaires ou réelles (12 au 22 août).

3^e Décade: Au sujet de l'ascétisme et de son pouvoir créateur (23 août au 2 septembre).

1936

1^{re} Décade: Érasme a-t-il fondé quelque chose? (à propos de son 4^e centenaire) (3 au 13 août).

2^e Décade: L'homme est-il humain? (14 au 24 août).

3^e Décade: La volonté du mal (25 août au 4 septembre).

1937

1^{re} Décade: Reconstruction de la S.D.N. Comment mettre ensemble la justice et la force (18 au 23 août).

2^e Décade: De l'unité de la philosophie (24 août -3 septembre).

3^e Décade: Vocation sociale de l'art dans les époques de trouble mental et de désespoir (20 au 30 septembre).

1938

- 1^{re} Décade: Solitude (27 juillet-é août).
- 2^e Décade: Primitivisme (7 au 17 août).
- 3^e Décade: L'ombre de César et le régime des masses (19 au 29 septembre).

1939

- 1^{re} Décade: La destinée (conversation dirigée par M.G. Bachelard, du 26 juillet au 5 août).
- 2^e Décade: Problème des étrangers en France (conversation dirigée par Ph. Serre, 14 au 24 août).
- 3^e Décade: (qui n'eut pas lieu en raison de la guerre) ; Relations intellectuelles, morales et spirituelles entre l'Angleterre et la France (organisée avec le Times Literary Supplement) (26 août au 5 septembre).

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