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## Abstract

The Influence of Congregationalism  
on the First Four Novels of D.H. Lawrence  
Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
by Margaret Jane Masson  
June 1988

Critics agree that D.H. Lawrence's Eastwood Congregational heritage was an important influence on the writer, but disagree as to the exact nature of its shaping; the classic Eliot/Leavis disagreement has never really been resolved. The main reason for this has been the lack of specific evidence about the kind of Christianity disseminated from the Eastwood Chapel's pulpit.

In fact, such evidence does exist in the form of newspaper reports of some of the sermons of the Reverend Robert Reid during his ministry at Eastwood, a ministry which coincided with Lawrence's teenage years and beyond. In Part One (Chapter Two), in the context of a review of the wider Congregational tradition, these reports are examined, the type of Christianity they indicate is elucidated, and the nature of the influence on D.H. Lawrence is discussed. Some of the alternative value-systems available to Lawrence in Eastwood are also considered.

In Part Two, each of Lawrence's first four novels is examined from the perspective of this new insight into his chapel inheritance. The movement from the domination of chapel assumptions in The White Peacock is traced through their rejection in The Trespasser, to the more explicit critique in the autobiographical context of Sons and Lovers, and Lawrence's most overt exploration of his Christian heritage in The Rainbow. This study reveals how the dichotomy inherent in Eastwood Congregationalism, between religion as moral, rational and ordered, and religion as mysterious, intuitive and unarticulated, continues to shape Lawrence's fiction in ways that are sometimes submerged and sometimes overt.

The Influence of Congregationalism  
on the First Four Novels of D.H. Lawrence

by

Margaret Jane Masson

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,  
in the Department of English Studies,  
University of Durham.

1988



23 MAR 1989

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This thesis is the result of my own work and includes no material previously submitted for a degree in this or any other University.

Signed : *Margaret J. Masson*

Date : *20 June 1988*

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Preface

Part of the material of Chapter Two has been published as 'D.H. Lawrence and Congregationalism' in The Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society. I am grateful to the editor, Dr. Clyde Binfield, for permission to include the material in this thesis. Part of the material of Chapters Two, Three and Six is to be published in an article entitled 'D.H. Lawrence's Congregational Inheritance' in the D.H. Lawrence Review.

I am very grateful to my supervisor, Miss Ruth Etchells, for her guidance throughout the preparation of this thesis. Her shrewd critical insight and humane wisdom have been especially valued.

I am indebted to Dr. John Worthen and Dr. Mara Kalnins for reading parts of the penultimate drafts of the thesis. Their interest and suggestions were much appreciated. My thanks are also due to Dr. Clyde Binfield for his help during my attempts to learn more about Eastwood Congregationalism, and for his comments on my assessment of the evidence. I alone remain responsible for the views expressed here.

For assistance in proof-reading, I am most grateful to Winifred Masson, Alison Collins, Roger Till, and Ellen and David Kupp, and for help with some bibliographical questions, I would like to thank Dr. Anthea Morrison and Dr. David Crane.

My largest debt, for their interest, encouragement and generous practical help, is to my parents. To them I dedicate this thesis.

Abbreviations

<u>Advertiser</u>	<u>The Eastwood and Kimberley Advertiser</u>
Appx	Appendix
<u>R</u>	<u>The Rainbow</u> (1915; rept. Harmondsworth, 1986)
<u>SL</u>	<u>Sons and Lovers</u> (1913; rept. Harmondsworth, 1986)
<u>STH</u>	<u>Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays</u> (1923; ed. Bruce Steele, Cambridge, 1984)
<u>Tr</u>	<u>The Trespasser</u> (1912; ed. Elizabeth Mansfield, Cambridge, 1981)
<u>WP</u>	<u>The White Peacock</u> (1911; ed. Andrew Robertson, Cambridge, 1983)

## CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

The significance of D.H. Lawrence's Nonconformist past is widely acknowledged and yet the more precise nature of its character and influence has been largely ignored. One possible reason for this is Lawrence's own tendency to minimize, in retrospect, the extent of his involvement with the Chapel religion of his childhood. In relation to other key influences, critics have pointed out Lawrence's tendency to 'cover his traces' and to insist that 'what he advocated came from his deeper self ... not outside'.<sup>1</sup> Eleanor Greene thus explains Lawrence's 'violent renunciation' of Nietzsche, while Colin Milton concludes his study of Nietzsche's influence on the early works of D.H. Lawrence with the observation:

Nietzsche's influence on Lawrence was profound, but precisely because of this it is only rarely evident in direct references or obvious borrowings. Instead it tends to appear in that more subtle and pervasive fashion which we might expect when ideas have been thoroughly assimilated and creatively used.(2)

This is even more obviously true in the case of the early and deeply-rooted influence on Lawrence of Eastwood Congregational Christianity. As we shall see, his later memory of having 'got over the Christian dogma'<sup>3</sup> by the time he was sixteen is mistaken. Published letters show that at the age of twenty-two he was still wrestling with some of the fundamental Christian doctrines. This, along with evidence from friends of that time, indicates that anything approaching a decisive break with the chapel did not occur until Lawrence was nearly twenty-three.



A second possible reason for this neglect of a more specific investigation of Lawrence's Nonconformist past is a tendency towards the uncritical acceptance of a clichéd or stereotyped impression. At one extreme is T.S. Eliot's famous dismissal of Lawrence's religious inheritance as 'vague, hymn-singing pietism',<sup>4</sup> or Richard Aldington's reference to 'this powerful, raucous, religious emotionalism ... crude religious propaganda ... slap bang bibliolatry'.<sup>5</sup> This is loudly challenged at the other extreme by defenders such as F.R. Leavis and A. Whigham Price who stress Lawrence's place in an alternative tradition with an intellectual vigour and cultural vibrancy far more creative, it is implied, than the established mainstream. Doctrinaire and emotive, neither view adequately reveals the complexity of Lawrence's religious tradition.

One contributory factor to this, and a third reason why our impression of Lawrence's Congregationalism has remained vague, has been the lack of concrete evidence. Even Anthony Rees, in his excellent thesis on Lawrence, displays caution in his surmises about the specific nature of the Congregationalism represented in the Eastwood Chapel and, 'in the absence of any direct evidence of the doctrine preached at Eastwood', he takes 'R.J. Campbell as representing Lawrence's point of departure from Congregationalism'.<sup>6</sup> Other writers also draw conclusions from what Lawrence read and from the general theological context of the time, and although an understanding of the various trends is essential, there is a danger of oversimplification or inaccuracy in simply reading the general milieu back into a specific situation. Individual preachers may vary considerably in their style and theological emphases. However, there does exist some direct evidence of the doctrine preached in the Eastwood Chapel which it seems has not yet been considered.

From 1905 to 1908, when Lawrence was between nineteen and twenty-two, twelve substantial reports or transcripts of sermons delivered by the Eastwood Congregational minister, the Revd Robert Reid, were published in the local paper The Eastwood and Kimberley Advertiser. In addition to this, the titles of his sermons throughout his ministry in Eastwood were usually advertised in the newspaper in advance, and a brief report frequently followed in a subsequent edition. Newspaper reports of Reid's ordination containing the full text of his ordination sermon, a report on his farewell to Eastwood, information from the Church Minutes Book, and research into his training at Paton College all combine to yield a much clearer and fuller picture of how Christianity was being presented from the Eastwood Congregationalist pulpit, and hence of Lawrence's particular religious inheritance.

Several studies have been devoted to Lawrence's religious vision; indeed, few critics of Lawrence can completely ignore this important dimension of his work. Lawrence himself claimed to be 'a passionately religious man'<sup>7</sup> and the religious impulse is very obvious in his writings. This has been widely and variously interpreted and evaluated. Some critics, like T.S. Eliot (at least in After Strange Gods) and William York Tindall, view Lawrence as a dangerous heretic while others such as Mark Spilka and George Panichas are sympathetic to the point of discipleship. The influence on Lawrence of religious traditions other than the Judeo-Christian tradition has fruitfully been explored, most notably, perhaps, by Chaman Nahal, while Martin Jarrett-Kerr pioneered the study of Lawrence from a specifically Christian viewpoint. D.M. Newmarch, in his interesting study D.H. Lawrence's Chapel, focuses on the Eastwood Congregational Chapel 'to

discover more closely what contribution it was able to make to the cultural life of the district during Lawrence's youth'.<sup>8</sup> Newmarch confines his study to the cultural aspects of the tradition. In his selective criticism of the fiction, it is Lawrence's explicit treatment of the chapel milieu that concerns him, and in particular its rôle as a social rather than a religious institution. He is not interested in Reid's theological stance and influence, and he does not, therefore, pursue this line of enquiry.

Graham Hough, in The Dark Sun, devotes a chapter to 'The Quarrel with Christianity' and while I agree with much of what he says, he shows a surprising lack of scholarly differentiation in his perception of 'Christianity'. This is most explicitly revealed in a footnote when he dismisses the Christian attitude to sexuality:

I take it for granted that Christianity does depreciate sexuality, or at most make reluctant concessions to it; and that Lawrence was right in believing this, wherever else he was wrong; and that the Chestertonian ... trick of representing Christianity as a robustly Rabelaisian sort of faith is a vulgar propagandist perversion.(9)

Such a comment suggests an awareness only of the Christian ascetic tradition and hardly at all of mainline biblical orthodoxy.<sup>10</sup> This exemplifies a common weakness in some of the earlier Lawrence criticism. Good literary criticism often co-exists with unsupported assumptions about traditional Christian doctrine and inaccurate surmises about Lawrence's particular Christian inheritance. On the other hand, studies in which the main aim is to elucidate Lawrence's religion are often thin in their assessment of the writer's literary achievement.

My aim in this thesis is to describe more precisely the shape and substance of Lawrence's particular Christian inheritance and to show

the nature of this influence - both positively and negatively - on his early novels.

But why should we assume that his Christian upbringing constituted such an important influence on Lawrence? After all, as noted earlier, he himself wrote:

By the time I was sixteen I had criticised and got over the Christian dogma.

It was quite easy for me; my immediate forebears had already done it for me. Salvation, heaven, Virgin birth, miracles, even the Christian dogmas of right and wrong - one soon got them adjusted. I never could really worry about them.(11)

This was published in 1928, however, when Lawrence was forty-three, and some of the early letters contradict this blasé dismissal. In a letter dated 15 October 1907, when Lawrence was twenty-two, he appears very much concerned with precisely such issues. He writes to his minister, the Revd Robert Reid:

Dear Mr. Reid,

I should be very glad to hear your treatment of some of the great religious topics of the day, and regret that I cannot attend an evening class. As it is my nights are all too short for the amount of work I ought to put into them.

Reading of Darwin, Herbert Spencer, Renan, J.M. Robertson, Blatchford and Vivian in his Churches and Modern Thought has seriously modified my religious beliefs. A glance through J.R. Campbell's New Theology suggested to me that his position was untenable, indeed almost incomprehensible to an ordinary mind that cannot sustain a rationalist attitude in a nebulous atmosphere of religious yearning. I do not think Campbell solves any problems; I do think he is practically an agnostic, - and a mystic.

But I should like to know whether the Churches are with him on the subjects of<sup>de</sup> Miracles, Virgin Birth, The Atonement, and finally, the Divinity of Jesus. And I would like to know, because I am absolutely in ignorance, what is precisely the orthodox attitude - or say the attitude of the Nonconformist Churches to such questions as Evolution, with that the Origin of Sin, and as Heaven and Hell.

I know these are tremendous issues, and somehow we hear of them almost exclusively from writers against Christianity.

Reading the Rise of the Dutch Republic I am staggered by the astounding difference between the accepted doctrines of various ages. It seems remarkable too, that change has always originated in a people antagonistic to the Church. It is essential that we should understand the precise position of the Church of today.

Pardon me if I sound presumptuous and write with the assurance and inflatus of youth. I do not know how to take my stand  
and am Yours Sincerely D.H. Lawrence.(12)

Lawrence's letters offer the most direct access to his developing and changing response to his Christian inheritance and reveal its importance to him, even in his eventual rejection of Christianity. The years from 1907 to 1916 are of special interest to us. By June 1907 Lawrence had finished the first version of what was eventually to become The White Peacock. By 1916 The Rainbow had been published and banned, Lawrence's hopes for a redeemed England shattered, and the dark, apocalyptic phase of Women in Love had begun.

During this time, three main stages in the development of Lawrence's relationship to Christianity may be identified. First, in the letter quoted above of 15 October 1907, we see the young Lawrence in transition, writing to Reid expressing doubts, but still apparently sympathetic to Christianity. By 3 December, Lawrence is clearly outside the Christian camp. Far from doing battle with it, however, the subtext of the letters over the next few years reveals a profound sense of wistfulness, even longing, after the loss of his belief in Christianity. This changes fairly suddenly with the onslaught of The Great War, to a strong reaction against what Lawrence perceives to be the drastic impoverishment of 'Christian' notions of salvation. But the letters reveal, even in 1916, a movement beyond the negative sense of disillusion and outrage to positive attempts towards the reformulation of a more adequate faith by which to live. It is at this

point - and with the writing of Women in Love - that the Christian influence in general - and the Congregational inheritance in particular - ceases to be such a crucial influence, as Lawrence explores and experiments in increasingly complex ways within a much wider frame of reference. Although fascinating, this is beyond the scope of the present study.

In the letter above, of 15 October 1907, the seeds of doubt have clearly been sown in the young man's mind. But Lawrence's account suggests that it is not so much the rationalists who undermine his faith as 'the astounding difference between the accepted doctrines of various ages' revealed by The Rise of the Dutch Republic. Not only is theology currently in flux but it appears to have always been so. As the notion of sustained orthodoxy is challenged, and with it the consensus of the traditional authority for the accepted doctrines, the responsibility of choosing for oneself what to believe seems increasingly inevitable. At about the same time, Lawrence was growing very disillusioned with his experience of college. He had entered Nottingham University College in September 1906 to read for a two-year course leading to his teacher's certificate. On 4 May 1908 he wrote to Blanche Jennings of his boredom at college:

Professors and the rest of great men I found were quite small men.... So I lost my reverence, and my reverence was a big part of me - and having lost my reverence for men, my religion rapidly vanished.(13)

Another important source of authority is thus undermined. Again, in the face of such fragmentation, one's own self increasingly becomes the central focus of reference and authority.

Lawrence's second main letter to Reid, written on 3 December 1907, indicates that the Congregational minister was aware that it was

something other than 'the violent, blatant' attacks on Christianity that were worrying the younger man. At any rate, his measure of understanding seemed to encourage Lawrence to open his heart to Reid, and the tone here is less polite and guarded, more informal, intimate, and revealing:

Dear Mr. Reid,

I send you my heartfelt thanks for the books - the 'Antidotes' as Ada, punning, calls them. During the Christmas holiday I will read them scrupulously.

As you say, violent, blatant writers against Christianity do not affect me - I could not read God and My Neighbour with patience. It is this way. By nature I am emotional, perhaps mystical; also I am naturally introspective, a somewhat keen and critical student of myself. I have been brought up to believe in the absolute necessity for a sudden spiritual conversion; I believed for many years that the Holy Ghost descended and took conscious possession of the 'elect' - the converted one; I thought all conversions were, to a greater or less degree, like that of Paul's. Naturally I yearned for the same, something the same. That desire was most keen a year ago, and during the year before that, when I had to fight bitterly for my authority in school. Through all that time I was constantly making the appeals we are urged to make, constantly bewildering myself as to what I should surrender - 'Give yourself' you say. I was constantly endeavouring to give myself, but Sir, to this day I do not understand what this 'giving' consists in, embodies, and includes. I have been moved by Mr. Lane, by Ritchie's dramatic fascination, by your earnest and less intoxicating appeal. Yet in the moments of deepest emotion myself has watched myself and seen that all the tumult has risen like a little storm, to die away again without great result. And I have watched for the coming of something from without; - it has never come. You will not say 'Because you watched'; you will not talk about 'Lord's good time' - then was the need, now it is much less, and grows smaller. Now I do not believe in conversion, such conversion. I believe that a man is converted when first he hears the low, vast murmur of life, of human life, troubling his hitherto unconscious self. I believe a man is born first unto himself - for the happy developing of himself, while the world is a nursery, and the pretty things are to be snatched for, and pleasant things tasted; some people seem to exist thus right to the end. But most are born again on entering manhood; then they are born to humanity, to a consciousness of all the laughing, and the never-ceasing murmur of pain and sorrow that comes from the terrible multitudes of brothers. Then, it appears to me, a man gradually formulates his religion, be it what it may. A man has no religion who has not slowly and painfully gathered one together, adding to it, shaping it; and one's religion is never complete and final, it seems, but must always be undergoing

modification. So I contend that true Socialism is religion; that honest, fervent politics are religion; that whatever a man will labour for earnestly and in some measure unselfishly is religion.

I have now only to state my position with regard to Christianity. At the present moment I do not, cannot believe in the divinity of Jesus. There are only the old doubts in the way, the old questions. I went through the lowest part of Sneinton to Emily's to dinner when she lived in Nottingham - it had a profound influence on me. 'It cannot be' - I said to myself 'that a pitiful, omnipotent Christ died nineteen hundred years ago to save these people from this and yet they are here.' Women, with child - so many are in that condition in the slums - bruised, drunk, with breasts half bare. It is not compatible with the idea of an Omnipotent, pitying Divine. And how, too, shall I reconcile it to a belief in a personal God. I cannot be a materialist - but Oh, how is it possible that a God who speaks to all hearts can let Belgravia go laughing to a vicious luxury, and Whitechapel cursing to a filthy debauchery - such suffering, such dreadful suffering - and shall the short years of Christ's mission atone for it all? I do not want them to be punished after death - what good then, when it is all irremediably done? 'God can touch their hearts,' you say, giving me examples, as Mr. Henderson did, 'of the terrible, wild and blasphemous man who was saved at last.' Then why not touch these people at once, and save this enormity, this horror? 'His ways are inscrutable' - you say - what comfort can I draw from an unknowable. 'Faith' - you say. 'And faith is,' you might continue, 'belief in a hypothesis that cannot be proved.' - But sir, there must at least be harmony of facts before a hypothesis can be framed. Cosmic harmony there is - a Cosmic God I can therefore believe in. But where is the human harmony, where the balance, the order, the 'indestructibility of matter' in humanity? And where is the personal, human God? Men - some - seem to be born and ruthlessly destroyed; the bacteria are created and nurtured on Man, to his horrible suffering. Oh, for a God-idea I must have harmony - unity of design. Such design there may be for the race - but for the individual, the often wretched individual?

I care not for Blatchford or anybody. I do not wage any war against Christianity - I do not hate it - but these questions will not be answered, and for the present my religion is lessening, in some pitiful moiety, the great human discrepancies.

I have tried to write to you honestly - this is the first time I have ever revealed myself. Of course I know there is much of the wilfulness of youth in it all - some little arrogance perhaps that you will pardon me. I thought it fair that you should have some explanation of myself from me - but it is a subject I can never discuss. I wish to thank you for your late sermon - and sermons. There seems some hope in a religion which will not answer one with fiats and decrees.

Again, I ask your pardon for all this incoherent display  
and am Yours very Sincerely D.H. Lawrence.(14)

This is indeed a fascinating document. The spiritual climate created by Reid, the other preachers mentioned, the Eastwood Congregational Chapel, and Lawrence's home, will be explored in the second chapter of this study. Certainly, this letter makes it clear that Lawrence's later attempts to minimize his involvement with, and emotional commitment to, the Chapel religion of his childhood must be qualified by what we read here. That Lawrence can no longer identify himself with the Christian world-view is clear enough. That he had also desperately wanted to be a Christian and had longed for conversion is yet more obvious. The subtext of this letter suggests that Lawrence's rejection was not, in the first instance, the result of his disagreement with Christian doctrine and belief, or morality and practice; his disaffection was rooted, rather, in a sense of betrayal, of being let down: 'And I have watched for the coming of something from without; - and it has never come .... then was the need, now it is much less.'

This need is most keenly felt, Lawrence tells us, when he is battling to secure his authority as a teacher. Perhaps it is no coincidence that it is when he is struggling to establish himself as a moral agent of control in the predominantly rationalist environment of school teaching, that Lawrence so craves the dramatic infusion of potent religious mystery which his spiritual inheritance had evidently promised him. His sense of being let down is equally understandable. It is not just to his minister that Lawrence confesses his deep disappointment. In the letter to Blanche Jennings he writes: 'I was sore, frightfully raw and sore because I couldn't get the religious conversion, the Holy Ghost business, that I longed for.'<sup>15</sup>

This is certainly a crucial turning point in Lawrence's relationship with Christianity. It also reveals, rather starkly, the

clash of two modes of Christianity which Lawrence never managed to reconcile: Christianity as morality, which in Reid's understanding meant Christianity as rational and ordered, a maintainer of social and cultural cohesion, and Christianity as mystery - intuitive, eruptive, inarticulate and passionate. Lawrence feels betrayed by Christianity because, in his experience, it arouses an expectation - even a hunger - for both modes and it then seems inevitably destined to frustrate this desire by setting the two in hopelessly diametrical opposition. This expectation and simultaneous frustration, as a careful reading of the subtexts of the early novels shows, deeply shapes the novelist's sensibility. His longing for conversion - dramatic, wonderful and mysterious - even as he is establishing himself as a sustainer of moral, rational and social order, possibly represents Lawrence's last great attempt to combine the two within his Christian experience. This does not work. The letter suggests that it is because Christianity did not, in the last analysis, give him the wonder, the reverence, the mysterious 'Holy Ghost business' that he longed for that Lawrence lost his inherited belief. He then began to formulate a more satisfying alternative and grew critical of what he perceived to be other deficiencies in Christianity. This second main letter to Reid may be one of Lawrence's earliest recorded attempts to formulate his own notions of valid religion. It reveals his own interpretation of the concept of rebirth, his commitment to a religion growing from one's experience - never static or fixed, his attempts to find a satisfactory 'God-idea' and his preoccupation with the problem of pain. This crucial document gives us access, then, to the vital transition between what we are identifying as the first and second stages in Lawrence's movement beyond his inherited religion.

In the second phase, Lawrence no longer identifies himself with the church, and the initial sense of outrage at his disappointment and betrayal gives way to a less anguished but still deeply felt sense of loss. This movement beyond the merely personal follows a characteristic Laurentian pattern: a spontaneous, emotional and often angry reaction which gradually deepens into a more mature, more comprehensive and constructive response.

In a letter to Reid expressing his sorrow that the minister is about to leave Eastwood, Lawrence openly refers to 'differing opinions'. He can no longer believe what he has been brought up to believe, although he expresses warmth and gratitude towards Reid personally. There is a note of nostalgia in the letters around this time:

I am very sorry to hear from Ada that you are going away from Eastwood. That will be a loss to her and to Emily, a loss to many in the place....

If I have ever been unmannerly or inimical towards you, I beg you to forgive me. I have a sense that your generosity has exceeded mine by a great way. In the fret of differing opinions we mark and disfigure a real heart-esteem - which I have done. For me, flesh and blood are the Scriptures; and turning back two or three years, and reading again, I am very sorry for having done an injustice to a fine page. I often turn, in the same way, back to the Bible, and am ashamed of my old insolence. - If only we were allowed to look at Scripture in the light of our own experience, instead of having to see it displayed in a kind of theatre, false-real, and never developing, we should save such a lot of mistakes. It's the narrowness of folk's barb-wire restrictions we get our raw wounds from - and then blame the world.(16)

J.D. Chambers tells us that in the summer of 1908, just before Lawrence left Eastwood, he reacted violently against the Congregational Chapel and what it stood for. This helps to explain the apologetic note in the letter and while Chambers' account of this will be given fuller consideration in Chapter Two, it is interesting to observe here that, despite his 'break' with Chapel religion, Lawrence does not seem

essentially antagonistic towards Christianity. Around this time, his sister Ada was doubting her faith and he describes her situation very sympathetically to his fiancée, Louie Burrows: 'Ada seems very miserable. She's dipped into disbelief.... Poor Ada - I'm very sorry. I would not, for worlds, have her go through this, bloody bludgeonings of unbelief, and the struggle for a new faith.'<sup>17</sup> And to Ada herself he writes:

I am sorry more than I can tell to find you going through all the torment of religious unbelief: it is so hard to bear, especially now....

It requires a lot of pain and courage to come to discover one's own creed, and quite as much to continue in lonely faith....I would still go to Chapel, if it did me any good. I shall go myself, when I am married.(18)

And to Louie, still settled in her Christian faith:

I had just as lief you were a Christian: I have my own religion, which is to me the truth: you have what suits you: I will go to Church with you - frequently.(19)

Will you, I wonder, get through life without ever seeing through it. I will never, if I can help it, try to disturb any of your faiths. You will secure yourself by praying for my conversion, eh? - There the balance.(20)

Lawrence is far from insisting that his loved ones, people over whom he must have had significant influence, follow him beyond the confines of their traditional orthodoxy. He displays a considerable degree of empathy. His attitude is more than tolerant: there is a note of wistfulness in the letters of this time. He makes it clear, however, that despite his sympathy and feeling for the pain of severance, he can no longer adhere: 'There is nothing to do but ... to lose, to smash up the old Idea which is nothing but an Idol, and to find in the emptiness a new presence.'<sup>21</sup> 'It is a fine thing to

establish one's own religion in one's heart, not to be dependent on tradition and second-hand ideals.'<sup>22</sup>

The frequently quoted words to Ada afford us a glimpse of how Lawrence's 'own religion' and 'God-idea' is developing:

It seems to me like this: Jehovah is the Jew's idea of God - not ours. Christ was infinitely good, but mortal as we. There still remains a God, but not a personal God: a vast, shimmering impulse which wavers onwards towards some end, I don't know what - taking no regard of the little individual, but taking regard for humanity.(23)

However, his attitude towards Christianity is still more nostalgic than iconoclastic.

It is with the beginning of the war that Lawrence's attitude towards Christianity seems to change. He viewed the war as a direct consequence of the prevailing social order in which a devitalised Christianity supplied the prevailing ideology: the Christian democratic principle. He reacts strongly against what he perceives 'salvation' has come to stand for. It is dismissed as a catch-word along with 'love' and 'duty'. Lawrence held the view that the war was a direct fruit of the degeneration of Christianity into a series of petty, private religions which he castigates as 'more dirty than a private property'.<sup>24</sup> He dismisses what he perceives as the private, individual nature of modern Christian notions of salvation as too small, too mean and too stultifying to suffice: 'I am tired of class, and humanity, and personal salvation.'<sup>25</sup> 'And a man shall not come to save his own soul - let his soul go to hell.'<sup>26</sup> 'I want ... a shifting of ... values from the old morality and personal salvation through a Mediator.'<sup>27</sup>

But the tendency to move beyond this passionate sense of outrage towards positive reformulation continues. Lawrence writes of the danger of the old terms sounding like cant,<sup>28</sup> of the need for a new

truth, of moving 'to the larger morality and salvation.'<sup>29</sup> 'I have been wrong, much too Christian, in my philosophy,' he writes to Bertrand Russell, 'these early Greeks have clarified my soul....I am rid of all my christian religiosity.'<sup>30</sup> In 1915 and 1916 Lawrence often writes of the need to cut oneself off from the past: 'There is a greater truth than the truth of the present. There is a God beyond these gods of today.'<sup>31</sup>

To Catherine Carswell, his attitude to Christianity seems more ambivalent:

I want people to be more Christian rather than less: only for different reasons. Christianity is based on re-action, on negation really....

I have been reading S. Bernard's Letters, and I realise that the greatest thing the world has seen, is Christianity, and one must be endlessly thankful for it, and weep that the world has learned the lesson so badly.

But I count Christianity as one of the great historical factors, the has-been.... I am not a Christian. Christianity is insufficient in me.(32)

Lawrence is not entirely casting off Christianity but he sees it as no longer living, an empty form, static and petrified:

We must have the courage to cast off old symbols, the old traditions: at least, put them aside, like a plant in growing surpasses its crowning leaves with higher leaves and buds. There is something beyond the past.... The great Christian tenet must be surpassed, there must be something new.(33)

And yet the shape of this 'something new' must inevitably be influenced by the old symbols and traditions, the essence of which Lawrence seems to be trying to distil and combine with what he finds of value in other traditions. His revaluations as he explores wider possibilities continue to be characterized by the vocabulary of Christian salvation. Lawrence's urge for salvation remains constant;

indeed his work may be seen as a conscious attempt to express and address man's ongoing need for, and attempts to achieve, some kind of salvation: 'What we want is the fulfilment of our desires, down to the deepest and most spiritual desire.'<sup>34</sup>

The basic assumption of the present study is that Lawrence's Christian upbringing had a profound - if ambivalent - influence on Lawrence, the novelist. The purpose of the thesis is twofold. My initial aim is to explore, at greater length and more precisely than has yet been done, the nature and character of D.H. Lawrence's Nonconformist inheritance. This is the subject of Chapter Two, in which I shall comment on the continuing academic debate regarding Lawrence's religious inheritance and, in the light of new evidence, offer a more accurate and detailed description than has yet been possible. In the course of this, I shall trace the trends and influences which led to the specific expression of Congregationalism in the chapel in Eastwood during Lawrence's youth. Since the core of the new evidence lies in the reports of Robert Reid's sermons, the heart of the chapter will be devoted to an analysis of these and an attempt to elucidate the Christian world-view which Lawrence heard expounded from the Eastwood pulpit throughout his teenage years. The Chapel is, of course, not his only mediator of Christianity. Lawrence's mother, Mrs. Ann Chambers, Jessie, other denominations, and Willie Hopkin are all important 'mediators of meaning' whose influence I shall also explore in my second chapter.

Having evoked, as fully as possible, the substance of Eastwood Congregationalism, the aim of the subsequent chapters is to explore the nature of this influence on Lawrence's early novels. A reading of the novels from the perspective of Lawrence's interaction with his

Congregational inheritance places them in a fresh context, and a new vantage point suggests new insights. My argument is that the influence of Eastwood Congregationalism, although seldom overt, is of fundamental importance in arriving at a more complete - and sometimes even original - reading of his first four novels.

## NOTES: CHAPTER ONE

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9. Graham Hough, The Dark Sun (1956), p. 246.
10. See Frank Bottomley, Attitudes to the Body in Western Christendom (1979).
11. 'Hymns in a Man's Life', in Phoenix II, p. 599.
12. Letter to Robert Reid, 15 October 1907, in The Letters of D.H. Lawrence, Volume I, September 1901 - May 1913, edited by James T. Boulton (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 36-37. (Hereafter cited as Letters, i.)
13. Letter to Blanche Jennings, 4 May 1908, in Letters, i, pp. 47-51 (p. 49).
14. Letter to Robert Reid, 3 December 1907, in Letters, i, pp. 39-41.
15. Letter to Blanche Jennings, 4 May 1908, in Letters, i, pp. 47-51 (p. 49).
16. Letter to Robert Reid, 27 March 1911, in Letters, i, p. 244.
17. Letter to Louie Burrows, 1 April 1911, in Letters, i, pp. 247-249 (p. 248).
18. Letter to Ada Lawrence, 9 April 1911, in Letters, i, pp. 255-257 (pp. 255-256).

19. Letter to Louie Burrows, 27 December 1910, in Letters, i, pp. 214-216 (p. 215).
20. Letter to Louie Burrows, 1 April 1911, in Letters, i, pp. 247-249 (p. 248).
21. Ibid.
22. Letter to Ada Lawrence, 9 April 1911, in Letters, i, pp. 255-257 (p. 256).
23. Ibid, pp. 255-256.
24. Letter to Gordon Campbell, [3? March 1915], in Letters, ii, pp. 300-303 (p. 301).
25. Letter to E.M. Forster, 28 January 1915, in Letters, ii, p. 266.
26. Letter to Ottoline Morrell, 1 February 1915, in Letters, ii, pp. 271-273 (pp. 272-273).
27. Letter to Gordon Campbell, [3? March 1915], in Letters, ii, pp. 300-303 (p. 301).
28. Letter to Gordon Campbell, [20 December 1914], in Letters, ii, pp. 246-250 (p. 249).
29. Letter to Gordon Campbell, [3? March 1915], in Letters, ii, pp. 300-303 (p. 301).
30. Letter to Bertrand Russell, [14? July 1915], in Letters, ii, pp. 364-365.
31. Letter to Ottoline Morrell, 7 February 1916, in Letters, ii, pp. 528-529 (p. 528).
32. Letter to Catherine Carswell, 16 July 1916, in Letters, ii, pp. 633-636 (p. 633).
33. Ibid, p. 634.
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## CHAPTER TWO

## D.H. LAWRENCE'S RELIGIOUS INHERITANCE

1. The Debate i

The tremendous sense of upheaval and transition which characterizes the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries makes any attempt to understand D.H. Lawrence's particular religious inheritance a complex undertaking. It is not always safe to assume too much from general trends: transition is rarely uniform, either chronologically or in its direction. Evidence of what actually went on in the Eastwood Congregational Church has been scanty and largely derived from the very particular perspective of Lawrence's own writings. Widely different 'readings' of Lawrence's Congregational inheritance have thus been possible - even inevitable.

The two classic readings, that of T.S. Eliot and that of F.R. Leavis, are diametrically opposed. Eliot sees the inheritance as essentially all mystery, as unfocused emotionalism, purely subjective, lacking discipline, order, form - in a word, tradition. Leavis indignantly repudiates Eliot's (American) ignorance, emphasizing the strong intellectual and social vibrancy of a moral tradition. Leaving aside the personal bias of each man as to what makes for healthy religion - both seem rather unsympathetic towards mystery, reverence and wonder, while privileging rationality - it is interesting to see how each has exclusively highlighted but one aspect of the inheritance. This probably explains why they still offer legitimate starting points of continuing relevance in any discussion of Lawrence's religion long after it is obvious that each is giving a one-sided interpretation based on flimsy evidence.

We have already considered Lawrence's own frustrated desire to reconcile the moral and the mysterious dimensions of Christianity. The Eliot/Leavis battle echoes this fundamental conflict within Lawrence's religious inheritance. As well as being a battle between an idea of Church and an idea of belief, this tension is between, on the one hand, Christianity as a rational, intellectual, social, disciplined, ordered religion, and Christianity as intuitive, inarticulate, mystical, undifferentiated and ultimately mysterious. It is this tension that constitutes the touchstone of the 'debate'. It belongs, of course, to a much larger debate, perhaps best explored in the works of the great German philosopher of religion, Rudolf Otto.

In his most famous book The Idea of the Holy, Otto argues that the interpretation of Christianity only as a rational, conceptual religion is wrong, one-sided and seriously misleading:

This is the view that the essence of deity can be given completely and exhaustively in such 'rational' attributions ... the 'rational' occupies the foreground, and often nothing else seems to be present at all.(1)

His whole book is the classic attempt to explore the 'non-rational' or 'super-rational' dimension of religion. For this he coins the term 'numinous' which his translator describes as 'standing for that aspect of deity which transcends or eludes comprehension in rational or ethical terms'.<sup>2</sup>

In Lawrence scholarship, the debate has certainly progressed and been considerably refined since Eliot and Leavis. Donald Davie is, in my opinion, one of the more perceptive recent participants, although I do not agree with all his assumptions, arguments or conclusions. 'In default of evidence to the contrary', he argues that the general impoverishment, intellectually and symbolically, of Congregationalism

in the 1890s probably meant that Lawrence was never actually presented with the Christian revelation, and what he was rejecting in the chapel religion of his youth was something other than full-blooded, orthodox Congregational Christianity.<sup>3</sup> Davie comes to the bold - if cautiously expressed - conclusion that Eliot's judgement of Lawrence's Eastwood Congregational inheritance as 'vague, hymn-singing pietism', 'isn't anything that the historical records permit us to controvert'.<sup>4</sup>

To a closer consideration of these, and other arguments in the debate, we shall return towards the end of this chapter. Meantime, Davie's central question and challenge must not be evaded. Was the Congregationalism imbibed by Lawrence at Eastwood drastically impoverished? An answer to this demands some appreciation of the tradition itself.

## 2. The Tradition

Congregationalism and the tradition of Dissent have their roots in the sixteenth-century Separatist and Puritan movements. Fully in the spirit of the Reformation, with the Bible recently rediscovered by the layman, these movements were shaped by the desire to follow, as fully and faithfully as possible, the biblical pattern for God's covenant people. Puritan theology, strongly Calvinist in temperament, stressed both the transcendence and sovereignty of God, and his intimate involvement in the affairs of his people. At the inception of the tradition, then, the deep reverence and awe before a God who is ultimately mysterious and Other was combined with a wide interest in social and ethical action. Christianity involved both feeling and rationality, mystery and morality.

The divergence of these two modes of religion begins with the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century; there was a difference

in character and tone between the Old Dissenters and the New Evangelicals. A 'dignified shyness' was giving way to a 'militant assertiveness'.<sup>5</sup> Preaching, praying - everything was becoming a means to the great end of the salvation of individual souls. Theology was being appropriated in a more empirical, pragmatic way to promote evangelistic success and the minister was seen primarily as an agent of evangelism rather than as pastor to his congregation. The breadth of Puritan theology - a result of their preaching practice of systematically and comprehensively expounding the Scriptures - was lost with the New Evangelical tendency to preach from texts, eclectically and haphazardly chosen. The austerity of the Old Dissenters had a dignity and form which tended to be disregarded in the more utilitarian spirit of the New Evangelicalism. According to Donald Davie, 'the first impetus towards the philistinism of nineteenth-century Dissent came not from Dissent but from inside the Anglican Establishment' - from the Evangelicals.<sup>6</sup> In the overwhelming zeal for spiritual revival, the political dimension of the Old Dissent was largely forgotten.

By the early decades of the nineteenth century, the staunch Calvinism of the Old Dissent had been considerably moderated. Man's decision and experience were emphasized rather than God's absolute sovereignty and divine initiative. A surge of philanthropic endeavour reflected - or perhaps helped shape - a sense of the improvability of the human condition. Subsequently - and somewhat ironically, stemming from a movement whose central tenet was salvation by faith - this 'reduced the classical doctrine of justification into a persuasive to ethical endeavour, a release from the Law which itself became a legalistic category, a gigantic moral "work"'.<sup>7</sup>

The more subjective, experiential emphasis gradually came to focus more on the human than on the transcendent; God increasingly came to be seen as Loving Father rather than Almighty Sovereign and there was a general drift towards immanentism, humanism and ultimately, in some quarters, secularism. But to cite these trends too quickly as proof of the impoverishment of Nonconformity may be to underestimate the variety of their shades of meaning. In his Study of Religious Thought in England from 1850, Clement C.J. Webb points out that immanentism assumed more than one guise and did not necessarily result in pantheism. It gave rise to a naturalism which claimed 'to dispense with the belief in a transcendent Deity without robbing human life of those nobler features'<sup>8</sup> which had seemed to require such a Deity. Idealism is another manifestation of the immanentist impulse and differs from naturalism in being a conscious immanentism. It retains a belief in God but translates the idea of a transcendent God into the Immanent Principle, not without, but within the system and necessary for its ultimate intelligibility.

D'A. Jones describes the doctrine of Divine Immanence as one in which:

God's presence everywhere, in nature and in man, destroys the artificial distinction between the 'sacred' and the 'secular' worlds, sanctifies the material life, and supports the socialist call for a Kingdom of God on earth.<sup>(9)</sup>

Certainly the scientific advancements of the age, especially the discovery of evolution at work within nature, made the more mechanistic concepts of 'God as divine watchmaker' less plausible. However, d'A. Jones claims that 'by its very nature, immanentism (as opposed to sacramentalism) imparts a diffuseness and a vagueness to Nonconformist thinking in this period'.<sup>10</sup>

### 3. R.J. Campbell

The most famous - or perhaps notorious - exponent of this immanentist tendency in theology was the Congregationalist minister, R.J. Campbell, whose The New Theology, published in 1907, caused such a stir. Webb describes Campbell's immanentism as 'extreme and uncritical'.<sup>11</sup> Lawrence read this book and mentions it dismissively in a letter to his minister on 15 October of that year. Despite this, Rees cites the book as 'of key importance in opening the road that led from Lawrence's starting point in early twentieth century Congregationalism'<sup>12</sup> to the ideas expressed in The Plumed Serpent. He implies that the Congregationalism of Lawrence's youth was continuous with the doctrine of Divine Immanence as outlined in Campbell's New Theology and suggests that it was this erosion of key Christian doctrines which made it so easy for Lawrence to 'get over' the Christian dogma by the time he was sixteen. We have already shown, however, that Lawrence's departure from Christianity was neither so early nor so easy. And to cite Campbell's book as 'the highwater mark of immanentism in the Congregational Church'<sup>13</sup> is misleading. That Campbell's New Theology caused such debate indicates that it represented an extreme position rather than the mainstream, and in one of Robert Reid's sermons entitled 'The New Theology and the Atonement', he clearly distances himself from the demythologizing tendency of Campbell's following. Indeed, Campbell himself withdrew the book twelve years after it was published.

The underlying tenet of the book is 'that the fundamentals of the Christian faith need to be re-articulated in terms of the immanence of God'.<sup>14</sup> Campbell saw himself as a retranslator of the faith, helped by 'the light of modern thought', to make Christianity relevant to his contemporaries. He embraces the idea of some sort of irreducible

'essence' of religion, universally felt but manifested in various forms, and describes it as 'the soul reaching forth to the great mysterious whole of things'.<sup>15</sup> Organized religion in general and churches in particular are viewed with some impatience as being stumbling blocks rather than stepping stones to living, vital faith, and in particular, Campbell, a recent convert to Christian Socialism, points to the 'masses increasingly alienated from the church'. Of the New Theology he writes:

Its starting point is a re-emphasis of the Christian belief in the Divine immanence in the universe and mankind.... In the immediate past, the doctrine of Divine transcendence ... has been presented in such a way as to amount to a practical dualism, and to lead men to think of God as above and apart from His world instead of expressing Himself through His world.(16)

But Campbell goes much further than this when he begins describing God as the

... mysterious Power which is finding expression in the universe, and which is present in every tiniest atom of the wondrous whole. I find that this Power is the one reality I cannot get away from, for, whatever else it may be, it is myself.(17)

He continues this line of thought in defining God as the 'Ultimate Self' and 'my deeper self' as he tries to describe man merging with Infinity through the rediscovery of the vast, neglected sphere of his subconscious. Man is thus interpreted as sharing in Christ's incarnation; he too is a part of the Godhead. The Fall is defined in terms of a state of ignorance rather than as a result of man's rebellion, and the evolutionary spirit of progress is manifested in the hope of the universal salvation of mankind.

Such conscious reinterpretation of the faith is a very obvious example of the fruits of the increasingly man-centred perspective of the nineteenth century. Its central manifestation lay in the newly

critical methods used to examine the Bible; the predominant assumption, no longer of Holy Writ as revealed by God, inerrant and unquestionable, but of a collection of human documents to be understood in their historical context and interpreted as man's experience of Divinity. Immanentist theology, with its vision of eternal verities within the world, went hand in glove with a social gospel (Campbell believed his New Theology was the religious expression of the ideals of the Labour Movement) and was very conscious of the brotherhood of man working towards the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. Its vision was deeply humanitarian. Campbell went so far as to say there was no such thing as individual salvation.

#### 4. Bishop Gore's 'New Theology and the Old Religion'

As I have already implied, it would be misleading to suggest that all manifestations of the prevailing immanentist spirit were as extreme or as unrigorous as those of Campbell and the New Theologians. A school of Anglican theologians had also made an impact with a collection of essays published in 1889: Lux Mundi: A Series of Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation.<sup>18</sup> As its title suggests, the book reflects the age's interest in God's involvement with, rather than distance from, man. One of the main fears of critics of the book was that it gave to the doctrine of the incarnation a centrality which they believed should rightfully be reserved for the doctrine of the atonement. Again, this shift reflects the evolutionary, optimistic spirit of the age and, in its most extreme essay, J.R. Illingsworth's 'The Incarnation and Development', sees the incarnation as the crown and consummation of God's involvement with and in men, rather than as providing a means of redemption to make possible a restoration of man's relationship with God, severed in the Fall.

Bishop Charles Gore, editor of and contributor to Lux Mundi, while sharing his co-writers' emphasis on the incarnation, is highly critical of the immanentism of thinkers like Campbell. In 1907 he published a collection of lectures and sermons under the title of The New Theology and the Old Religion and concludes that the New Theology 'represents abandonment, and not progress'.<sup>19</sup>

He and his colleagues were also anxious to reinterpret the Christian faith for the contemporary age, but not without the constraints of endeavouring to remain true to its central tenets. Gore criticizes Campbell for his 'very inadequate appreciation of its principles and its history'.<sup>20</sup> In his essay on 'The Immanence of God', Gore agrees that 'the creed of God's immanence in all things is true, and ... the Christian religion identified itself with it and propagated it'.<sup>21</sup> Beginning with the faith's origins in Judaism and through the Church Fathers, he shows how the idea of God's immanence was constantly recognized, but he insists that the concept of God's transcendence is equally - if not more - fundamental to Christian orthodoxy: 'God as alone self-existent and independent and supreme, the creator and lord and judge of all'.<sup>22</sup> He insists on the necessity of maintaining this perception 'of the absolute difference between the creator and the creature'.<sup>23</sup> Belief is based, then, not on 'a human speculation' but on 'a real intelligible self-disclosure of God',<sup>24</sup> and Gore insists that this disclosure must ultimately come from somewhere beyond nature.

Gore argues for the traditional view of sin and the Fall of man. He shows how the New Theology's interpretation of the incarnation, while seeming to resemble the biblical one, is fundamentally different, stemming from its basic identification of God and man. Gore reaffirms that doctrine of the atonement and argues for the inspiration - if not inerrancy - of Scripture.

Here is an example of a theologian who, it could be argued, is very much a man of his time and aware of his responsibility of interpreting the faith for his age, and yet could not seriously be accused of abandoning the central tenets of the Christian religion. To imply, then, that identifying with the spirit of the age inevitably involved a wholesale debunking of the key doctrines of Christianity is not entirely accurate. It could be maintained that some of the modern emphases restored certain perspectives that had been neglected for too long. In particular, they served as a corrective to a dualism which had plagued Christianity since earliest times.

#### 5. Institutionalism

Interestingly, these nineteenth century trends of immanentism and humanism had yet other results somewhat different from either the renegation of Campbell or the new emphasis of the Lux Mundi school. Sellars describes the institutionalizing process prevalent in the Nonconformist churches towards the middle of the century.<sup>25</sup> As attempts were made to consolidate and build on the achievements of the Evangelical Revival, the chapel milieu increasingly developed into a kind of counter-culture, and a whole variety of activities and institutions were provided as an alternative to the more worldly pursuits beyond it. The double benefit was the protection of the faithful and the recruitment of new members, particularly among the young. At the centre of this tendency was the temperance movement, and although in theory it remained a voluntary matter of the individual's conscience, in practice tee-totalism often became an assumed consequence of spiritual conversion.

With temperance went the whole gamut of self-help and self-improvement endeavours, from Sunday Schools through temperance cafés to Pleasant Sunday Afternoons. P.T. Forsyth saw this departmentalism as the harbinger of secularism and Sellars comments on the subtle metamorphosis it engendered as religion came to be seen as a form of entertainment,<sup>26</sup> in some cases almost as a hobby. The more human perspective which was so much a part of the age, certainly made religion an all-pervading factor; to a large extent, it encompassed the individual's cultural and social life. This creation of a 'world within a world' gave rise to a pietism detached and protected from the secular world. In the increasing attention to organizations and activities, however, some degree of the Puritans' 'inheritance of intensity', of their deep sense of the supra-human, mysterious otherness of religion, was inevitably lost.

#### 6. Congregationalism

It is this 'inheritance of intensity' which lies at the heart of Bernard Lord Manning's understanding - so vigorously expounded in his classic collection Essays in Orthodox Dissent - of what it meant to be a Congregationalist. Conscious of Congregationalism's roots in the Reformation and Puritanism, Manning emphasizes the uncompromising nature of the faith, its austere refusal to 'accommodate the comforts of natural man':

It is our peculiar inheritance to emphasise that religion is something more than, and quite different from, all these things [i.e. 'the only oasis in work, the only glimpse into peace and mystery, the only convenient social fellowship']. We stand for unnatural, for supernatural religion. Our inheritance is a religion of the most uncompromising, least generalised parts of the New Testament, of intensity and supernaturalism, or it is nothing at all.(27)

He writes of the emphasis both on 'the objectiveness of our religion and the direct immediate contact that it gives between the soul and God'.<sup>28</sup>

This aspect of Lawrence's inheritance is developed in a thesis by Robin Beaty entitled 'The Dissenter's Search for the Unknown Desire'.<sup>29</sup> He uses the dynamics and implications of this desire for immediate, primary experience of the transcendent, as a key for interpreting Lawrence's work.

On more than one occasion, Manning maintains that Congregationalism has no distinctive theology: 'Our great theologians have always held, and hold to-day, perhaps with occasional exotic trimmings, to the main central path of Catholic and Evangelical thought',<sup>30</sup> and despite the considerable freedom permitted - there was, for example, no imposition of doctrinal tests - Manning points to the continuing orthodoxy of the denomination:

It is our glory that with all our freedom (nay, because of our freedom) we have not broken away from the full, sound orthodox teaching and custom of the catholic Church. We have kept the full faith in freedom.(31)

Manning describes the continuance of the Reformation spirit in its desire to abandon what it saw as peripheral and distracting to what was deemed central in the faith. Thus, in the free churches, the celebration of the Lord's Supper was simplified, abandoning 'all rites that bore no direct and obvious reference to the Supper' and emphasizing 'the few actions which make the celebration'.<sup>32</sup> In the same vein 'the Word and the preaching of it were represented once again as central, august, different from all other human speech'. This resulted in 'austere solemnity, public worship once again [setting]

forth Christ in Word and Sacrament'. Manning's comments clearly reveal the Congregationalist suspicion of artifice:

The very phrase 'the art of public worship' (that art which scornfully men say we lack), with all the conceptions that lie behind it, is to men bred in the heritage of our worship something approaching blasphemy. The grace of which our services and Sacraments are the means is so irresistible that in their simplest forms Christian rites are utterly and eternally adequate. To us, if we have eyes to see and ears to hear and hearts to understand, it is superfluous to add to their august simplicity.(33)

The implication is that form is the merest servant of Divinity: the more self-effacing and transparent the better. The focus is transcendent and spiritual rather than immanent and sensuous, and indeed Manning sums up the 'treasure' of the Congregationalist inheritance as 'other-worldliness'.<sup>34</sup> He sees as a strength the denomination's refusal to be weighed down by 'the accumulated burden of its own traditions',<sup>35</sup> and this spirit of liberty lies at the heart of what Manning describes as Congregationalism's most distinctive feature - its churchmanship. In stressing the very high doctrine of the church, however, he emphasizes that this liberty is in the church and not from it; indeed as the church is seen as the gospel incarnate, salvation is conceived in terms of the saved society: 'Congregationalism cannot conceive of an isolated, individual piety.'<sup>36</sup> Manning even goes so far as to assert that without the church, 'there is no salvation for human society'.<sup>37</sup> The church is viewed as the vehicle of grace. Alongside this strongly communal self-definition is also a highly developed individual conscience, the result of an equality of membership whereby each person's relationship with God is perceived as direct: 'each church member is alike in having a hold on the one thing that matters supremely on earth'.<sup>38</sup>

This domestic character of Congregationalism appealed strongly to the middle classes, and a number of scholars refer to the distinctly middle-class ethos or aspiration of the denomination. Members were often reasonably prosperous and keen to have well-educated clergy. The Congregational Chapel tended to be a place where 'a serious belief went along with a good deal of mental aliveness'.<sup>39</sup> Whigham Price emphasizes the importance of the Congregational Chapel as a cultural and educative force imbuing clarity of thought and a certain vigour of the critical faculties.<sup>40</sup> Along with this he also cites an uncompromising prophetic independence of conviction and action, a puritan attitude to work and sex, a strong community identity, and a sense of wonder as part of the Congregationalist legacy.<sup>41</sup>

These, then, are the broad contours of the religious tradition into which D.H. Lawrence was born. It is clear that it is a tradition which reflects the human need for the numinous, mysterious dimension of religion as well as for the rational and ethical. That it was not always so successful in keeping both in fruitful synthesis is also apparent. To consider Davie's charge of the intellectual and symbolic impoverishment of Congregationalism in the experience of Lawrence demands a careful look at what was going on in the Eastwood Chapel during Lawrence's youth. What was the precise nature and character of the Christianity that we believe helped to shape the writer's sensibility so deeply?

## 7. Eastwood Congregationalism

The Eastwood Congregational Chapel was established in Eastwood in 1868, a 'middle-class Victorian enterprise, more or less evangelical'.<sup>42</sup> Mrs Lawrence joined the church after she and her family moved to Eastwood in late 1888,<sup>43</sup> and there were three ministers

there during her membership: the Revd Charles Wesley Butler (at Eastwood from 1874 to 1890), the Revd John Loosemore (from 1890 to 1896), and the Revd Robert Reid (from 1898 to 1911).

Loosemore, who took up his charge at Eastwood when Lawrence was five, was a Welshman. He trained at Airedale College where he came under the influence of Dr. Archibald Duff, the Old Testament scholar. According to Tudur Jones, Duff 'combined a wide learning and warm evangelicalism with a severely critical approach to the Bible,'<sup>44</sup> and we know from Jessie Chambers that Loosemore, 'the charming young Welshman', engaged in 'long and animated discussions about the authenticity of the Bible'<sup>45</sup> with her father, which vexed her mother's orthodoxy. As Tudur Jones reminds us, however

... the yielding of inerrancy was not synonymous with accepting Higher Criticism ....

Before Higher Criticism could become acceptable it had to be divorced from the rationalism with which it had been wedded in the past. Only by an alliance between it and evangelical theology could it be made welcome amongst Congregationalists.(46)

Loosemore's closest friend was the much more famous Congregationalist, J.H. Jowett, renowned in his own time as the denomination's most popular preacher and expounder of 'an enlightened Evangelical doctrine' who 'loved to extol Divine grace'.<sup>47</sup>

Robert Reid is undoubtedly the Congregationalist minister who had the highest profile in the young Lawrence's life. He became minister at Eastwood in September 1898 when Lawrence was just thirteen, and remained there until 1911, by which time Lawrence had left Eastwood, his mother had died, and his central tie with the place had essentially been severed.

The period in which I have taken a special interest is that between 1905 and 1908, the time from which we have the twelve substantial reports of Reid's sermons. These years are of particular interest to the student of Lawrence since we know from his letters that it was during this time that Lawrence was writing to his minister with his questions and expressions of doubt. Indeed, it is possible that one series of these sermons was by way of response to the young man's queries. Because Lawrence was still a chapel-goer, and since in his letter to Reid of 3 December 1907 he thanks the minister for his 'late sermon and sermons' the Tuesday after one of them was preached, we can be fairly certain that he heard some of these in particular. These sermons, then, and indeed any source which gives us a clearer idea of Reid's theology, of the Christian world-view he conveyed week by week to his congregation, are bound to be extremely helpful in understanding more precisely the nature and substance of Lawrence's particular Congregational inheritance.

In addition to the sermons, The Daily Express of Friday 30 September 1898 contains a very full account of Reid's ordination at Eastwood. The majority of the article, which occupies the best part of three full columns, is taken up with a very detailed report of Reid's speech on the occasion in which he summarizes his spiritual autobiography and outlines his basis of faith. Similarly, at the end of his ministry in Eastwood, there is a full report in The Eastwood and Kimberley Advertiser of the farewell ceremony. The retrospective speeches of Reid and others further inform our impressions of the ministry which cannot have failed to have had an important influence on D.H. Lawrence in his formative years. An analysis of this new material, then, will constitute a significant part of the present chapter.

In this attempt to extend our knowledge of the specific substance of Eastwood Congregationalism, it has also been possible to discover more about Paton College in Nottingham where Reid trained, and about its founder, J.B. Paton, who exercised a considerable influence on Reid and, more indirectly, on the surrounding centres of Congregationalism. The context of the influential Castlegate Congregational Church in Nottingham is also relevant for our investigation. A.R. Henderson, minister at Castlegate and later Principal of Paton College, preached occasionally at Eastwood and is referred to by Lawrence in one of his letters to Reid. We learn from the letters, too, that D.L. Ritchie, also at one time a principal of the theological college, made an impression on Lawrence with his 'dramatic fascination'. Insights into how these men, as well as Reid, presented the Christian faith, further help us to evoke more accurately and vividly the Christianity which prevailed in the Eastwood Chapel during Lawrence's youth.

#### 8. The Reverend Robert Reid

Robert Reid was born in 1868, in Stonehaven, Aberdeenshire. In the context of his ordination speech at Eastwood in September 1898, Reid describes his own religious inheritance in the course of narrating 'the experiences which led him to believe he was Divinely inspired to the work of the ministry':

He was brought up in the somewhat stern and severe discipline of a Scottish peasant home, and received his earliest religious impressions from his mother, who taught him to pray, to fear God, and to keep his commandments. As a daily exercise he had to read a chapter of the Bible and commit to memory a portion of the shorter form of the Westminster Catechism, and by that means his mind was early made familiar with, although it could not fully comprehend, the great truths of the Gospel.(48)

These roots, deep in an austere Scottish Calvinism, immediately distinguish Reid to some extent from the trends of mainstream contemporary Congregationalism. The characteristics of such an upbringing are more akin to the Old Dissent of the Puritans than the humanizing tendencies of the more recent evangelicalism: religion is uncompromising, God is transcendent and Other, the Bible is read systematically rather than for proof texts, theology is first believed to consist of an objective, intellectual truth rather than something primarily experiential. Years later, in 'Hymns in a Man's Life', Lawrence recognizes and expresses gratitude for this measure of detachment in Reid's 'healthy preference for healthy hymns'... 'I am glad our Scotch minister on the whole avoided sentimental messes such as "Lead, Kindly Light", or even "Abide with Me."'49

Reid describes how, from his boyhood, 'he had a deep desire to become a minister of Christ' but was stopped by various seemingly insurmountable difficulties and instead entered on a business career 'and became so engrossed with its interests and activities as to practically exclude all thought of a ministerial calling'. He then tells of 'a memorable experience through which he had passed [which] turned his heart and mind again with greater intensity to Divine things', and led to a more active involvement in Christian service and especially in preaching:

In that exercise he had the inward consciousness and the outward evidence of the Divine presence and blessing; and he felt that what before had been a personal desire to devote himself to the public service of Christ now became the urgent and imperative call of God. After long and prayerful consideration he decided to offer himself as a candidate for the ministry, and made successful application for admission to the Congregational Institute.(50)

The Calvinist influence of Reid's childhood, especially in the conception of the relationship between God and man, is obvious. His

perception of the distinction between God and man is also clear: God is the initiator and inspiration in preaching; he is the ultimate focus; man is his instrument and channel of grace. The Calvinistic doctrine of assurance is echoed in Reid's interpretation of 'the inward consciousness and outward evidence' as indications of Divine approval: man's dependence on God and the vanity of merely human endeavour are assumed. Reid thus also differentiates between what may be only a human desire on his own part to 'devote himself to the public service of Christ' and 'the urgent and imperative call of God'; there is a deep-rooted caution against human presumption and an earnest seeking of the Lord's will in prayer.

#### 9. Paton College

Reid was trained in Nottingham at the 'Congregational Institute for Theological and Missionary Training', later renamed Paton College after its founder, John Brown Paton. Founded in 1863, the college's aim was 'to train men as Evangelists, Home and Colonial Missionaries and Pastors'<sup>51</sup> and was distinctive in its emphasis on preparing older men, such as Reid, who wanted to enter the ministry from various walks of life. Paton's idea was that the training should be both flexible and practical and the spirit of his vision is clearly expressed in one of his letters:

If the revived earnestness of the Churches raises up likely men for our pulpits, we cannot submit to have these men, with the living flame of love glowing in their hearts, plunged into the vapour-bath or wrapped in the eternal wet-sheet of a monastic college. When men in business, awakened by love for souls, have discovered their power of utterance and have a call from God to preach, what more ludicrous than to put these men to the most unprofitable task of gerund-grinding, which has not the slightest reference to their after work, damps perhaps forever their first love, cramps and withers the sinews of intellectual energy, and chokes or conventionalises their free, native, urgent power of talk.(52)

The evangelical tenor of Paton's Christianity is clearly discernible: the 'revived earnestness', the preference for experiential warmth to academic detachment and the underlying assumption of the primacy of the minister's evangelistic task, the 'love of souls' and 'urgent power of talk'. His principles for training similarly reflect his evangelical presuppositions:

What, then, must the training for such a man be, one who is called of God? He must know his own language and prove his aptitude for the work. The English language is the instrument he must use in commending the Gospel to his fellow-men. The good workman must know how to handle his tools.... He must know his Bible; he cannot know it too intimately. In these days, when the working classes are so widely infected with the cavillings of infidelity, he must know something of the solid mass of evidence which upholds the authority of the Book of books, and attests the divinity of our religion.... He must hold, therefore, with the utmost distinctness the main dogmas of the Christian faith.(53)

The utilitarian attitude towards language, the emphasis on immediacy - with the evangelical and Romantic assumptions of spontaneity, inspiration and emotion - and the concern to defend the authority of the Bible and the orthodoxy of the faith all reflect Paton's evangelical beliefs and shape the training at the college he founded. Reid was a student of the college right at the end of Paton's principalship and Paton's influence on him is evident, not only in certain characteristics of his ministry, but also in a memoir he contributed to the biography of Paton written by his son.

#### 10. Paton's Sermon Classes

Reid's theme is Paton's Sermon Classes, and his six-page reminiscence affords the fascinating insight not only into a detailed description of how preaching was taught at the college, but also into Lawrence's minister's perception of it. Reid writes of 'the eager and joyful anticipation' with which the students awaited their teacher's

summing up, and their relish of the 'brilliant flashes of insight, of pungent wit, playful sarcasm, biting humour, or wise counsel',<sup>54</sup> which gave the class its distinction. Although Paton saw preaching as a means to an end, wanting 'effective' rather than 'fine' preachers and challenging his students to 'get your message home',<sup>55</sup> he encouraged and tried to draw out all the art and device of which a man was capable in order to render the message effective: 'Every gesture was required to have boldness, strength, and grace. Anything cramped, finicking, or suggestive of weakness was to be vigorously avoided.'<sup>56</sup>

Reid cites 'grace' as a favourite word of Paton's, 'to which he always gave a manifold significance, laying special stress on its connotation of winsomeness and charm. The dullest amongst us was made to realise what preaching meant, and what possibilities it contained.'<sup>57</sup>

Clearly Paton's view of the English language as the instrument used by the preacher in commending the gospel, while essentially utilitarian, heightened rather than lessened his attention to its sensitive appreciation and the nuances of its form: 'Let your words be short, sharp, piercing, epigrammatic, containing the force of what has been said throughout the sermon. Remember the "sabre-cuts of Saxon speech"'.<sup>58</sup>

The structure of the sermon was emphasized: the importance of a good introduction and conclusion and a logical progress of 'statement, exposition, advocacy, enforcement' in the main body. Substance was of the essence. A sermon was expected to have 'knuckle' and challenge rather than merely to soothe. Paton was insistent on 'grace of delivery without any sacrifice of force or "passion"..."unction and argument must never be divorced"',<sup>59</sup> and he counted sincerity as the indispensable virtue.

The Doctor wanted passion in his men; but he wanted (as he was fond of saying) 'solidity and depth' of passion, begotten of personal soul-experience....

We were to bring the truth we preached into immediate and vital relation to men's lives and make it a living force. Of one sermon which had little vital power, the criticism was: 'The great moral truths underlying the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Resurrection, were not set forth so as to appeal to the conscience, but were stated in a fusty, schematic, forensic style. Don't expound these things as a lawyer expounds a legal system. These things have life in them. The words of Christ's messenger are spirit, and they are truth. They must have nothing jejune, dry, and husky; they want the full ear of spirituality.'(60)

Paton also stressed a courage, endurance and ardour in preaching that befitted ministries called to 'a cross and not a cushion' and Reid comments on the 'large, noble and worthy conception of salvation' expressed by Paton: '"The whole man is saved; the whole of life is included in the Christian redemption, the soul cannot be saved by itself and sent off in a box to heaven."'61

This breadth in Paton's perception of salvation is corroborated elsewhere in the biography:

He spoke of the greatness of the redemption which it was the Father's business to fulfil - how it extended to the whole man, his body and mind, his pleasures and his surroundings, and all that appertained to his daily life; how manifold and how practical, therefore, was the function of that redeeming process.(62)

Likewise, Paton's understanding of holiness was far from narrow or pietistic:

...holiness is a large term and means the health of our whole being consecrated to God.... The Holy Spirit is the principle that gives health and harmony to our whole being, which can only be secured when all our powers are bounden unto and are regulated by the will of God.... What I deplore is that we have too much separated religion from the conduct of life.(63)

According to his son, his use of 'such profane things as football, tents, hunting songs and horizontal bars for the purpose of spiritual education shocked the sensibilities of many'.<sup>64</sup>

Yet, despite what appears to be a powerful nondualism, Paton's theology could certainly not be accused of representing an impoverished tradition diluted into immanentist humanism. The basis of his faith and teaching remained spiritual and rooted in the uncompromising doctrine of the cross:

The deep roots of sin and evil could not be reached by distributing a few material things; it must go right down to the unseen cause of all disease, physical and moral; it must convince and convert. The keynote of the minister's message and the burden of his heart must be, as it was with the apostles, Christ and Him crucified; in Him was the power to convert the world; in His death He took upon Himself the chains and power of sin, that He might break them asunder; in that sign the Gospel conquered, evil passions were subdued, and the Christ was formed within the man renewed unto knowledge 'after the image of Him that created him.' Not only in word must the Cross be held up. The Cross must be embodied in the life; every life must be a crucifix.(65)

Paton's thrust is essentially orthodox and primarily evangelistic; he sees the faith as dynamic and far-reaching, to be liberated from conventional formulae and much broader than a merely individual interest, 'each thinking of himself and his own salvation'.<sup>66</sup> 'To be saved,' he writes, 'is to receive the life of Christ, to enter into the obedience and fellowship of His life, and so to be filled with a love for God and men in which selfishness is lost.'<sup>67</sup> He stresses the initiating mercy of a God who is Eternal Love and has infinite compassion.

Such an insight into Paton's theology and spirituality gives a significant indication of the tone and character of the college during Reid's training. According to Ian Wallace's History of Paton College, a full course by Reid's time lasted for four years and the syllabus had three main components: Theology, English, and Practical and Evangelistic Work. This emphasis on practical training meant that the students were expected to devote six hours a week to evangelistic work in addition to

their Sunday activities.<sup>68</sup> The evangelical concern to reach the urban masses resulted in 'Inner Missions'. In Nottingham there were six such mission centres; the College and Castlegate Congregational Church were among the most active and advanced representatives of this movement. The concern to ensure the nurture of their students' devotional lives is also reflected in the curriculum by way of prayer meetings and monthly sabbatical days of worship and rest. As Reid's comments on Paton's Sermon Classes indicate, preaching was given a very high priority.

Paton's breadth of vision ensured that the curriculum had the broad base of 'a sound English education' and his own desire to relate the Christian faith to the concerns of the day (he was for a time Editor of the Eclectic Review) was also reflected in the syllabus. A key topic in the late nineteenth century was the debate between science and religion, and in 1875, science classes were introduced. In 1895 - during Reid's time at the college - two foreign students were admitted: one an Armenian pastor and the other a member of the Nestorian Church in Persian Kindustan. The syllabus also reflects this awareness of other cultures and the increasing interest in other religions. In 1895 there was a course on Islam and the next year, one on Hinduism. According to Wallace, 'both attracted representatives from nearly all the religious bodies in Nottingham including the Established Church and the Rabbi of the Jewish Synagogue'.<sup>69</sup>

## 11. Reid's Ordination

Reid's training, it would seem then, represents the Congregational tradition at its most robust, with a convergence of the denomination's strengths: spiritual but not otherworldly, orthodox but not narrow, impassioned but also disciplined. That Reid himself embodied many of

these strengths seems likely; the Eastwood Church was very keen to have him as its minister and indeed called him, unanimously, thirteen months before he had completed his training and was willing to wait for him. Reid's letter of acceptance, recorded in the Eastwood Congregational Church Minutes Book, shows him aware of the honour and deeply conscious both of his duty to the college and his responsibilities towards the 'urgent and undivided voice of a congregation of His people'. His tone is earnest, deeply pious and again reflective of a Calvinistic spirituality:

I cannot come to you on my own strengths, but will come having a deep sense of my utter dependence upon God. His grace will be sufficient for me and the channels through which it flows are a praying church and a Godly and consecrated people.(70)

At his ordination service Reid is described by various speakers as 'a man of marked ability and an eminently good man', a preacher of 'intellectual grasp and sustained power' who would 'be a friend equally of all classes, he being broad-minded and catholic'. His character is described as 'blameless' and commended for its 'sincerity and depth', and his success and popularity in his parish involvement while in training is commended. Reid's academic ability is stressed: 'Had he had time and opportunity he would have taken degrees in any university in the land.' Reid is attributed with 'a great passion for usefulness ... organising faculty and gracious tact', and the congregation are assured that they would never regret having called Mr. Reid to their ministry.<sup>71</sup>

In the course of his own address, recorded very fully in the Daily Express on the following day - 30 September 1898 - Reid, as well as describing the experiences which led to his calling to the ministry, also explains 'why he elected to exercise that ministry on the

Congregational Communion' and also 'the main doctrines which he believed and proposed to teach'.

In his churchmanship, Reid shows himself firmly within the mainstream of Congregationalist tradition, believing in the independence of each congregation to manage and administer its own affairs and the responsibility of each individual church member for 'maintaining the efficiency and Christian character of the Church'. Reid stresses the essential equality of all members and that power and responsibility rest, not with the ministers or with a select sub-group, but with the 'whole body of believers'. In the same vein, Reid emphasizes the ordinariness of the minister: he is in no way the mediating priest, 'for this', argues Reid in classical Reformed tradition, 'would deny the sufficiency of Christ, nor did there remain any sacrificial function for him to perform seeing that Christ hath been manifested to put away sin once for all by the sacrifice of Himself'. The minister is a fellow sojourner with no 'supernatural powers other than those which come through spiritual obedience, meditation and prayer'.

Reid differentiates between the genuine independence of each congregation and isolationism; he talks of the catholicism of Congregationalism and this he sees as being based, not on uniformity of creed or of ecclesiastical organization but on the 'inwardness of faith and of fellowship in the midst of outward diversity'.

There is no evidence to suggest - as Davie and Rees have done - that this particular expression of Congregationalism had dwindled into a kind of secularized humanism. On the contrary, Reid is emphatic about the spiritual nature of the church:

The church was the body of Christ, and as the individual believers were members one of another, each needful to the upbuilding and perfecting of the other in Christian life and character ... [the

church] exists as an organised spiritual society whose life and energy were immediately derived from Christ. To be in Christ was the primary positive condition of membership. The entrance to the Divine Kingdom was by the way of a new birth, a regeneration. (Appx 282)

With regard to his outline of the doctrines he believed and proposed to teach, Reid again shows himself to be orthodox. Those elements of more 'advanced' thinking that may be detected are certainly nowhere near the radical 'reinterpretations' of an R.J. Campbell. Indeed, the minister who 'charges' Reid is disdainful of 'up-to-date matters and sensational events' and stresses the importance of earnestness. It is also significant that Reid takes so seriously his duty to outline his theology publicly. More seriously than mere convention demanded, it assumes interest, concern and knowledge on the part of his new congregation.

In his description of the Trinity, it is God's sovereignty that Reid emphasizes although his fatherly disposition is also described. He reveals a break with the strict Calvinism of his own and his denomination's roots in obliquely denying a hell of eternal punishment for the unsaved, proposing instead the ultimate destruction of evil, unendurable by an absolutely Holy God. His view of Scripture also reflects the contemporary shift from the strict view of inerrancy to the acceptance of the Bible as God's 'revelation of His own nature and purpose', and as constituting 'the highest authority in faith and practice'. There is a shift, too, in his perception of the essential unity of his denomination as rooted in shared experience rather than in a common creed.

With regard to his doctrine of salvation, however, Reid is fully within the Victorian evangelical tradition as reflected in what we have

observed of Paton College:

He believed in Jesus Christ, His Divine nature, His sinless life, His sacrificial death. He believed His life to be the manifestation of that life which God sought in them; that through the merits of His death they obtained forgiveness of their sins; and that by the indwelling of His Spirit they were built up in godliness of character. He believed in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit as the Divine agent in the work of convincing men of sin, creating in them true faith, illuminating their minds, and bringing them to a full knowledge of saving and sanctifying truth.... He believed that in the conduct of life every soul was responsible to God, every one of them in the last issue would have to appear before the judgement seat of Christ and render an account of the deeds done in the body. He believed that all men have transgressed the law of God, and that, therefore, all need the forgiveness which could only be obtained through a willing and living personal trust in the atoning death of Jesus Christ. This pardoning grace of God bestowed upon them through Christ their Lord lay at the root of all Christian character. It opened the way for the return of God to the soul, and supplied the new impulse and motive, new power and passion to the life. The emphasis of the Apostolic ministry rested upon this cardinal truth; how 'that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses,' that 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life,' that 'the blood of Jesus Christ, His son, cleaneth us from all Sin,' that 'Christ hath once suffered for sins the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God'; and under God that would be the nerve and soul of all his preaching - the very core and crown of his message. Because he believed in the love of God as revealed to them in Jesus Christ; because he had experienced in his own heart the joy of forgiveness, the cleansing and renewing power of the Spirit of God; because he had found in Christ the peace which his soul desired and the grace sufficient for all his needs, it would be his joy with humble and ever conscious dependence upon God to proclaim to them that forgiving and redeeming love, that abundant and soul-reviving grace which had ever been the comfort and stay of all the people of God, and His power unto salvation to all them that believed. (Appx 283-285)

## 12. The Sermons

From the report of the ordination ceremony and from Reid's memoir in Paton's biography, we already have a fairly substantial picture of the minister's theological stance. These sermons give us some insight into how Reid's theology was translated, week by week, into his preaching; bearing in mind, of course, that Lawrence listened to Reid's

sermons each Sunday from the age of thirteen until he left home at twenty-three.

There are two series in these recorded sermons: one on the Seven Cardinal Virtues (Reid had preached on the Seven Deadly Sins in previous weeks but these sermons are only announced and not reported), and one on Science and Religion. The others include what appears to be a complete transcript of a funeral sermon, one entitled 'The Debasement of the Imagination', and another, 'The New Theology and the Atonement'. All - except the memorial sermon - were for the evening service; the titles of the morning sermons are rarely given. This may indicate that the evening services were designed to attract a wider congregation and may have been intended to be more broadly evangelistic in tone.

Yet one of the most striking features of these sermons, despite what we might have been led to expect by the predominant note of evangelical spirituality of Reid's training and ordination address, is their largely moral tone. The sermons bear witness to the complexity of an age of transition: liberal and evangelical sentiments can, it seems, coexist in the same man. And Reid was by no means peculiar in this.

A significant factor to be borne in mind in the assessment of these sermons is that, by and large, we are looking at reports rather than full scripts although some of the reports appear to contain a full transcript of Reid's sermon. I have included these reports in an Appendix to allow the reader to draw his/her own conclusions. My impression is that the reporter was a member of Reid's congregation, possibly a journalist employee of the newspaper, who contributed reports of sermons which he deemed particularly edifying or interesting. Personal bias in the selection of sermons as well as in the reporting of each sermon cannot be discounted. In fairness to

Reid, it is also worth bearing in mind that sermons are not usually written to be read and analysed in print - although Jessie Chambers pays tribute to the 'interesting sermons that were more lectures than sermons'.<sup>72</sup>

### 12.1 The Memorial Sermon

The text for Reid's 'powerful and fitting discourse' at the memorial service of Mr Edward Lindley reported on 10 May 1905, is taken from that most ethical of biblical books, Proverbs: 'As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise.' The sermon, which appears to be a full transcript, is remarkably this worldly with no direct reference to heaven or life beyond the grave, no reflection on ultimate spiritual matters, no presentation of the gospel. It is possible that this may indicate a certain integrity on Reid's part if the service is in memory of a man who, while obviously a deeply respected 'moral pillar' of the community, was not a particularly spiritual man. Nevertheless, the omission is surprising.

The basic 'argument' of the sermon is 'that a man's praise acts as a test of character', and Reid describes how both the praise a man receives and what he deems praiseworthy reveal his true worth. Reid displays a degree of imagination in offering an alternative perspective to the traditional notion of 'adversity as the great and sure touchstone of character', and suggests that 'the influence of the world's smiles is more potent to divert a man from the pursuit of right than the rough blast of the world's scorn'.

Much of the sermon pays tribute to Edward Lindley's character, to his kindness, integrity and modesty, his public spiritedness and general popularity. This sermon - in common with all that are reported - displays many of the virtues Paton would have commended: a fluent and

strong style, a progressive sequence of thought logically ordered, and the timely, if not particularly original, employment of images and analogies.

## 12.2 Imagination

The second report appears on 23 November 1906 and, interestingly, is on the topic of 'the debasement of the imagination'. Reid's text is from Ezekiel 8:12 -

Then he said unto me, Son of Man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? For they say, The Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth.

Again, the predominant note is moral rather than spiritual but, as the subject demands, is concerned with the relationship between the inmost being and the manifested character. The language and imagery often reflect the distinctly Victorian tone of much of the sentiment:

Men may make of their imagination a sty in which all foul things run riot or they may make it a sanctuary in which no unclean thing can find a home; a holy chamber into which they can retreat and dwell amid the lofty and the pure, the lovely and the good.... You may live if you choose in the mountain air or in the malarial bog; in the sunshine, or in the slime, and to live with a debased imagination is like living in the midst of a pestilential swamp with its fever-laden vapours constantly breathing forth death. (Appx 297)

The vivid, not to say lurid, images are extreme: no neutral ground is presented, only states of complete purity or utter debauchery. This suggests a moral earnestness of a Puritan vigilance in which every smallest reaction has a moral value and whose judgement tends to be in black and white rather than in shades of grey. The imagery itself is telling. Purity is associated with cleanness and security and with the dry elements of rare, ethereal mountain air and

light. Debasement is more vividly portrayed and the repeated image is that of the malarial bog, the pestilential swamp, slime, and later, a dirty puddle. It is envisaged as marshy, damp, cloying, dark, disease-ridden and death-dealing. Debasement is characterized by chaos and disorder; its elements lack differentiation.

Years later, as we shall see, Lawrence's matrix of imagery, while much more sophisticated, is sometimes remarkably similar. The moral evaluations have changed and there is an attempt to integrate the dry, light elements which characterize Reid's sphere of 'purity', and the wet, dark sphere of 'debasement'. But the underlying image patterns remain the same. In The Rainbow, for instance, the sensual life is often characterized by water, and although this is appreciated as a necessary condition for life, to live from this centre alone - as in the case of the Brangwen men of the Marsh Farm - is to be saturated, water-logged. In 'The Prussian Officer' the dichotomy implicit in this image pattern is used with striking effectiveness. Set in a landscape of scorching, dry heat, the crisp representative of authority, order and control gradually squeezes the life out of the sensuous young orderly who, after murdering his oppressor, finally dies of thirst.

Reid's sermon on the imagination is interesting also in the emphasis it places on choosing. It is assumed that it is man's responsibility as to whether his imagination is a sty or a sanctuary, and the urgency of this existential choice is heightened by the previously noted absolute polarity between the pure and the debased. In Lawrence's first novel, The White Peacock, choosing is similarly important. In a novel about the leaving of childhood, choice and active responsibility for one's life and fate are seen as imperative, and yet, for various reasons, well-nigh impossible.

Reid takes for granted that choosing is straightforward, at least in his sense of the obvious, clear-cut difference between right and wrong. This view reflects the assumed primacy of reason, and it is perhaps in what it tells us about Reid's ambivalent attitude towards instinct and the passions that the sermon on the imagination is most interesting.

Instinct is not seen entirely as suspect in and of itself, but there is the implication that it naturally tends towards the wayward and requires a firm hand. The imagination becomes active when 'released from the restraints of business and society', and Reid urges his hearers to 'close the door of your mind against the indelicate and the impure':

If you are careful as to the food you eat out of respect for the health of the body will you have less concern for the health of your mind and soul. Why should you jealously guard the outer porch of the temple and desecrate the holy places within.... The chamber of imagery is our chamber of judgement. (Appx 298)

Reid also emphasizes, with strong Platonic overtones, the possible positive power of the imagination:

Every great movement of progress in the world once existed only in the imagination of some man whose mind had been illumined by the inspiration of the Almighty.... The function of imagination is to improve on the actual. Imagination looks beyond the actual to the ideal; sees something nobler waiting to be achieved; impels men to reach forth to the unobtained and the unaccomplished. My idea of the practical includes things that are out of sight. It includes the forces that shape character and determine destiny. And the 'practical' person who takes no account of the power of imagination in life is omitting one of its most active and potent factors. (Appx 298)

It is clear that Reid's positive, idealist vision of the imagination is primarily one of reason and utility, rather than passion and feeling. It is perceived chiefly in terms of power harnessed and

translated into practical usefulness, with little concept of creativity, fantasy and spontaneity being worthy in and of themselves.

### 12.3 The New Theology and the Atonement

The next sermon reported at length appears in the Advertiser on 8 February 1907 and is entitled 'The New Theology and the Atonement'. By this time, R.J. Campbell's views were already being widely debated, even though his book was not published until 1907. On 30 November 1906, 'Week by Week' - written by Willie Hopkin under the pseudonym of 'Anglo-Saxon' - comments thus:

I am glad the Revd R.J. Campbell, of the City Temple, has had the courage to say about religion what thousands of us think. The world is moving on. I don't admire some of his views of other subjects but a man of broad views won't get very far atwist, I think. No doubt the Scribes and Pharisees will shortly be shouting 'Crucify Him!' but he can afford to wait; for time and common sense are both on his side, as well as truth.

Reid's tone and comments are more qualified. His text is 'The Son of Man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many'. While he alludes to the prevailing theological discussion, Reid warns against an overestimation of its significance, yet implying that controversy is better than being ignored:

We may ... totally dissent from many of the views that are being expressed; we may, and I trust we do, deplore the spirit manifested by many who have engaged in the discussion;... Surely it is better that the traditional Christian faith should be the subject of serious discussion, hostile criticism, or even violent attack, than that it should simply be ignored - left entirely out of account by the multitude as something of no real practical importance in the scheme of life. (Appx 299)

The keynote of Reid's sermon is the interpretation of the person

of Christ; he says that in the discussion they were hearing much of

...how various minds interpreted the person of Christ. Did it not suggest itself as a reasonable course that we should enquire, as far as possible, how He regarded Himself, and especially how He regarded His own death? (Appx 299-230)

Thus Reid repudiates mere human interpretation as a substitute for scriptural authority and he also goes on to refute the interpretation of Christ as merely human:

It had been said of the typical theologian that he seemed absolutely incapable of looking at the death of Christ from the purely human point of view, such point of view being that He died as any of the noble army of martyrs have died - a victim to the fury of a frenzied mob.... But was that how Christ Himself regarded His death? The theologian's point of view was not our first concern. The supreme question is What was Christ's point of view? Before we know what value to attach to what others have taught concerning Him we must know what He taught concerning Himself. (Appx 300)

Reid goes on

...to show from the Gospel narratives how large a place the thought of His own death occupied in the mind of Christ, and what He definitely taught concerning its moral and spiritual issues for mankind. No interpretation could be put upon His words, that would leave them with the ordinary value of speech, if it emptied them of the idea of the Atonement. It was in the light of Christ's own life and words and work that we came to understand, however imperfectly, such words as these: 'Christ died for the ungodly.' 'He bore our sins in His own body on the tree.' 'He is the propitiation for the whole world.' (Appx 300)

Thus Reid emphasizes the uniqueness of Christ in words which suggest a uniqueness of kind and not merely of degree. While the moral perspective is clearly seen as important, it is the more spiritual, supernatural achievement of the atonement which still seems to be central in Reid's theology. He is very far from the position of R.J. Campbell and the New Theologians. Yet there are hints here in which one might suspect some dilution of a more robust evangelical viewpoint.

There is a tentativeness in the suggestion that we may have come to understand words about Christ 'however imperfectly' which belies dogmatic boldness, and the texts chosen may indicate a tendency towards universalism. But these must remain as hints and guesses and be held with the reservation that we are reading a report and not a full text. Omissions or a failure to explain fully what he means by certain concepts may well lie with the reporter rather than the preacher.

Nevertheless, the moderation of Reid's tone is made very apparent when compared with that of 'A. Banker', an anonymous, occasional contributor to the Advertiser. In a piece entitled "A Demoralised Planet", which appears on 16 August 1907, he writes:

The so-called 'New Theology' is causing the unstable to lose their faith in the Holy Bible ... the Lord's day is being desecrated ever more and more and in many pulpits of this land the great atonement for sin made on the cross by the Son of God is utterly ignored, and mere ethics and morality - though imperative of course, to those who would attain to eternal life - are substituted for faith in the Redeemer's sacrifice. For through that alone can an entrance be gained to the Glory Land.

It is quite possible, appearing as it does just as Reid's series on the seven cardinal virtues is drawing to a close, that 'A. Banker' has the Congregational minister in mind when he criticizes 'mere ethics and morality'. Hopkin, alias 'Anglo-Saxon', takes 'A. Banker' to task in his column a fortnight later: 'What awfully stupid things a man may be led to say.' He mocks the lurid imagery and adopts the typically superior and weary tone kept for religious hypocrisy: 'It is really trying to one's nerves to have to correct the unco guid on Scriptural points.'

#### 12.4 Courage

The first and last sermons in Reid's series on the seven cardinal virtues are not recorded, although in the report on 21 June 1907,

Reid's treatment of 'courage' is preceded by the reporter's description of the previous Sunday's sermon as 'intelligent' and 'forceful', and listened to with rapt attention. '[It] promises to be a very interesting and useful course.'

Reid describes courage as one of the 'elemental virtues of the race, and one of the first to be discerned and approved'. His perception of the primacy of physical courage very strongly reflects the crudely evolutionistic assumptions of his time:

Long before there was an aristocracy of birth or wealth, talent or genius, there was the aristocracy of the stout heart and the strong arm. The savage, dressed only in paint and feathers, with no mind to speak of, had his ideal of courage, and the badge of distinction on his tribe was superiority to fear. And among civilised peoples the same instinctive appreciation of physical courage persists. (Appx 301-302)

Similarly topical is Reid's citing of heroes as men of courage and the dimension of duty as that which elevates courage from mere 'brute ferocity or animal instinct'.

The 'argument' gradually turns to the opportunities in contemporary, everyday life to exercise courage, and the evolutionist undertone is again discernible in Reid's implied perception of a moral development in man:

While the early idea of what constitutes courage still lingers on, we have come to recognise that the everyday life offers a wide field for the exercise of genuine valour. In every sphere of activity there is ample scope for its energy. Its greatest triumphs are won, not in martial strife, but in the pursuits of peace. (Appx 302)

While Reid gives examples of courage in physically hazardous situations, the emphasis falls more on moral courage:

The man who persists in what he feels to be right, who adheres to his conviction in spite of the clamour of the crowd, and the loss of popularity which his action may involve; the man who has the

courage to say what he believes to be true rather than what he knows will be popular; who never trims his sails merely to catch the favouring breeze of public opinion, but bravely speaks out and lives out the truth that is in him, is a type of the brave soul who is the salt of any community. (Appx 302-303)

Here the dissenting spirit of uncompromising integrity is clearly set forth; the coward is one who

...thinks only of his own gain, or comfort, or reputation, and on that mean altar is prepared to sacrifice every principle and every interest, however dear and sacred, that can only be preserved at the cost of toil and hazard and sacrifice. (Appx 303)

Courage is seen in terms of moral energy, hard-earned and prepared to suffer rather than compromise. It is this austere strain which is echoed in Bernard Lord Manning's interpretation of the Congregational inheritance as fundamentally at odds with 'natural' religion, with a religion of ease and comfort. This idea of life as a struggle and a challenge is very clearly revealed in Reid's understanding of the difference between ancient and modern courage:

The pagan courage was largely the courage that could face death without the emotion of fear; the courage required in these modern days is the courage to face life, with all the responsibilities it brings, without shrinking from what we know to be the path of right. (Appx 303)

This sense of struggle is implicitly linked to the problems of belief in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The earlier theme, the commendation of the man of integrity who sticks to his convictions against the tide - and surely we must count Lawrence as such a man - recurs towards the end of the sermon. The sensational aspects of courage give precedence to a more mundane steadfastness which, while alive to danger and difficulty

...goes straight forward in steadfast adherence to duty and truth. The courage of Christian life is pre-eminently courage to adhere

consistently to Christian principle and to Christian practice - the courage of deep, unwavering conviction, which is another name for faith. (Appx 303)

This indicates Reid's sense - commonly felt - of Christianity as embattled and on the defensive against a tide which has turned. It reveals him, unlike Lawrence, as more of a preserver of the old truths rather than their reinterpreter. Yet his terms, as they are reported, are rather vague: 'Christian principle', 'Christian practice', 'unwavering conviction' suggest, in Walter Houghton's phrase, the Victorian tendency towards 'aspiration without an object'.<sup>73</sup> We shall consider this in greater depth when looking at Reid's sermon on faith.

#### 12.5 Temperance

The next cardinal virtue on which Reid preaches and which is reported in the Advertiser on 5 July 1907, is the virtue of temperance. From our Laurentian perspective, it is particularly interesting in its psychological presuppositions. In preceding comments, the reporter describes the large congregation and tells us that the sermon lasted fully half an hour. He implies that this is longer than usual but that Reid still succeeds in maintaining the 'impressive attention' and interest of those present. He also notes the unusual brevity of the service as a whole - lasting just a few minutes over the hour - and comments:

During the summer, with its bright evenings, this shortening of the services will certainly add to their popularity. There would probably be fewer empty pews in many churches if one hour services were the custom. (Appx 304)

Reid takes for his text: 'He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city,' and begins, as he frequently does, in considering the contemporary usage of the theme word. Noting the

restricted range of its modern application - 'in popular speech it is almost exclusively employed to signify total abstinence from intoxicating liquors' - Reid tries to go beyond this limited and specialized meaning to its original, much wider and more general significance:

Instead of standing simply for the control of one appetite, it was used to express the habitual restraints of all human passion. Temperance, therefore, is not a mere sectional virtue; it has to do with the whole of life. (Appx 304)

Again, we may detect the Puritan suspicion of ungoverned human passion already discovered in Reid's view of the imagination. Reid, however, is very emphatic that restraint should not result in some bland, non-extreme moderation:

Moderation ... is not always the true guide of life. Many people are moderate - without being anything else. The only extreme which they ever allow themselves is the extreme of moderation. And to be moderately truthful, or moderately honest is not a mark of high moral distinction. The avoidance of extremes is a common and familiar counsel, but it is not always the counsel of courage or wisdom. (Appx 304-305)

Reid is critical of 'a timorous and wavering disposition', of 'that excess of weak and timid moderation which always drifts in the direction of base compromise, and invariably ends in the surrender of principle':

In exalting the virtue of temperance therefore we need to exercise care lest we confuse it with the cold, selfish spirit of calculating prudence which never runs against an accepted opinion, or exposes itself to reproach by departing from traditional and customary grooves; but judiciously steers a middle course for the sake of ease and comfort. The truly temperate life is the well-proportioned and well-disciplined life; the life in which wild and wayward impulse is checked and restrained by reason and conscience. (Appx 305)

This is far from the 'cash Christianity' so scathingly exposed in Lawrence's later poetry. Reid shows here that he understands very well

the temptation to 'play safe' in morality and seems to have little sympathy for mere convention and even less for the mean-minded acquisitiveness of a calculating prudence. There is place for risk. Again, we see that it is reason and morality which are emphasized rather than passion and feeling. Primitive energy is almost automatically assumed to be 'wild and wayward' and in need of checking and restraining; the Augustinian virtues of order, proportion and discipline hold sway. Indeed, Reid goes on to say:

The word which best expresses the root idea of temperance is self-control. And that is a word which carries with it the notion of discipline; so that our subject is really the virtue of discipline. No need is more imperious for this nature of ours, with all varied appetites and desires, all its manifold powers and passions, than the need of strong and wise government. The first and greatest conquest for every man is the subjugation of all the turbulent elements in that inner world of his own personality over which he is meant to exercise authority. (Appx 305-306)

Reason and the will must control impulse and feelings. Yet what Reid is advocating cannot simply be dismissed as a kind of life-negating or masochistic morality:

The first and highest function of all wise rule is, not to impose needless and irritating restrictions, but to provide the conditions under which the sum of individual energy and capacity may be exercised and developed to the advantage of the entire commonwealth. (Appx 306)

In translating this to the spiritual realm, Reid argues for an application of this same principle 'to promote ... balance and effectiveness and integrity of the whole. Self-restraint is always a method of self-cultivation. Self-control is essential to the highest self-expression.'

But Reid's radical dualism here is undeniable. It is at its most blatant in another sermon reported on 17 January 1904 entitled 'The

Strange Case of Dr. Jeckyl and Mr. Hyde'. Here, Reid states that there are two distinct sets of qualities - good and evil:

If like Dr. Jeckyl we allow the evil free play, and did not do our utmost to restrain our wicked desires and stamp out the tiger and the ape in our nature, so surely would the time come when we should find that even if we desired to cultivate the good, we should be unable to do so.

This tremendous suspicion of 'wicked desires' and of the animal passions surely helps to explain - and perhaps even justify - Lawrence's very Nietzschean view of Christianity. As Colin Milton writes in Lawrence and Nietzsche:

Like Nietzsche, Lawrence links [such] repressive idealism with the Christian tradition; both see Christianity primarily (though not exclusively, or without qualification) as an ascetic creed which counsels the extirpation or emasculation of the passions.(74)

Reid's suspicion of raw, uncontrolled passion is again evidenced as his sermon on temperance continues. Its keynotes are fear of the irrational and the riotous, and an insistence on restraint and control:

Nothing can be more destructive in Nature than power escaped from control. Flood and fire and tempest are terrifying in their riotous force; yet, when subdued to the control of man and restrained within reasonable limits, water, fire and wind are beneficial and not destructive agencies. It is not otherwise with the faculties and passions of [man's] own nature. Escaped from the control of reason and the moral sense, they are wasteful and destructive. Only as they are under the firm command of the will and the intelligent guidance of wisdom do they become ministers of beneficence. The due restraint of passion is the true cultivation of power. Self-control never means the cramping of power, but the perfecting of faculty - it means power rendered efficient.  
(Appx 306)

## 12.6 Justice

The fourth in Reid's series on the cardinal virtues, reported on 12 July 1907, is 'justice' and was dealt with, according to the reporter, in 'a most able and interesting manner'. The text is from

[sic]  
 Micah 6:8 - 'He hath showeth thee, O man, what is good, and what more doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.' Reid describes these words as 'the greatest utterance in the Old Testament'. In so doing, he makes his emphasis on moral rather than on numinous or mysterious religion quite explicit. It is not Moses' encounter at the burning bush, or Jacob's wrestling with the angel, or Isaiah's vision of the Lord in the temple which Reid singles out as 'the greatest', but the much more practical, down-to-earth moral imperative of this verse in Micah. Reid says that these words 'define the eternal essentials of all true religion'. The central thrust of the sermon is - although Reid does not actually quote from James - 'faith without works is dead'. The minister is dismissive of concern about the right ceremonial or external devotion: 'The Divine requirements are simple and moral: Justice, Mercy, Humility. Without these nothing avails.'

Reid states that the virtue of justice requires knowledge and thoughtfulness and is therefore a virtue which has to be cultivated: 'To be habitually just necessitates the cultivation of a sensitive and educated conscience.'

In his insistence on a religion which involves 'the obedience of the life' and not just 'the homage of the lips', Reid reveals a rather dismissive attitude - characteristic of his generation - of mere creeds:

A precept is honoured only in the measure in which it is practised. The true test of discipleship is never the mere repetition of a creed, but the manifestation of a character. Creed is nothing more than so much useless parchment until it is embodied in practical conduct and personal disposition. To be a good neighbour, scrupulously just and fair to all, working ill to none, is vastly more important than our views on predestination. To do justly is of far more vital concern than to be sound on every point of orthodox doctrine. The great heresy to fear is not intellectual, but moral; not errors of opinion, but sins of conduct, and all injustice is sin. (Appx 309)

This emphasis on practical rather than doctrinal religion is very much in keeping with the prevailing spirit of the age and one which also found favour with Lawrence. Yet the implication that the two can be separated thus, shows a marked divergence from the tradition's Puritan forebears. Reid is again insistent on the importance of the exercise of the virtues as an expression of the Christian faith in everyday life; in this sermon there is also the hint of a concern for social justice which was a high priority within the denomination generally at that time:

The desire of every true lover of justice is to remove the disadvantages under which men labour, and all artificial barriers that hinder them from reaching the fullest and most complete life of which they are capable. (Appx 310)

The humanistic tenor of this sentiment again demonstrates a strong 'this-worldly' dimension in Reid's Christianity, and suggests a perception of salvation which involves man's fulfilment on earth as well as in heaven. The evolutionary framework of the contemporary mind-set assumes man's efforts can contribute to this. Reid quotes George Eliot: '[Justice] is like the Kingdom of God, - it is not without us as a fact, it is within us as a great yearning', and Reid suggests in his peroration that this universal yearning can 'pass from eager longing to full fruition' only 'as those to whom the light of life has come "Do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with their God".'

Reid's approving use of George Eliot's words highlights again the shift in theological emphasis from objective fact to subjective feeling. The 'great yearning' within is indicative of something which is more obvious in the next sermon, the Victorian tendency towards 'aspiration without an object'.

## 12.7 Faith

Reid's sermon on the virtue of faith appears in the Advertiser on 26 July 1907. The text is from Hebrews 11:1 - 'Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for; the proving of things not seen,' and the discourse is divided into two main sections: 'The Nature of Faith' and 'What Faith Does'.

Once again Reid begins by correcting popular misconceptions and abuses of the term, in this case the idea of faith as 'blind, unreasoning acceptance of some unprovable assertion or dogma'. Reid's tone is forceful:

It is from such undiscerning acceptance of extravagantly improbable propositions that superstitions, wild fanaticism and cruel persecutions have so often sprung. Men have not stayed to examine the real nature of their religious belief, but have accepted it mechanically at the dictation of an external authority or at the bidding of unreasoning impulse, with the result that true faith has been confused with mere credulity. Superstition is belief based on ignorance. Faith is rational conviction; it is belief founded on intelligent perception of truth. (Appx 311-312)

Reid is, then, diametrically opposed to faith as set against rationality. Man's individual responsibility to question and criticize rather than to accept blindly, is assumed. There is suspicion equally of 'unreasoning impulse' and of 'external authority':

A belief held without sense or reason is not what the New Testament writers mean by faith. Instead of commanding us to close our eyes, it is the function of faith to open them to the perception of spiritual realities. Instead of laying upon man the injunction: 'Thou shalt not exercise thy reason,' faith makes its appeal to our highest powers of thought and discernment. (Appx 312)

Reid emphasizes faith's relation to the unseen, spiritual realm:

It has relation not so much to things that cannot be known as to things that cannot be seen. And upon these invisible realities the spiritual faculty of reason exercises itself under the quickening inspiration of faith. (Appx 312)

Yet Reid's descriptions of the virtue of faith remain somewhat vague: although he states that faith is 'never a thing that ends in itself', his analysis of it as a thing in itself rather than in relation to something else has the effect of leaving it, somehow, in a state of suspension. Faith, by its very nature, demands an object for its adequate definition, as indeed Reid's strictures against 'blind faith' would seem to suggest. Yet only once in this report is the 'object' of faith described or even alluded to in any specific or concrete way: faith is in the 'invisible God' and in 'the reality of righteousness'. Faith is described as 'an energetic principle of action which operates throughout the whole range of life'; it is shown to have wider implications than the exclusively religious, a motivating force which 'lies behind all the activities of men':

Nothing of enduring work is ever accomplished without the force of energetic and strong conviction. The measure of a man's achievement is largely proportionate to the loftiness and energy of his faith. (Appx 312)

In the section on 'What Faith Does', Reid's theme again is on the importance of practical religion, of 'actual, living, working faith', rather than on intellectual assent to religious creeds. Faith is shown as the great moral energizer enduing men with heroic qualities; 'it is the inspirational force of life'.

Reid's language grows increasingly vague: he talks of commitment to 'spiritual facts and laws', and advocates trustfully committing oneself 'soul and spirit' to their authority and power without - at least so far as we can tell from the report - spelling out what these facts and laws are. Faith is commended as 'the ruling principle of life'; living by faith is resting 'upon the reality of the invisible' and being governed by belief in the unseen. It is being motivated by

the world of spirit rather than the world of sense and involves believing in 'something higher than mere expediency or worldly policy ... in God and righteousness'.

Although his description of faith's nature and function is certainly within Christian orthodoxy, he seems to do very little, despite the intentions expressed in his ordination sermon, to expound the more precise details of its essential content. Again, the motive seems primarily moral: 'The first work of Christian faith is to give us moral energy, moral mastery.' Interpreting faith in 'the ordinary sense', Reid describes it as 'simply the response of our mind and activity to something in which we believe':

And faith, in the deep Christian sense, is the response of our whole life to God and to all that He has revealed and promised. There may be many things which we do not understand, and there must be many others that we would question and test; but if after all that we have earnestly considered and sifted there remains that which our highest spiritual instinct tells us would be good to be true; then if we respond to that, and have personal confidence in that, we are exercising the faith that uplifts and saves. (Appx 314)

Faith is reasonable, then, but not necessarily always ultimately comprehensible. It is one's 'highest spiritual instinct' which Reid implies is the ultimate authority. He thus advocates a subjectivism which, while very much in keeping with the spirit of the times, is surprising in the light of his earlier response to the Congregational tradition.

Walter E. Houghton, in The Victorian Frame of Mind, attributes this characteristic of 'aspiration without an object' to the fact that the Victorian Age was one of transition 'in which the old ideals were vanishing and new ones were many and half-formed'.<sup>75</sup> He cites George Eliot - quoted sympathetically, as we have seen, by Reid - as offering a prime example of such unfocused emotion in Middlemarch's Dorothea.

Houghton observes: 'If we look closely at Victorian aspiration, we discover that the ideal object, whether a great cause or an exalted conception of human nature, is often vague and sometimes nonexistent.' He describes how aspiration becomes an end in itself:

The eye is focused not on an ideal but on oneself in glorious pursuit of an ideal....

Aspiration could not easily find its objective correlative, whether a great cause to serve or a high character to strive for. It tended to jump from one aim to another, or to look to a vague humanitarianism, and therefore to become, when the end proved elusive, an end in itself.(76)

Much of Lawrence's irritation and frustration with a nebulous, pretentious and moralistic Christianity is particularly evident in The Rainbow (where the church is usually Anglican). In the episode where Anna goes to church with Will and tries desperately to control her giggles, Lawrence's tone is mildly satirical. The gist of what Anna hears seems to be general moral exhortations couched in vague, religious terminology, platitudes floating free from what is immediate, tangible and personal. While it would be unfair and inaccurate to dismiss all of Reid's sermons in such terms, 'The Virtue of Faith' comes perilously close. It is only fair to add that Lawrence himself sometimes shares this tendency towards vague pretentiousness; it helps to account for the kind of failures - the vague, strained language, the loss of artistic control - sometimes evident in his novels. Reid is by no means as unfocused as the extreme expression of this trend of 'aspiration without an object'. But the combination - expressed most clearly in this report of his sermon on faith - of the emphasis on high-minded idealism and moral aspiration with only infrequent and vague references to the object, reveal Reid as a man of his time.

## 12.8 Hope

The penultimate in the series on the seven cardinal virtues - but the last to be reported - is on the virtue of hope, and appears in the Advertiser on 9 August 1907. Referring back to the powerful influence of faith on the character, Reid is at pains to demonstrate that hope, too, is immensely practical and not 'vague, idle sentiment; an emotional luxury, a beautiful dream'. He contrasts a hope that is 'dreamy and dubious' with Christian hope characterized by a realism which 'looks at the ugliest and most disagreeable facts of life with open eyes, and, in face of all their weary weight of discouragement and depression, preserves a sunny and buoyant confidence'.

Once again, the 'aspiration without an object' tendency is discernible in Reid's sentiments. He talks of assurance but it seems a more vague concept than the specific doctrine of his Calvinist forefathers, and again, a thing in itself rather than rooted in theological truths perceived as objective facts. Reid contrasts the hope which is born merely of temperament with Christian hope. The latter 'comes from a mind persuaded of the reality of what God has set before us as supreme objects of faith and desire and expectation'. Here is something of an objective correlative, but then Reid goes on to say: 'We are saved by hope. And it is our salvation because it upholds and draws us, and girds us anew for the toil and the battle.'

It is possible that the preacher is somewhat carried away by the rhetoric and the desire to persuade his people of the fullest possible worth of each of the virtues. But one cannot help but be at least mildly surprised that the speaker who promised at his ordination that salvation through the atoning sacrifice of Christ would be 'the very core and crown of his message' should here, as far as we can gather from a newspaper report, be so backward in defining the basis of

Christian hope. Again it seems to be presented as something nebulous, commended in generalities rather than specifically defined: hope is 'the secret vision, without which the people perish', it is the combination of desire and expectation 'for the greatest and best of all the gifts of life.' The sermon ends with a bugle-like flourish of which Paton would have been proud:

Yet there is nothing too great to hope for which Eternal Goodness has promised. And the Gospel of Christ comes to us with abundant and overflowing encouragement to hope - hope for ourselves; hope for the world; hope for the triumph of righteousness and truth and brotherhood. (Appx 317)

## 12.9 Science and Religion

The overflowing optimism, integral to an age in which confidence in man's progress was at its height, is the dominant theme in the next series of sermons to be reported in the Advertiser: the series on 'Religion and Science'. These discourses obviously attracted considerable interest in the town and gave rise to something of a continuing debate in the newspaper. "Week by Week" comments in typically imperious tone:

This is a fine step in the right direction, and the church should be crowded. The Churches are losing ground very fast because they will not face present-day questions concerning the relationship or antagonism between science and religion. They will be compelled to ere long, or else shut up. Personally, I feel proud to think that we have a teacher bold enough to face the whole situation, and I know it will receive able handling. (6 December 1907)

The first report, on 6 December 1907 (the sermon was actually preached on the previous Sunday, 1 December), mentions the large congregation present and comments on the address as 'most learned, lucid and convincing'. That D.H. Lawrence was present is made almost certain by his letter to Reid of 3 December in which he thanks the minister for his 'recent sermon and sermons'. The title of this

introductory sermon is 'Some Guiding Principles' and it deals with 'the proper position for religious people to take up with regard to science'. Reid appears to take a middle way, condemning a fundamentalist religious attitude which uncompromisingly rejects the discoveries of science, and yet is conscious of the frequently provisional nature of many of science's new truths. Reid's basic argument is that religion and science are not the same and are not, therefore, fundamentally opposed. Some great scientists were men of faith; some were not. He showed that

...none of the views now held by the leading exponents of these sciences were at all opposed to real religious truths.... Christianity remained and would remain a great and living force quite strong enough to withstand the shock of all opposing forces. The investigation of Nature's secrets was a duty, and the final result would strengthen rather than weaken true religion.  
(Appx 318)

#### 12.10 Evolution and Traditional Views of Creation

The second sermon is reported on 13 December 1907 and is entitled 'Evolution and Traditional Views of Creation'. In spite of the inclemency of the weather, the reporter tells us that 'there was a good congregation, who listened with rapt attention to a most powerful and inspiring address, full of fire and eloquence'. The reporter refers back to the previous Sunday's sermon, writing:

The ground covered was so extensive that a listener in order to follow intelligently was obliged to concentrate his utmost attention on the subject, and even then some elementary idea of science in general was requisite to a thorough grasp of the matter under consideration. (Appx 319)

The scope of the present sermon, however, was confined 'to but one point in the controversy': namely, evolution and creation. Reid:

...showed how needlessly upset many religious people were concerning the scientific theory of all forms of life evolving

from similar forms. Some people's faith seemed to depend upon mystery and miracle. If the mystery was solved and the miracle explained their faith gave way. (Appx 319)

Far from seeing 'mystery and miracle' as basic components of the faith, Reid seems to see them as, at best, peripheral, as elements to be superceded by the light of knowledge and reason. There is the implication that a need for mystery in religion is somehow immature, even self-indulgent.

Reid goes on to cite historical examples to demonstrate how previous scientific theories were initially denounced as heresy and feared as threats to the whole structure of religion: 'Nowadays every educated person accepted these facts without any injury to their faith.' Reid therefore counsels against undue anxiety and defensiveness in the face of science:

Was it reasonable, therefore, for Christians to become agitated about evolution not agreeing in every detail with the story of creation as set forth in Genesis? The main idea of Genesis was to give man a knowledge of God, not an exact description of the creation. Genesis was the account of man's introduction to God. (Appx 320)

Again, by arguing that the province of science is different from that of religion, that '[science] has nothing to do with the cause and purpose of all things' and therefore its claims are of a different order, Reid argues against their opposition. In the tradition of Paton College and the earlier dissenting academies, he argues for man's responsible stewardship of his talents and God's creation:

God has endowed man with an intelligence by means of which he can discover Nature's laws for himself, and He would be stultifying Himself by saving man the trouble of acquiring this knowledge in disclosing to him the facts by means of miraculous revelation. (Appx 320)

### 12.11 Evolution and the Fall

The third in the series appears in the Advertiser on 27 December 1907 and is on the subject 'Evolution and the Doctrine of the Fall'. It is an interesting sermon in showing, perhaps more clearly than any other, the 'modern' elements in Reid's theology. He contrasts the old theological idea with the scientific theory of evolution:

The old theological idea, said the minister, was that Adam was a perfect man, but that by giving way to temptation he and all his descendants had fallen to a state far removed from perfection. The scientific theory of evolution, in which all men who had any real acquaintance with the result of scientific research believed, taught that man, like all other forms of life, was progressing upward, and that the farther they went back in history the lower man sank in the scale. The theologian said, 'Man has fallen'. The scientist said 'Man has risen'. (Appx 321)

Reid points out how this apparent contradiction causes 'the unthinking man' to give up religion 'as an exploded idea':

Like so many people, he confused theology and religion. If he had read his Bible he would have found that Adam was not there described as perfect. In fact, the description of Adam and Eve in Genesis gave them a picture of two simple children, and that was exactly what science taught with regard to primitive man. Adam was not a savage, and neither was primitive man. (Appx 321)

Thus Reid, in effect, repudiates the doctrine of the Fall, seeing the biblical story of Adam and Eve as portraying two children who did not know right from wrong:

They had to be taught the difference as their intelligence expanded. Science taught that at some stage in his history man began to discern that there was such a thing as righteousness and morality, and the Bible by the beautiful story of Adam and Eve declared the self same thing. It was strange how theology had confused the minds of men. (Appx 321-322)

Reid goes on to explain how the creation account in Genesis is a story, an allegory, akin to the parables told by Jesus in the New Testament. The tone is somewhat apologetic, as if the minister is

aware that he may be offending the more traditionally minded in his congregation:

Mr. Reid went on to show how the finest minds and the most saintly men of the day accepted these things with no injury to their faith. Indeed, to men of intellect and education, it was difficult to see how such ideas could injure one's faith. (Appx 322)

He also counters another criticism which the traditionalists would make of this more modern view:

It had been said that to disprove the so-called 'fall of man' was to take away the need of Christ. What an ignorant idea! A man had only to open his eyes and look round about him to see the necessity of Christ's life and death. (Appx 322)

#### 12.12 Revelation

The final sermon in this 'Science and Religion' series is reported on 3 January 1908 and is entitled 'The Evolution of Revelation'. Again, the 'unusually' large congregation is a subject for comment and the reporter draws his conclusions:

It is a noteworthy fact that by this course of addresses on what is admittedly a difficult subject to lay before an audience of all sorts and conditions of men, Mr. Reid has proved conclusively that there are large numbers of people who are anxious to hear sermons of intellectual depth dealing with facts which all men of education accept but which too many ministers fear to teach for fear of arousing doubt and unrest in the minds of their hearers, evidently not realising that in large numbers of cases the doubt exists already, and the only reasonable way of allaying this mental unrest is to face the situation by placing the results of scientific research in their true aspect before their congregations. (Appx 323)

In this last sermon of the series, Reid's theme is the Bible and he proceeds to show how 'a thorough examination of the Scriptures conclusively showed a gradual growth of understanding of God's

attributes'. Once again, the perspective is evolutionary and represents a shift from the literal, fundamentalist approach of earlier generations:

It was a common mistake to regard the Bible as literally the words of God. The fact was that it was the record of the revelation of God to mankind. The immense importance of the Bible lay in the fact that it was the history of how God had revealed Himself to man. Step by step from Genesis onward they were able to trace the gradual expansion of the knowledge of God. At first the light was dim, but it grew brighter and brighter until in the person of Jesus Christ God disclosed Himself in his full glory to humanity. (Appx 323-324)

Reid exemplifies his argument by citing the imprecatory Psalms. Christ would not have called down such curses on his enemies. The Psalmist, however, according to Reid, was a man with 'a passion for righteousness', incensed by the wickedness and cruelty he witnessed around him. His sentiments were in accord with the measure of the knowledge of God at that time in his possession. However, it is to the New Testament that Christians must go 'to find the full and complete revelation of the Godhead':

In Christ God revealed Himself in all his perfection, but the evolution of revelation did not end in the New Testament. Examine the history of the church from primitive to modern times, and they found that the appreciation of Christ's teaching was a plant of gradual growth. Little by little men saw more and more what Christ's teaching really meant. To-day they understood Christ better than ever before, and as time went on that knowledge would grow from more to more until it covered the earth with a glory as of the sun in his splendour. (Appx 324)

Again, the confidence is that of the heyday of a Nonconformism informed by the gospel of Evolution. Yet despite a number of what may have appeared to be surprisingly modern beliefs held by Reid - in the light of the tenor of his ordination ceremony - he is still far from the most radical and extreme of modernists in his denomination. There

is no suggestion that Christ is other than divine or that God is but an all-penetrating Eternal Principle indistinguishable from creation.

With the limited nature of direct evidence, it is difficult to prove a decisive shift in Reid's theological position. My impression, however, is that there is a gradual modification in his perspective: no 'crisis of faith' or fundamental break with previously held doctrines, but rather a measure of absorption of and influence by certain modern trends. Reid comes across as a thinking man, indeed one who prides himself in facing difficulties directly, confident in the reasonableness of the Christian faith and its ultimate compatibility with modern thought. Yet we have also seen the strand of an uncompromising insistence on holding to the faith against the tide. In February 1911, in the light of his possible departure from Eastwood, he is commended as a preacher 'far removed from the "popularity catching" frothiness somewhat characteristic of modern times. The sermons are marked by a depth and power which stimulate thought in his hearers. Reid is an apologist for the faith but is far from being reinterpreter of the 'Campbell school'.

### 12.13 Farewell to Reid

The report of 'Eastwood's Farewell to the Rev. R. Reid' which appears on 31 March 1911, confirms our impression of a steady, faithful ministry and is still reminiscent of the earnest piety of the ordination ceremony. The gathering is noted for its testimony to the 'pervading spirit of loyalty and esteem in which Mr. and Mrs. Reid were held by all sections of the community, and not merely by their own people'. Reid's departure was obviously much regretted and the commendation of his ministry at Eastwood was very high:

Mr. Reid had given them thirteen years of faithful ministry and friendship: he had given himself and all his energies and powers to the place; he had been ready at all times and in all seasons to help the youngest in equal measure with the most prominent member of the Church; he had preached the doctrine of Christ boldly and fearlessly; and his labours had been greatly appreciated and would leave a lasting impression after he had taken his departure.... At Eastwood they had found him a dear friend, a true pastor, and a faithful servant of our Lord and Master. (Appx 327)

Reid is commended for the 'efficiency' of his ministrations in the pulpit, the faithfulness with which he discharged his pastoral duties, and the unfailing zeal with which he had supported the several institutions connected with the church. His response is humble, but grateful:

He was humbled and thankful to God that he should be counted worthy of such esteem and affection.... As he laid aside the office and looked backward on his own failings and the kind indulgence of his people, he could only say how he had tried to be fair and considerate to everyone, and if he had failed, as he must have done on many occasions, he hoped they would humbly forgive his shortcomings and believe that his motives had been sincere. In everything he had said and done, he had had before him the interests of the Church, and neither in word or deed had he been animated by personal feelings.... He had tried to be like his Master, but none knew better than he how he had failed....

During the singing of the closing hymn, 'God be with you till we meet again,' many in the congregation gave way to feelings of emotion. (Appx 330-331)

### 13. Henderson and Ritchie

Reid was not, of course, the only preacher whom Lawrence heard in the Eastwood Chapel. Visiting preachers included A.R. Henderson, minister of Castlegate Congregational Church in Nottingham, and D.L. Ritchie, Paton's successor as Principal of the Theological College. From a perusal of Henderson's History of Castlegate Congregational Church, it is clear that he was theologically committed to maintaining the church's loyalty to the evangelical faith while insisting on the

church's responsibility to meet the requirements of its time and place in social service.

Something of Ritchie's theology and spirituality can be deduced from three poems preserved in the records of the Castlegate Congregational Church. They indicate a fairly traditional evangelical theology, reconciling God's wrath and love in working holiness and purity in the believer's life: 'the precious goal of life's enduring gain'. Ritchie's 'dramatic fascination' which Lawrence mentions to Reid is evidenced in the robust vigour of his poetry. There is an emphasis on love, on the abundance and life-affirming nature of Christian experience:

As comes the breath of spring,  
With light, and mirth and song  
So does God's spirit bring  
New days - brave, free and strong.  
He comes with thrill of life,  
To chase hence winter's breath,  
To croon to peace the strife  
Of Sin that ends in death....

He comes to rouse the heart  
From moping and despair;  
Through high hope to impart  
Life, with an ampler air....

His presence is to men  
Like summer in the soul;  
His joy shines forth, and then  
Life blossoms to its goal.

#### 14. The Debate ii

We are now in a position to return to the debate about the nature of D.H. Lawrence's Congregational inheritance and examine Donald Davie's conclusion that the Congregationalism experienced by Lawrence was a drastically impoverished one, both intellectually and symbolically.

Davie admits that his surmises are partly based on the general trends of Congregationalism in the 1890s. They are also derived in part from a letter from Jessie Chambers to Emile Delavenay in which she explains, according to Davie, that the culture which she and Lawrence imbibed in the Eastwood Chapel was 'wholly a literary culture'<sup>77</sup> (Davie's emphasis):

Now all this feeling about the value of life and experience, and how the highest and best of it is embodied in art and literature, is in my mind...deeply and inevitably associated with religious feeling. For me, that is religion.(78)

Davie contrasts this 'wholly literary', vague, religious experience, 'altogether too tenuous to be dignified with such names as "tradition" or "culture" or even "sub-culture"', with the Oliver Cromwell Independents mentioned by Lawrence, to demonstrate the extent to which Congregationalism had 'lost its bearings and reneged on its inheritance'.<sup>79</sup>

This, however, does not appear to be fair either to Jessie's letter or to Congregationalism. Just prior to the extract which Davie quotes, Jessie makes it quite clear that she is trying to demonstrate continuity with, rather than divergence from, the tradition of her forebears, by illustrating that culture and literature were inextricably bound up with what it meant to be a Congregationalist: 'the only way in which we departed from that tradition,' she writes immediately prior to Davie's extract, 'was in going much further and deeper than our parents had done.'<sup>80</sup> Certainly, the sentiments reflect the immanentist trends of the time, but that Jessie did not simply equate art, culture and religion in some sort of inclusivist, miasmal haze is made clear in a letter she wrote three years later to

Lawrence's Jewish friend, Koteliensky, where she states her

...conviction that all other values, except those revealed by Christ, lead straight into a blind alley.... [the discipline of Christianity is] the only way for human beings to become and remain human...

What seemed to me the tragedy of D.H.L. in the days when I knew him was his refusal to accept the Christian value.... His values had become so confused that he put the worthless above the priceless.... I shall always believe that he died because his life had got into a blind alley, and he didn't know how to get out of it.(81)

Clearly, Jessie thought that Lawrence should have known better. We certainly cannot simply accept Davie's dismissal of the Congregationalism at Eastwood as a wholly literary culture.

Nor can we accept, unqualified, the surmises of Anthony Rees in his thesis on Lawrence, 'The Politics of Industry'. He accepts the conclusions of Donald Davie too uncritically. His two other main sources, The Christian Socialist Revival by P. d'A. Jones and Nineteenth-Century Nonconformity by Ian Sellars, both, by the very nature or scope of their subject matter, privilege certain theological trends - the secularist, humanist and immanentist - and hardly touch on others. Thus Rees, while emphasizing the importance of grasping the nature of the Congregational Chapel as a key influence on Lawrence's youth, makes huge assumptions on the basis of general trends. From these he concludes that the Congregationalism of Lawrence's youth was based on the doctrine of 'Divine Immanence', and that by Lawrence's time, Congregationalists had 'found it possible to jettison most doctrines'.<sup>82</sup>

Davie also believes that 'the peculiarly strong intellectual tradition'<sup>83</sup> cited by Leavis had not survived to be vibrant in the 1890s. (It is interesting that Davie always cites the decade of Lawrence's fifth to fifteenth years. Is he assuming that after

sixteen, the Chapel was no longer of vital significance to Lawrence?) John Kent, in an article entitled 'A Late Nineteenth-Century Nonconformist Renaissance',<sup>84</sup> disagrees. He argues against the widely held myth started by Matthew Arnold's caricature of the Nonconformists as philistines. He views as untrue the widespread notion - reflected in the views of Davie and Rees - that Nonconformity was in decline from the 1880s and indeed he sees the years between 1886 and 1906 as a 'golden age' in the history of the free churches, a time when they were at their height institutionally, intellectually, culturally and materially. Certainly, this would support Leavis' contention of the continuation of this vibrant intellectual, cultural and social tradition of Congregationalism into the environment in which Lawrence grew up.

Reid's sermons also support this. It is clear that he was a man of learning who regularly used his knowledge of theology, science and literature in the pulpit. In founding and presiding over the very successful Literary Society in Eastwood, he encouraged lively debate in the wider community on all manner of topics.<sup>85</sup> Evidence from the Advertiser of other 'extra-curricular' intellectual and cultural activities associated with the Chapel also upholds Leavis' view.

However, Davie's sense that Eastwood Congregationalism was impoverished symbolically seems to be much more likely. Responding to Leavis' description of the richness of the Congregational cultural tradition, Davie argues: 'The purpose of Church or Chapel is not to be "the centre of a strong social life", but to be a centre and arena for worship, for the enactment of the ultimate mysteries.'<sup>86</sup> Davie tells us that the evidence of 'general practice in the dissenting churches' of the time suggests that 'the mysteries either were not celebrated, or were celebrated in such a way as to emasculate their symbolic

significance'. Hence Davie's acceptance of T.S. Eliot's charge of 'vague, hymn-singing pietism'. Yet the two critics are, beneath this phrase, saying very different things. Eliot, as we noted earlier, is criticizing Lawrence's inheritance as unstructured, indulgent emotionalism, rooted in a vulgar taste for mystery. Davie's criticism seems to be that Eastwood Congregationalism is impoverished because it has forgotten what he sees as the heart of religion: 'the ultimate mysteries'. By this he means, primarily, the symbolic, ritual and ceremonial dimension. This may be true. Certainly in the wider sense, I believe Davie is right in seeing Eastwood Congregationalism as impoverished in the diminution of its acknowledgement of the mysterious, numinous dimension of Christianity, and accurate in his diagnosis of the effects of such impoverishment on the budding novelist. To this we shall return towards the end of this chapter.

#### 15. William Hopkin

If, as was suggested earlier, there is an element of modification or development in Reid's theological views, one cannot help but wonder if this might be, in part at least, a response to Willie Hopkin's frequent criticism of Christianity and the churches in 'Week by Week'. The column is lively and delights in controversy. 'The unorthodox,' he believes, 'are the world's hope.' In a debate at the Literary Society, reported on 27 October 1905, on 'The limitations and possibilities of human freedom', Hopkin is quoted as stating, 'the greatest obstacles to freedom are convention, environment, public opinion, orthodoxy....' Anglo-Saxon's apparently fearless and often caustic wit would have its effect in such a small community as Eastwood. Hopkin obviously respected Reid; we have already noted his positive anticipatory comments about the series on 'Science and Religion'. Of Reid's series

on 'The Seven Deadly Sins', he remarks: 'those people who have attended the series of sermons at the Independent Church have been fortunate, for the sermons have been intellectual, sound and eminently practical.'

A former Wesleyan, Hopkin had left the church and dissociated himself from all forms of institutional religion. In response to one letter he writes:

Now here is an interesting question.... A lady desires to know what my religion is. Madame, my religion is one of my own make. It just suits me and I am thinking of going round preaching it. It contains no theology and is of a most free and easy description. It can be preached indoors and out, but it is better out of doors than in. It contains but one commandment, and that one had no reference to Heaven or Hell. Now, Madame, you can go ahead and work it out if you like puzzles. (17 May 1907.)

Hopkin, as we have also seen, is a champion on the side-lines for New Theology. He believes in the evolution of religion, in a progression which must be prepared to leave behind what he sees as out of date. In particular he attacks vociferously the "fiendishly cruel" doctrine of eternal torment. He is impatient with what he sees as the church's distortion and spiritualization of the message of Christ, a message he sees as eminently down to earth, practical and physical:

In spite of all the plain teaching and practice of Jesus the churches try to spiritualise everything, but let them try forever, and they cannot spiritualise a man's stomach.... Jesus realised that and always attended to the body first and the spirit afterward.... The way the churches in their catechisms and hymns speak of the body is simply and utterly abominable, besides being a nasty slap in the face for the Creator of the body. (16 August 1907)

Hopkin continues - in his more sentimental vein - to eulogize the human body:

There is nothing so beautiful as the human body, and nothing as wonderful in the whole creation ... In maligning the body we malign the power that through countless ages and by tortuous paths has slowly but surely moulded it from the first tiny cell to its present magnificent perfection. But for the body there can be no

mind.... The body is the equal partner of the soul and warrants equal care, attention and love. Harm one and you harm the other.... Nor can I imagine a more beautiful world than the present.

Hopkin concludes with a vision - not without elements in common with that of Lawrence's at the end of The Rainbow - of an earthly heaven:

Slowly but surely, out of earth's rubbish heaps and chaos is being builded the city of God, the place of brothers.... Its foundations are splashed with the blood of little children, and echo with the cry of hopeless age. The builders die ... are replaced ... eager. One day it will be finished and the sons and daughters of men will crowd into it and the earthly heaven will be an accomplished fact.

During the miners' strike in 1908, Hopkin's impatience at the church's lack of practical assistance is a recurring theme. In his column on 14 February 1908, he quotes Campbell: 'Of all forms of materialism the worst and the subtlest are those which masquerade as Christian respectability,' and comments: 'We are chock bang full of it in Eastwood.' The following week he castigates the 'flinṡty heart of dull respectability'.

It is clear, then, that Hopkin was a vital force in Eastwood and we know from the biographies that his influence on Lawrence was important. In public life he set himself up as a free thinker of the broadest possible views, often, as we have seen, at variance with institutional or orthodox truths. In response to a query as to whether he was a disciple of Jesus, his reply is: 'Yes I am a disciple of Jesus, Buddha, Zoroaster, Edward Carpenter, Whitman, Tom Paine and many others.'

It is likely that for the young Lawrence, to whom he became a personal friend as well as the well-known and much-respected local controversial character, Hopkin was a very significant conveyor of alternative salvific perspectives from those he received in the Chapel.

If the dominating motifs of Reid's Christianity are those of reason, morality and utility, Hopkin's outlook, with its emphasis on spontaneity, playfulness and a natural earthiness, is characterized by those of feeling and passion.

That the distinction between the two men is by no means a simple diametrical opposition must already be clear. Perhaps their most obvious meeting ground was in the Literary Society which regularly involved both men in its lively debates. Topics of discussion and talks were often addressed by Congregationalist ministers or visiting missionaries; the subjects were rarely of specifically religious concern.

#### 16. Lydia Beardsall

The earliest influences are conveyed, of course, through the family and it was because of his mother that Lawrence was brought up with such close ties to the Congregational Chapel. The ambiguities and contradictions inherent in Lawrence's own thinking throughout his life are usually attributed to the very different 'ideologies' assumed by each parent.

Lawrence's mother, Lydia Beardsall, was grand-daughter of the Nottingham hymn-writer, John Newton, and daughter of George Beardsall, a 'zealous worker and lay preacher for the Wesleyan Home Missions'.<sup>87</sup> These Home Missions were a response to the findings of the 1851 census which exposed, in the heyday of overseas missionary endeavour, the extent of 'heathenism' at home. Almost twice as many people were now outside the church as were within. Roy Spencer's description of 'the fiery Evangelical teaching with its hard-headed righteousness [in which] evil would be punished in hell and goodness enthroned in heaven; [and] black was black and white was white'<sup>88</sup> probably captures

something of the tenor of the religious sensibility with which Lydia Beardsall was early imbued. Her relationship with her father was a very close one; according to Spencer she 'idolised her father and accepted without questioning his word and judgement. She continued to accept them even when she was married with children of her own'.<sup>89</sup>

Spencer also exposes the myth of Lydia's social superiority to her miner husband. George Beardsall was a dockyard fitter in Sheerness for much of his working life and when he was made lame by an accident at work, the family's already very modest standard of living was severely threatened. They returned to Nottingham where Lydia and her two sisters helped support the family by working as lace drawers. Lawrence's father, on the other hand, enjoyed a more clearly defined and secure economic 'niche' as a butty in the mining industry. Lydia's perception of herself as socially superior and the somewhat romantic account of their background which she conveyed to her children is interesting. Spencer describes the care with which George Beardsall always chose the family abode, 'as far away from the rabble as his income would allow',<sup>90</sup> and draws attention to their 'self-imposed and rigidly-maintained standards'.<sup>91</sup> George Beardsall was also fiercely teetotal, 'taking a firm stand against what he considered were evil and anti-social practices',<sup>92</sup> and Lydia further differentiated herself by her disdain for dialect; she took pride in always speaking 'correctly'.

We have here, then, indications of a mind-set which prized highly such values as order, control and self-betterment. Human nature is fallen and therefore suspect and, however George Beardsall articulated his theological notions of redemption from the pulpit, their practical outworking in the life of his family seems to have involved the 'redemption' of all spheres of life from the inchoate, 'the masses', the uncultured and undifferentiated. With effort and discipline the

individual must separate himself from what is perceived as a kind of lower-common-denominator and its merging heedlessness, to a clear-minded knowledge of right and wrong. In this frame of reference it is easy to understand why drunkenness should be castigated as a particularly heinous sin: its essence is the loss of self-control; its solace the shedding of inhibitions as the boundaries of the self blur and merge expansively. These values also account for the deep-rooted suspicion of sex, in the tradition of St Augustine who put a premium on reason and will and counted as sin any inordinate desire which escaped the mind's control. This interpretation is clearly continuous with the one which dominates the sermons of Robert Reid.

#### 17. Lawrence's Mother and Father

It will be clear, now, that Lydia Beardsall's upbringing was very much under the dominion of a Christianity which privileged reason, morality and utility. From our knowledge of her during her marriage and motherhood, she struggled to maintain this as her ruling perspective. Biographies about Lawrence testify to her attempts to make her sensuous husband conform, and in one of his own autobiographical fragments, Lawrence describes his mother's generation's vision of womanhood as 'the higher moral being', moulding a generation 'to the shape of her own unfulfilled desires':

What had she wanted, all her life? - a 'good' husband, gentle and understanding and moral, one who did not go to pubs and drink and waste the bit of wages, but who lived for his wife and his children.(93)

By the time he wrote this, of course, Lawrence saw such moulding as profoundly insidious, transforming the 'rough, wild men' of a previous generation to tame men - sober, conscientious, decent, but hopelessly shrunken and 'under'.

Ada Lawrence remembers her mother as:

... small and slight in figure, her brown hair, sprinkled with grey, brushed straight from a broad brow; clear blue eyes that always looked fearless and unfaltering... I don't remember seeing her dressed in anything but black and white, or grey, and she never possessed any jewellery. When I was older I persuaded her to have a bodice of mauve, covered with black lace, but she had grave misgivings every time she put it on. How lady-like we thought she looked when dressed for chapel in her black costume and black silk blouse....(94)

Her Puritan taste for simplicity extended to the house furnishings. Ada comments on something distinctive about the Lawrence home: 'Perhaps this was because mother would have nothing cheap or tawdry, preferring bareness.'<sup>95</sup> D.M. Newmarch points out how the Morel home in Sons and Lovers 'reflects something of the classical puritan virtues of thrift, foresight and moderation.'<sup>96</sup> This suspicion of artifice extended into her attitude towards her son's writing which, Lawrence tells us, was dismissed as 'affectation', 'flights of genius were nonsense'.<sup>97</sup> Instead she hoped her sons would rise in the world in more conventional, useful ways.

Willie Hopkin remembered Mrs Lawrence as a woman of 'considerable refinement and culture'<sup>98</sup> and Ada describes her as an 'excellent talker' with a 'dry, whimsical, fascinating sense of humour ... never effusive or demonstrative'.<sup>99</sup> Lawrence, half-admiringly, recalls her irony and occasional sarcasm. This detachment contrasted markedly with her husband's 'overflowing humour' and somewhat childlike naïvety. 'Superior' is a word often used to describe Lydia Lawrence; sometimes kindly as when her children remember 'she was very much respected,... Her nature was quick and sensitive, and perhaps really superior'<sup>100</sup> and, as Ada realized, 'some people were ill-natured enough to say that she "put it on" when she spoke, for her English was good and her accent so different from that of the folk round about'.<sup>101</sup>

Jessie Chambers remembers Mrs Lawrence as a woman of vigour and determination:

Her confidence in herself and her pronouncements upon people and things excited my wonder. It was new to me to meet anyone so certain of herself and of her own rightness.(102)

Mrs. Lawrence occupied a remarkable position in her family. She ruled by a sort of divine right of motherhood, the priestess rather than the mother. Her prestige was unchallenged; it would have seemed like sacrilege to question her authority. I wondered often what was the secret of her power, and came to the conclusion that it lay in her unassailable belief in her own rightness.(103)

George Neville, another of Lawrence's boyhood friends, recalls her stubbornness and her little toss of the head and irritating 'sniff' 'which were answer to all objections'.<sup>104</sup>

We have already noted the logical connection between this tendency towards reason's insistence on dominance and control and abhorrence of drunkenness. This distaste is rooted in the perceived waste of money as well as in the 'wasting' or 'squandering' of the self it involves. Lawrence is critical of her attitude in his essay 'Women are so Cocksure':

She was convinced about some things: one of them being that a man ought not to drink beer.... the drinking of beer became to my mother the cardinal sin. No other sin was so red, so red-hot. She was like a bull before this red sin. When my father came in tipsy, she saw scarlet.

We dear children were trained never, never to fall into this sin. We were sent to the Band of Hope, and told harrowing stories of drunkenness;...

My mother spoilt her life with her moral frenzy against John Barleycorn. To be sure she had occasion to detest the alcoholic stuff. But why the moral frenzy? It made a tragedy out of what was only a nuisance.(105)

As with her attitude to alcohol, so Mrs Lawrence's attitude to love and sex carries a strongly puritanical strain. Jessie Chambers corroborates Hopkin's estimate of the extent of Mrs Lawrence's

influence on her son, and refers, in her correspondence with Emile Delavenay, to a sense of guilt in his attitude to sex:

Not only was there a flavour of puritanical disapproval of love in general, there was also this atmosphere of definite ridicule and hostility. I suppose D.H.L.'s passive acceptance of this was due to the fact that it justified his affection for his mother,...

I had always felt that there is a pathological element in Lawrence, above all in the sphere of sex.(106)

Later she adds:

It seems to me that one result of D.H.L.'s relationship with his mother was the complete divorce in his mind and attitude between love and sex.(107)

George Neville, in his comparatively recently published memoir of D.H. Lawrence (1981), offers interesting new insights into Lawrence's early intimations of sex. Obviously very sympathetic to Mrs Lawrence, he yet describes her as 'decidedly Puritanical in her morals and teachings',<sup>108</sup> and remarks on the family's extreme reticence about sex. The young Lawrence was initially shocked that reproduction should be talked about so openly at the Hags Farm, but Neville goes on to describe how deep an impression this new perspective had on the lad:

Leaving the farm, he went on to speak of Nature generally, and I gathered that at this period he had formed the definite conclusion that the chief law of the natural world was: Reproduce, Reproduce in abundance; and you cannot over reproduce.(109)

Neville implies that it was encountering this attitude towards sex and reproduction, so dramatically different from the discreet/oppressive one which prevailed in his home, that first made Lawrence conscious of sex as an enigma about which he wanted to write more deeply than had so far been done.<sup>110</sup>

One of the areas that reveals most about the different outlooks of Lawrence's father and mother is in their response to animals, and to pets in particular. Phoenix contains Lawrence's lovely descriptions of two episodes in which animals were introduced into the Lawrence household: Adolf, a wild baby rabbit which the father discovers beside its dead family one morning on his return from the pit,<sup>111</sup> and Rex, a young pup which the family is asked to look after for a while.<sup>112</sup> The children side with the father in their desire to care for the creatures, the mother either tolerates or is hostile to the beasts and scorns her children's concern: 'my mother detested animals about the house. She could not bear the mix-up of human with animal life'.<sup>113</sup> By contrast, the father identifies closely with the natural world:

He watched every bird, every stir in the trembling grass, answered the whinnying of the pewits and tweeted to the wrens. If he could, he also would have whinnied and tweeted and whistled in a native language that was not human. He liked non-human things best.(114)

Lawrence's father loved dancing and singing and as a young man had enjoyed boxing and rowing. Lawrence's description of the collier in 'Nottingham and Mining Countryside' is undoubtedly also a portrait of his father. Its bias clearly reveals the dramatic turn-about of Lawrence's sympathies towards his parents in his later life:

Now the colliers had also an instinct of beauty. The colliers' wives had not. The colliers were deeply alive, instinctively. But they had no daytime ambition, and no daytime intellect. They avoided, really, the rational aspect of life. They preferred to take life instinctively and intuitively....

...he was fulfilled on the receptive side, not on the expressive. The collier went to the pub and drank in order to continue his intimacy with his mates. They talked endlessly, but it was rather of wonders and marvels, even in politics, than of facts....

The collier fled out of the house as soon as he could, away from the nagging materialism of the woman.... his life was otherwise. So he escaped. He roved the countryside with his dog, prowling

for a rabbit, for nests, for mushrooms, anything. He loved the countryside, just the indiscriminating feel of it. Or he loved just to sit on his heels and watch - anything or nothing. He was not intellectually interested. Life for him did not consist in facts, but in a flow.<sup>(115)</sup>

The instinct of beauty is motivated by passion and mystery rather than reason and morality; the desire for intimacy and continuance rather than detachment and differentiation; the love of wonders and marvels before facts; the passive 'letting things be' rather than consciously directing and shaping one's life.

These observations and reminiscences offer a reasonably full impression of the outlook and values of Lawrence's parents and in the case of Mrs Lawrence are continuous with her response to spheres explicitly religious. In keeping with his more instinctive mode of consciousness, Arthur Lawrence is never recalled as having an expressed response to religion as such. He had sung in the parish church choir as a young man and apparently went to the chapel with his family from time to time, but he seems not to have had an articulated, conscious belief-system. His life is, rather, characterized by a natural, non-reflective and more sensuous immediacy.

Lydia Lawrence's background, as we have seen, was Methodist. Some time after her marriage, she joined the Congregational Chapel in Eastwood, a church which had grown out of what were largely middle-class values and aspirations.<sup>116</sup> She enjoyed its intellectual stimulus and liked discussing religion and philosophy with the minister when he called.

Ada remembers her mother as 'at heart deeply religious and a stickler for truth, having great contempt for anything petty, vain or frivolous'.<sup>117</sup> Jessie Chambers describes her as something of a preacher and recalls Lawrence's resentment of the tone of authority she shared with the conventionally religious people of the chapel.<sup>118</sup>

### 18. Mrs Lawrence and Mrs Chambers

In 'D.H. Lawrence's Chapel', D.M. Newmarch offers some interesting insights into what he describes as the metamorphosis of the Puritan tradition in the life of Mrs Morel.<sup>119</sup> He suggests that this exploration in Sons and Lovers of the contrasts between the spirituality of Mrs Leivers and Miriam on the one hand, and of Mrs Morel on the other, reflects the different perspective of Lawrence's own mother, and Mrs Chambers and Jessie. Here portrayed, then, are two very different expressions of Congregationalist piety. David Chambers describes his mother as having 'absorbed with passionate intensity the Puritan message of nineteenth century nonconformity', and describes her spiritual inheritance thus:

My mother had been brought up in a household in which the Christian injunctions of love and duty were literally rules of life, extending even to forgiving your enemies and turning the other cheek. Grievances must be silently borne, and frayed tempers must not give rise to hard words.(120)

He contrasts this submissive acceptance with the more strident spirit of Mrs Lawrence's attitude. When young Bert punches the Chambers lads in a fit of disappointment, his mother encourages them to 'hit him back, hit him back, serve him right.... Hit him hard' ... 'I believe in retaliation. This "bear and forbear" gospel is too one-sided for me! Give him some of his own medicine, I say'.<sup>121</sup>

Jessie Chambers writes in her Personal Record of how she and Lawrence used to discuss their mothers' respective religions:

We each regarded our mothers as deeply religious women and in many talks we tried to find out what significance the religion they professed had for them. It was the beginning of Lawrence's groping into experience to find a value that might serve as a guide. There was little analysis of the elements of religion at this stage - that came later - but there was a serious attempt to find a practical value. Lawrence talked a good deal about 'faith' and 'works' and seemed divided in his own mind as to which was the

true expression of the religious life. Our respective mothers were the standards of measurement and he finally summed up the argument by saying:

"I suppose your mother's "Mary, Mary" - I'm afraid mine's "Martha, Martha"'.(122)

Newmarch detects in Mrs Lawrence a 'new secularised puritanism' in which the moral energy persists; the more spiritual, other-worldly intensity which characterizes the religious experience of Jessie Chambers apparently having given way to hard-headed practicality. The one is outward-directed, this-worldly and has a fighting spirit; the other is inward-looking, based on humility and self-denial.

This is epitomized in a comment Jessie records: 'Mrs. Lawrence told mother that she looked forward more to meeting her son Ernest in Heaven than Jesus Christ Himself.'<sup>123</sup>

Ada also indicates Mrs Lawrence's refusal to find comfort in promises of the next life when she writes that after Ernest's death they never heard their mother singing again.<sup>124</sup> According to George Neville, Mrs Lawrence once fiercely reprimanded him for his optimistic interpretation of the adage, 'Man never is but always to be blest':

It means that you are being deceived just like so many, many thousands more besides. It is the delusive promise that keeps people going, because they deceive themselves. They read it like you do, in the method they prefer. But it really expresses one of the greatest truths of life: man never is blessed but he always buoys himself up with the false hope that he's going to be. And he generally finds it out too late, and then starts hoping his blessing will come in the future life.(125)

This rather austere, embittered response is further indicative of Mrs Lawrence's demand for an eminently practical religion operating in realms human and material rather than transcendent and spiritual. By contrast, the spirituality of Mrs Chambers and Jessie not only tended

towards the life-negating but also, in Jessie's case particularly, nourished a richly imaginative interior world for which Mrs Lawrence would have seen no earthly use.

There is little doubt about the enormous influence Mrs Lawrence had over her son. In a letter from Jessie to Koteliansky some seven years after Lawrence died, she writes;

I think that L. inherited his 'philosophy,' and especially his manner of expressing it, directly from his mother, and also his conception of Christianity with the Congregational Chapel at Eastwood, and with his mother's interpretation of it.(126)

#### 19. Lawrence's Impressions

As Lawrence himself writes, 'Nothing is more difficult than to determine what a child takes in, and does not take in, of its environment and its teaching.'<sup>127</sup> Yet some of his own impressions of the inheritance of the Congregational Chapel religion of his youth are recorded in his essays. One of the most famous - and most lovely - is 'Hymns in a Man's Life'. The strongest sentiment expressed here is gratitude for having been brought up 'a Protestant, and among Protestants, a Nonconformist, and among Nonconformists, a Congregationalist'.<sup>128</sup>

Eastwood was small enough for Lawrence to absorb a fairly clear idea of the ethos of other denominations represented: he expresses relief that he was not burdened by the Anglican 'snobbish hierarchies of class' or by the 'personal emotionalism' of the Primitive Methodists.<sup>129</sup> Here and elsewhere, Lawrence expresses horror at the salvationism of the Pentecostalists and indeed the Advertiser bears witness to their missions and revivals. On 12 May 1905, for example, a fruitful mission is reported and '321 conversions' recorded.

Yet it is clear from Lawrence's letter to Reid of 3 December 1907 that he, too, had 'been brought up to believe in the absolute necessity for a sudden spiritual conversion'. He implies that Reid, Ritchie and Henderson, all in their various ways, assume the necessity for conversion. Yet there is no evidence in what sermon reports we do have to suggest that overtly evangelistic preaching was characteristic in the Eastwood Chapel. The titles of many of Reid's other sermons which were advertised in the newspaper<sup>130</sup> indicate that the reports we have are fairly typical. My impression, then, is that although Christianity was presented as both mystery and morality in the Chapel, these strands were never really woven together; and the predominantly moral emphasis of the minister is very clear.

In 'Hymns in a Man's Life', Lawrence makes a sharp distinction between the religion of didacticism and dogma - which he characterizes as wonderless, boring and dead - and the religion of wonder and mystery. Indeed he goes so far as to say, 'knowledge and wonder counteract one another'.<sup>131</sup> The essay describes the quality of 'wonder' which Lawrence absorbed as a child from the vividly 'glamorous worlds' created in 'the golden haze of a child's half-formed imagination' by the hymns he sang as a youngster in Eastwood Chapel. Lawrence describes the actual hymns as banal; what he loved was their power to evoke a magical, vivid world quite different from his actual world and life. Lawrence characterizes the sense of wonder as the natural religious sense:

The miracle of the loaves and fishes is just as good to me now as when I was a child. I don't care whether it is historically a fact or not. What does it matter? It is part of the genuine wonder. The same with all the religious teaching I had as a child, apart from the didacticism and sentimentalism. I am eternally grateful for the wonder with which it filled my childhood.(132)

However, Lawrence's criticisms of the religion of his childhood in Apocalypse - even accounting for the reinterpretation of the years we have already witnessed - seem to revolve around what he describes as the 'fixity' of the mind-set. He remembers how, as a typical nonconformist child, he had 'had the Bible poured every day into [this] helpless consciousness, till there came almost saturation point'.<sup>133</sup> He attributes his resentment of the Bible to the 'almost nauseating fixity' of interpretation. He recalls, with an almost audible shudder, the way the wonder was, as it were, systematically squeezed dry by the rigidity of the exhaustively analytical interpretation of the Bible:

It was day in, day out, year in, year out expounded, dogmatically, and always morally expounded, whether it was in day-school or Sunday School, at home or in Band of Hope or Christian Endeavour. The interpretation was always the same, whether it was a Doctor of Divinity in the pulpit, or the big blacksmith who was my Sunday School teacher. Not only was the Bible verbally trodden into the consciousness, like innumerable foot-prints treading a surface hard, but the foot-prints were always mechanically alike, the interpretation was fixed, so that all real interest was lost.(134)

It would seem that if there was an impoverishment of the tradition, it was not the wandering from the orthodoxy of a transcendent spirituality which was at the heart of it - for, in comparison with R.J. Campbell, Reid cannot be accused of diverging far from either. Indeed, one of Lawrence's frustrations with Chapel religion was precisely that it was so orthodox and intolerant of alternative viewpoints. Jessie Chambers recalls:

[Lawrence] resented the tone of authority adopted by the conventionally religious people, including his mother. He said, 'Even mother doesn't like me when I'm different. I've got to be as they are, or else I'm all wrong'. He used to complain that in Chapel one had to sit still and seem to agree with all that the minister said. He would have liked to be at liberty to stand up and challenge his statements. It was a matter of grief to him, too, that whoever opposed the orthodox teaching was cast out of the church, which claimed to have a monopoly of the right way of living.(135)

Rudolf Otto, in The Idea of The Holy, points to this danger of orthodoxy's preoccupation with dogma and doctrine - which in 'no way... do justice to the non-rational aspect of its subject'.<sup>136</sup> His diagnosis of the one-sidedness of the rationalist and moral interpretation (for 'religion is not exclusively contained and exhaustively comprised in any series of "rational" assertions')<sup>137</sup> certainly applies to Reid's late nineteenth-century Nonconformity:

Far from keeping the non-rational element in religion alive in the heart of the religious experience, orthodox Christianity manifestly failed to recognise its value, and by this failure gave to the idea of God a one-sidedly intellectualistic and rationalistic interpretation.(138)

Any impoverishment of the tradition, then, and the heart of Lawrence's frustration with Eastwood Congregationalism, lies in what were widely considered to be the strengths of Reid's preaching: its logic, reasonableness and, despite the 'aspiration without an object', its analytical thoroughness. Jessie Chambers comments in A Personal Record that the sermons were often more like lectures<sup>139</sup> and we have indeed seen how, in his preaching, Reid takes pride in clarifying terms and concepts. The sermons are always carefully structured, following a consistent argument and, in the tradition of Paton, the aim of his rhetoric is never an end in itself but always to persuade his hearers. Yet this domination of a late nineteenth-century idealist Christianity which privileges analytical reason, order and control, involves, in its utilitarian efficiency of energy, a kind of reductionism. There is the assumption that everything must be expounded and explained and converted into what can be justified as morally valuable. So in The Rainbow we see Ursula's disappointment when the wonderful Eastern hyperbole of the Bible is explained:

'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into heaven.'...

But it was explained, the needle's eye was a little gateway for foot passengers, through which the great humped camel with his load could not possibly squeeze himself; or perhaps, at a great risk, if he were a little camel, he might get through. (R 277)

This is precisely the spirit which seems to ignore the quality of mystery and wonder which keeps a tradition vibrant.

What sort of needle's eye, what sort of a rich man, what sort of heaven? Who knows? It means the Absolute World, and can never be more than half interpreted in terms of the relative world. (R 277)

In Apocalypse, Lawrence writes:

Now a book lives as long as it is unfathomed. Once it is fathomed, it dies at once....

Once it is known, and its meaning is fixed or established, it is dead. A book only lives while it has power to move us, and move us differently; so long as we find it different every time we read it.(140)

Paul Tillich, one of the most illuminating theologians of culture this century, also comments on this neglect of mystery, wonder and otherness in the Protestant tradition. He suggests that Protestantism has failed to resist the tendency to humanize the divine, has neglected to protect the 'finite and conditioned' from usurping the place of 'the unconditional in thinking and acting'.<sup>141</sup> Tillich believes that a failure to transcend man-made ideologies - in true Protestant spirit - has resulted in a neglect of the nonpersonal elements in man, a neglect of 'his vital and mystical side for the sake of consciousness'.<sup>142</sup> This results in the devaluation of religion as 'the state of being grasped by something unconditional, holy, absolute'.<sup>143</sup> He sees the moralistic character of his own early experience of Protestant preaching and 'its tendency to overburden the personal centre and to make the relation to God dependent on continuous, conscious decisions

and experience'<sup>144</sup> as resulting from a failure to take account of man's imaginative, subconscious self, and his need for sacraments and symbols. This 'theology of consciousness', analogous to the Cartesian philosophy of consciousness, resulted in the personality being

... cut off from the vital basis of existence. Religion was reserved for the conscious centre of man. The subconscious levels remained untouched, empty, or suppressed, while the conscious side was overburdened.(145)

It is this, surely, which causes the restless dissatisfaction that Anna feels with the Christianity purveyed in the church:

Was it this she had come to hear; how by doing this thing and by not doing that, she could save her soul?... There was something else she wanted to hear, it was something else she asked for from the Church. (R 158)

Much later, in his essay 'On Human Destiny', Lawrence himself talks about the impoverishment of a religion reduced to what may only be mentally conceived and known:

As a thinking being, man is destined to seek God and to form some conception of Life. And since the invisible God cannot be conceived, and since Life is always more than any idea, behold, from the human conception of God and of Life, a great deal of necessity is left out. And this God whom we have left out, and this Life that we have shut out from our living, must in the end turn against us and rend us. It is our destiny.

Nothing will alter it. When the Unknown God whom we ignore turns savagely to rend us, from the darkness of oblivion, and when the Life that we exclude from our living turns to poison and madness in our veins, then there is only one thing left to do. We have to struggle down to the heart of things, where the everlasting flame is, and kindle ourselves another beam of light. In short, we have to make another bitter adventure in pulsating thought, far, far to the one central pole of energy. We have to germinate inside us, between our undaunted mind and our reckless, genuine passions, a new germ. The germ of a new idea. A new germ of God-knowledge, of Life-knowledge. But a new germ.(146)

As usual, Lawrence's reflections are rooted in his personal experience. Jessie Chambers' brother, David, in his lecture 'Memories

of D.H. Lawrence', recalls Lawrence's break with the Chapel in the summer of 1908:

He was becoming impatient with the narrow life of Eastwood. Above all, he was breaking the bonds of Chapel religion and Chapel morality. This seems to me a very important turning point between the old life and the new, and I think I can identify the occasion for it, though I cannot be sure of the date. We were returning from Chapel on a summer evening: his mother, my mother, various members of the family, with Lawrence and perhaps one or two of his friends. It was a beautiful evening, and we chose to return through the field paths and through The Warrens. Lawrence was in a dark mood and by the time we reached the Warren he began to inveigh against the Chapel and all it stood for and especially against the minister, the Reverend Robert Reid, for whom we all had a great respect. Lawrence poured a stream of scorn and raillery upon the poor man, made fun of his ideas, and mimicked his way of expressing them: it was a fierce, uncontrollable tirade, an outpouring of long pent-up rage that left us all silent and rather frightened. We had never seen him in such a mood before. He seemed to be beside himself. His mother was as shocked as the rest of us, and perhaps she had the most reason. It was she who had fastened the Chapel bonds around him; he submitted but with a bad grace.... He was now in open rebellion.(147)

Lawrence, Chambers tells us, had just finished his course at University College at the time; he would have been nearly twenty-three.

## 20. Conclusion

In this chapter we have been able, more fully than has hitherto been possible, to explore the nature and character of D.H. Lawrence's Nonconformist inheritance. My intention is not, of course, the elucidation simply of doctrines and dogmas and the demonstration of how these inform the metaphysics of Lawrence's writing. My aim is to consider the more deeply embedded sphere of 'meanings' which are usually implicit rather than overt, embodied in the imagery and tone of the subtext rather than on the surface of a novel. And for this reason, the most interesting significance of Lawrence's religious inheritance can only be fully appreciated in the subsequent chapters.

The two main value-systems which shaped Lawrence were dominated by the contrasting motifs of reason, utility and disciplined form on the one hand, and passion, playfulness and merging fluidity on the other. There is, of course, no sharply defined boundary between the two realms - and indeed it is their interaction which offers the focus of interest. This is particularly highlighted in Paul Tillich's interpretation of the Protestant Principle which insists on safeguarding the nonhuman, subconscious, mysterious dimension of religion and yet is also characterized by a critical, rationalist spirit in a continuing process of self-transcendence. This dual perspective is characteristic of the tradition into which Lawrence was born but was not often held in such balance. One way of interpreting Lawrence's artistic endeavours is to see them as an attempt to reconcile the two perspectives, or at least to restore them to a creative rather than a destructive tension.

It is Lawrence's parents who embody most radically the two value-systems at war. These values are also a reflection of the wider context of Eastwood, and indeed of late nineteenth-century intellectual and religious thought. Reid's Christianity, in particular, in its privileging of the spiritual over the physical, and of reason over feeling, reflects some of the assumptions of the prevailing rationalist idealism. Lawrence was much influenced in his early years by his mother, who shared the assumptions of Chapel religion. His early values, then, would have been dominated - through his mother and the Chapel (including Sunday School, Band of Hope, and Christian Endeavour) - by the kind of reason and morality and spirituality evident in Reid's sermons. Alternatives existed, however, and made choice and change a possibility: the numinous potential of religion was also hinted at in the Chapel; there was also the conflicting mysticism and earthiness of



the Hags Farm, the satiric criticisms of Willie Hopkin and, probably most important, the more subliminal influence of his father's mode of life.

The way in which these elements shaped Lawrence the novelist, both in terms of positive influences - as in the imagery, the intellectual rigour, the 'wonder', and also the negative features - the dualistically rigid, repressive tendencies which stimulated a critical but creative Laurentian reaction, is the theme of the remaining chapters.

## NOTES: CHAPTER TWO

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130. e.g. in 1904: Jan. 31: 'Hidden Treasure'; Feb. 7: 'The Decay of Reverence'; Feb. 21: 'The Strenuous Life'; Feb. 28: 'Impulse and Action'; March 6: 'The Bible'; March 20: 'A Young Man's Religion'; March 27: 'Our Greatest Need'; April 3: 'Pioneers of Hope'; April 10: 'Impossible Secrecy'; April 17: 'Superficial Religion'; April 24: 'Unexplained Powers'; May 1: 'A Study in Destiny'; May 8: 'Unreal Words'; May 22: 'Illusions'; June 5: 'A Positive Faith'; June 12: 'The Christian Affirmation'; June 24: 'The Comfort of the Gospel'; July 17: 'The Curse of Cowardliness'; July 24: 'Responsibility and Independence'; July 31: 'Mean Generosity'; Aug. 7: 'Stereotyped Religion'.
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- He is perfectly at home in the original world of the Bible, which is not the world of modern rationalism or positivism, but one filled with power and glory. But if he is against the modern thought-movements which have opposed Christianity, he is also against essential features of the nineteenth-century puritan Anglicanism and Dissent that he grew up with, and which he absorbed daily at chapel, in school, and at home with a pious mother. What he got from that was twofold: a grasp of the Bible, and through its language some ways of perceiving which are not 'thought'; and years in which to ponder human phenomena such as Mr. Lindley, Mr. Massey and Miss Mary, presented in ['Daughters of the Vicar'] as an ascending order of limited Christian beings.
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## CHAPTER THREE

## THE WHITE PEACOCK

Critics vary widely in their evaluation of Lawrence's first novel and also, consequently, in their assessment of the significance of The White Peacock in Lawrence's writings: 'Beyond all argument an admirable and astonishing piece of work';<sup>1</sup> 'hardly worth consideration as a novel in its own right';<sup>2</sup> 'basic to an understanding of everything Lawrence wrote subsequently';<sup>3</sup> 'painfully callow';<sup>4</sup> 'a dense work, impossible to unravel'.<sup>5</sup> While some critics mention The White Peacock only to dismiss it, others argue for its crucial importance in understanding all of Lawrence's subsequent writing, as a seminal novel containing all the subsequent themes and images in embryo and not yet distorted by the weight of the 'pollyanalytics'.

No one argues for The White Peacock as a great work of art per se. Its weaknesses are obvious enough: the unconvincing narrative technique and narrator; a plot which seems to lack cohesion and fails sufficiently to integrate the subplots; and the uncertain tone of the novel with its mannered aestheticism and pretentious dialogues which spring, at least in part, from the ambiguous social context of the Beardsall family. Yet, as at least one critic has pointed out, some of what is taken to be a weakness in the conception of the novel - for example, the criticism that George's lack of determination in his bid for Lettie is never adequately explained - is actually understood better if seen in a context wider than that of male/female dualism. Colin Milton, for instance, examines the Nietzschean influence on the early works of Lawrence, and offers a fuller and more satisfying interpretation of The White Peacock. A consideration of the Eastwood

Congregationalist influence on Lawrence similarly yields, I believe, a more ample understanding of this first novel, and indeed of Lawrence's subsequent works.

From such a perspective, The White Peacock is particularly interesting. Lawrence began writing his first novel around the Easter of 1906, and worked on it with varying degrees of continuity and intensity until its publication in 1911. As we have seen, Lawrence's break with the Chapel did not come until about 1908, just before he left Eastwood to teach in Croydon, and it seems from the biographical evidence that he was a regular attender up until then. His letters to Reid in 1907 suggest that this involvement was not merely conventional or suffered 'under duress'. The White Peacock evolves during Lawrence's last years as a chapel-goer, through the period of his break with the Chapel and with Eastwood, and into the time of his early attempts to formulate an alternative set of values by which to live.

Given such a context, we might expect such a major transition (as the letters, if not Lawrence's subsequent memories, reveal it to have been) to be evident in the fiction; we might assume that Lawrence's reaction against the influence of the Congregational Chapel would be clearly discernible in The White Peacock. Yet on the face of it, this does not seem to be the case. As I noted in the Introduction, however, Eleanor Greene and Colin Milton have, with reference to Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, argued very convincingly that the greater the influence, the greater Lawrence's tendency to 'cover his traces'. Part of this seems wilful, stemming from his desire to develop an authentic personal philosophy from his 'solar plexus'. Part of it is the inevitable result of assimilation: as Colin Milton says, the more completely digested and assimilated a philosophy or world-view is, the less

explicitly obvious it will be.<sup>6</sup> This is certainly true with regard to Lawrence and Eastwood Congregationalism.

The White Peacock seems to be strongly influenced, both positively and negatively, by Lawrence's inherited notions of Christianity. The setting, mood and imagery, the plot, the dilemmas and the characters, are all shaped by Eastwood Congregationalism and are more fully understood when interpreted in this context. These values - of order, control, rationality - are not, of course, confined to Reid or to Eastwood Congregationalism or to Christianity. From the much wider grouping of values, I am, in analysing the Eastwood Congregationalist influence, selecting but one strand in a whole complex of influences on the novelist. I am not, of course, suggesting that the complexity can be reduced to a single strand, or that Lawrence's work can be 'explained' by this one influence.

Congregationalism's influence on Lawrence and his reaction to it is, in The White Peacock, largely embedded within the story and does not draw attention to itself. But there are a couple of episodes where this is not the case. The first appears in Chapter Seven in the encounter with the new 'Christian' inhabitants of the gamekeeper's old home. Lettie, George, Emily and Cyril are out for a Sunday afternoon walk (although in one of the unsatisfactory but inevitable lapses in a narrative with a peripheral first-person narrator, Emily and Cyril inexplicably disappear at some stage). This chapter is an important one in terms of relationship between Lettie and George. She knows at last that she will keep her engagement with Leslie and the walk is something of a swan-song with George. The chapter is laden with natural imagery. One image cluster conveys the deep ambiguity with which Lettie perceives her dilemma. The succession of nests and eggs with associations of security and cosiness are juxtaposed with the

soaring freedom of the adult birds: "I wish," she said, "I wish we were free like that. If we could put everything safely in a little place in the earth - couldn't we have a good time as well as the larks?"' (WP 208). Lettie wants both security and freedom, but without the one becoming bondage and the other a mere scattering of the winds or a walking into disaster like the unfortunate chick that toddles into the fire.

Another related image cluster expresses the violence and destructiveness of nature's relationships: the dead wood-pigeon, killed, Lettie imagines, after a fight with a love rival; and the elm, choked into a splendid dying display by the clutching ivy. In both instances, Lettie admires the recklessness of nature: "Trees know how to die, you see - we don't." ... "If we were trees with ivy - instead of being fine humans with free active life - we should hug our thinning lives, shouldn't we?"' (WP 209-210). Yet she is also dismayed at nature's cruelty. It is in this context, heavy with emotion and significance, as well as with nature imagery, that we find the seemingly incongruous meeting with the new inhabitants of the Kennels. Lettie has stopped by the stone water-trough when their conversation is suddenly interrupted:

'That's a private trough,' exclaimed a thin voice, high like a peewit's cry. We started in surprise to see a tall, black-bearded man looking at us and away from us nervously, fidgeting uneasily some ten yards off.

'Is it?' said Lettie, looking at her wet hands, which she proceeded to dry on a fragment of a handkerchief.

'You mustn't meddle with it,' said the man, in the same reedy, oboe voice. Then he turned his head away, and his pale grey eyes roved the countryside - and when he had courage, he turned his back to us, shading his eyes to continue his scrutiny. He walked hurriedly a few steps, then craned his neck, peering into the valley, and hastened a dozen yards in another direction, again stretching and peering about. Then he went indoors.

'He is pretending to look for somebody,' said Lettie 'but it's only because he's afraid we shall think he came out just to look at us' - and they laughed.

Suddenly a woman appeared at the gate; she had pale eyes like the mouse voiced man.

'You'll get Bright's disease sitting on that there damp stone,' she said to Lettie, who at once rose apologetically.

'I ought to know,' continued the mouse voiced woman 'my own mother died of it.'

'Indeed,' murmured Lettie, 'I'm sorry.'

'Yes,' continued the woman 'it behoves you to be careful. Do you come from Strelley Mill Farm?' she asked suddenly of George, surveying his shameful déshabille with bitter reproof.

He admitted the imputation.

'And you're going to leave, aren't you?'

Which also he admitted.

'Humph! - we s'll 'appen get some neighbours. It's a dog's life for loneliness. I suppose you knew the last lot that was here.'

Another brief admission.

'A dirty lot - a dirty beagle she must have been. You should just ha' seen these grates.'

'Yes,' said Lettie, 'I have seen them.' 'Faugh - the state! But come in - come in, you'll see a difference.'

They entered out of curiosity.

The kitchen was indeed different. It was clean and sparkling, warm with bright red chintzes on the sofa and on every chair cushion. Unfortunately the effect was spoiled by green and yellow antimacassars, and by a profusion of paper and woollen flowers. There were three cases of woollen flowers, and on the wall, four fans stitched over with ruffled green and yellow crêpe paper, adorned with yellow paper roses, carnations, arum lilies, and poppies; there were also wall pockets full of paper flowers; while the wood outside was loaded with blossom.

'Yes,' said Lettie, 'There is a difference.'

The woman swelled, and looked round. The black-bearded man peeped from behind the 'Christian Herald' - those long, blaring trumpets! - and shrank again. The woman darted at his pipe, which he had put on a piece of newspaper on the hob, and blew some imaginary ash from it. Then she caught sight of something - perhaps some dust - on the fireplace.

'There!' she cried. 'I knew it; I couldn't leave him one second! I haven't work enough burning wood but he must be potter potter-.'

'I only pushed a piece in between the bars,' complained the mouse voice from behind the paper.

'Pushed a piece in!' she re-echoed, with awful scorn, seizing the poker and thrusting it over his paper 'what do you call that, sitting there telling your stories before folks-'

They crept out and hurried away. Glancing round, Lettie saw the woman mopping the doorstep after them, and she laughed. (WP pp. 212-213)

At one level, this episode, with its caricature of the hen-pecked husband, provides some welcome comic relief in a fairly emotionally intense chapter. However, it serves some other purposes too. Here is one of the few explicit glimpses we have in the book of a certain mode of Christianity. Lawrence makes a point of telling us that the man is reading the Christian Herald, and cannot resist a parenthical 'those long blaring trumpets'. That this couple is meant to represent a world-view opposed to Annable's thoroughly materialistic, animalistic one is clear.

The man's first words, 'That's a private trough ... You mustn't meddle with it', reveal a defensive, territorial attitude sharply contrasted with the reckless spendthriftness of the dying elm and the natural world. His voice is thin and reedy, like a bird or an oboe: something not quite human or artificial. He is uneasy, timid, unnatural, sent on this unpleasant mission by a domineering wife. Inside the house, the man's subjection is pitiful; Lawrence's portrayal here of a humiliatingly emasculating 'Christianity', a slave mentality, is strongly Nietzschean. In the cruelly destructive nature of the marital relationship, the devastating results of predatory nature - the choked elm and dead wood-pigeon - are echoed. The woman is life-negating, self-pitying, with a martyred manner; she is tactless, without charm and judgemental. She disapproves of George's unkempt

appearance, and makes obvious her total discounting of his family as suitable neighbours for her. Her response to their plight, which is forcing them to leave the farm, is bluntly callous: 'we s'll 'appen get some neighbours.'

Her scorn of the keeper's family is largely on account of their dirtiness, and indeed her emphasis on cleanliness and order is shown to be obsessive and a form of perfectionist domination as she bullies her husband over imaginary dust and ashes caused by his pipe or his poking of the fire. The rigid, puritanical, spotless interior is revealed as tasteless. The room's unnaturalness is highlighted by the profusion of artificial flowers within when 'the wood outside was loaded with blossom'. Culture's parody of nature's creativity and abundance betrays its own strangulated aridity. The chapter's images of natural domesticity and security are reduced inside the house to a scene of deadly bondage. The values of order, cleanliness and control become rigidity, and the associated disgust with the dirty, chaotic and natural are here magnified and caricatured. Nevertheless, it seems clear that this couple's value-system bears resemblances to Reid's Christianity, and this brief episode offers a small, but significant insight into one of the important perspectives - that of a repressive Christianity - against which the fabric of the story is defined.

A further glimpse comes near the end when George's little daughter, Gwendoline, arrives home from church and preaches at her father:

'And you're very naughty!' preached Gwendoline, turning her back disdainfully on her father.

'Is that what the parson's been telling you?' he asked, a grain of amusement still in his bitterness.

'No it isn't!' retorted the youngster. 'If you want to know you should go and listen for yourself. Everybody that goes to church

looks nice, -' she glanced at her mother and at herself, preening herself proudly - 'and God loves them,' she added. She assumed a sanctified expression, and continued after a little thought: 'because they look nice and are meek.' (WP 312)

These reactions against a certain mode of self-righteous Christianity, however, are not typical. There are more important and interesting ways in which Lawrence's reaction to his Congregational inheritance shaped his fiction.

For instance, Graham Holderness, in a stimulating book on Lawrence, suggests that Lawrence's crisis of faith gave rise to his early aestheticism:

In the process of losing the emotional and moral intensity of religious faith, Lawrence turned to art as an alternative. It is not surprising that he should turn to the kind of 'art' which appears to transcend the complexities of concrete human activity and offers to soothe the tortured soul with an illusory wholeness and perfection. 'Art' that stands over and above life, mocking its conflicts and disharmonies and imperfections with a serene beauty, or the abstract, absolute unity of pure aesthetic form.(7)

While Holderness is right in seeing Lawrence's first novel as a direct response to his rejection of Chapel Christianity, and as an attempt to explore alternatives, he oversimplifies the issue. Holderness argues that in The White Peacock, Lawrence is taking the way of aestheticism, and he sees the whole action of the novel as transforming the human into the aesthetic, with aestheticism emerging ultimately as the 'only available means of evading tragedy'.<sup>8</sup> But in the novel, aestheticism is shown to be at least as sterile as sheer brute unconsciousness, an equally isolating and deathly tragic hell. If one interprets the novel as a struggle between aestheticism and realism, then such a struggle is more complex and by no means the pyrrhic victory that Holderness seems to be suggesting. The influence of Lawrence's Congregationalist inheritance is, as we shall see, deeper, more subtle and more pervasive than Holderness and most other

critics suggest. It is not responsible only for leaving a vacuum in Lawrence that needed to be filled, but was one of the important influences which continued actively to shape Lawrence's fictive agenda.

The White Peacock must be the hardest Lawrence novel to schematize neatly. It is shot through, even structured upon, ambivalences and dichotomies and startling contrasts. Lawrence's ambivalence towards his religious inheritance contributes to the density of the work and the sense that it is impossible to unravel. Within the novel, it seems as if he is caught between his inability to remain within the old value-system and his not having constructed a new one within which to write. One of the major themes of the book is the difficulty of growing up: the mood is profoundly nostalgic, wistful and even fearful. The White Peacock is an elegy to the loss of childhood; it is Lawrence's 'In Memoriam', his crisis of faith transmuted into art. On the surface the novel's perspective is hostile to the Eastwood Congregationalist mode of Christianity; at deeper levels we see that the struggle is still very much alive and Lawrence's rejection is very far from complete. As well as the loss of childhood theme, the novel's exploration of the nature of man and of love, and of the passions in particular, reflects Lawrence's ambivalence. In the upheaval of faith - and with it the loosening of primary definitions - what man is or should aspire to be, is by no means finally settled. The related themes of man's lack of control over his own destiny, and of his loss of control over nature as evidenced in the wasteland setting and theme, also indicate the influence on Lawrence of a religious inheritance in which two of the key motifs were restraint and order.

'Wasteland' is a pervasive modernist motif and Lawrence is one of a number of early twentieth-century writers who gives it a central place in his art. In The White Peacock, it is perhaps too easy to

concentrate on the personal relationships, dilemmas and tragedies portrayed, to the exclusion of the wider setting. It is not just individual lives, but the whole land which seems blighted. The farm is being overrun and destroyed by rabbits; wild dogs ravage the sheep; the bottom pond is crawling with rats. The novel abounds with images of a world formerly tamed, civilized, built up by man, being eaten away, gradually and relentlessly destroyed by nature. This struggle in the landscape, in the very setting of the novel, is explored in a more complex way within the characters. The continuing hold on Lawrence of some of the assumptions of Eastwood Congregationalism lies, perhaps, at its heart.

The opening paragraphs deftly set the scene and context and introduce many of the major themes:

I stood watching the shadowy fish slide through the gloom of the mill-pond. They were grey descendants of the silvery things that had darted away from the monks, in the young days when the valley was lusty. The whole place was gathered in the musing of old age. The thick-piled trees on the far shore were too dark and sober to dally with the sun, the reeds stood crowded and motionless. Not even a little wind flickered the willows of the islets. The water lay softly, intensely still. Only the thin stream falling through the mill-race murmured to itself of the tumult of life which had once quickened the valley. (WP 1)

The most obvious contrast is between past and present. In the young days, the fish were silvery and darted, now they are shadowy and grey, and merely slide through the gloom. The world is growing old and over-ripe, static in its surfeit. The thick-piled trees and the crowded weeds convey an image of nature overgrown, no longer kept in bounds under man's control. Yet nature's unboundedness is portrayed as a kind of bondage: the weight, the gloom, the neglect and the sombreness. There is no more dallying with the sun or wind, only a soft, intense stillness. All this contrasts with the sense of vibrant life that has been 'in the young days when the valley was lusty'.

There is a strong sense of continuity with the past: the same place, the same valley, the same mill-pond. The narrator stands where the monks of previous ages stood, and yet the paradoxical contrast of life and non-life (what is dead and past is portrayed with more vitality than what is still living), distances them immeasurably. The murmuring stream of the final sentence is the only apparent remnant - or even promise - of vibrant life. Embodied in the very first paragraph of the novel, then, is one of the essential assumptions on which it is structured: uncontrolled nature chokes life.

We have seen that one of the primary tenets of Robert Reid's Christianity is that of discipline and control. The natural passions are seen as potentially explosive, subversive and destructive if not kept firmly in hand. It seems to me that in his first novel, Lawrence had by no means broken free from this assumption. In terms of both setting and characters, the thesis of Reid's Christianity seems to be - albeit reluctantly and resignedly - accepted.

The squire discovers rabbits to be a lucrative business and forbids his tenant farmers to control their numbers. So, while the rabbit population increases to plague-like proportions, what the farmers have painstakingly cultivated is gradually eaten away: 'Farms were gnawed away; corn and sweet grass departed from the face of the hills; cattle grew lean, unable to eat the defiled herbage' (WP 57).

It is the gamekeeper, Annable, avowed enemy of human civilization and cultivation, who guards the rabbits from interference with their uninhibited reproduction and laying bare of the landscape. The result is the loss of an adequate livelihood at the Strelley Mill farm; and this dilemma underlies the whole story. A decision needs to be made. George's father decides to emigrate to Canada, but George, closely identified with the lapsed landscape, allows circumstances to shape his

destiny. It is not woman, as manifested in Lettie, who is responsible for undermining and demoralizing George, making it impossible for him to act purposively. The fundamental lack of will and conscious control in his life is portrayed right from the beginning, as part of the condition of the world in which he lives: a world in which man seems steadily to be losing his control over nature, with disastrous effects. If the rabbits are, in terms of their threat to the viability of the Saxon's livelihood, the most destructive natural force in The White Peacock, they are not the most chilling. As dusk is falling, Cyril, Emily, George and Lettie go down through the neglected, overgrown garden, 'not very productive, save of weeds, and perhaps, tremendous lank artichokes or swollen marrows' (WP 52) to the lower pond, 'a pool chained in a heavy growth of weeds' (WP 53). Amidst these images of neglect and choking overgrowth, they watch with a fascinated horror, the rats which overrun the area:

It was moving with rats,... We sat on some piled, mossy stones to watch. The rats came out again, ran a little way, stopped, ran again, listened, were reassured, and slid about freely, dragging their long naked tails. Soon six or seven grey beasts were playing round the mouth of the culvert in the gloom. They sat and wiped their sharp faces, stroking their whiskers. Then one would give a little rush and a little squirm of excitement, and would jump vertically into the air, alighting on four feet, running, sliding into the black shadow. One dropped with an ugly plop into the water, and swam towards us, the hoary imp, his sharp snout and his wicked little eyes moving at us. Lettie shuddered. I threw a stone into the dead pool, and frightened them all. But we had frightened ourselves more, so we hurried away, and stamped our feet in relief on the free pavement of the yard. (WP 53)

This confrontation adds a further dimension to the theme of fear of being overrun by nature. Rats are associated with treachery, viciousness, filth, scavaging and disease. Lawrence also captures something of the instinctive horror, the primitive, irrational fear with which man tends to recoil from rats. And it is the pavement here, not nature, which represents freedom.

Nature is embodied savagely, too, in the form of the strange dogs who harry the sheep:

One morning, the squire, going the round of his fields as was his custom, to his grief and horror found two of his sheep torn and dead in the hedge-bottom, and the rest huddled in a corner, swaying about in terror, smeared with blood. (WP 63)

Again, the theme of untamed, wild nature winning over man's efforts at domestication is echoed in the fact that these dogs seem to be domestic dogs which have reverted to their wild state.

Uncontrolled nature is felt, in the episodes with the rats and the dogs, as something frightening, subversive and violent. Along with the rabbits, encroaching nature is perceived as profoundly threatening to man. In The White Peacock, man's control is undermined, and the result is ultimately destructive. In terms of the world of nature, certain assumptions common to Lawrence's Eastwood Congregational inheritance still seem to hold sway: the loss of the rational, human control over the natural world is disastrous.

The sense of continuing battle against an inevitably encroaching enemy echoes the sentiments of Reid and other late Victorian Christians who felt their world-view increasingly challenged by the winds of modernity. Despite his habitual optimism and confidence that Christianity could certainly withstand the probings and testings of modern ideas, Reid's sense of isolation at the ebbing of the sea of faith is also suggested in his sermons. In one on 'Courage' he defines true courage in these terms:

The man who persists in what he feels to be right, who adheres to his conviction in spite of the clamour of the crowd, and the loss of popularity which his action may involve; the man who had the courage to say what he believes to be true rather than what he knows will be popular, who never trims his sails merely to catch the favouring breeze of public opinion, but bravely speaks out and lives out the truth that is in him,... the courage required in

these modern days is the courage to face life, with all the responsibilities it brings.... The courage of Christian life is pre-eminently courage to adhere consistently to Christian principle and to Christian practice - the courage of deep, unwavering conviction.(9)

This, however, is a fairly oblique influence and echo; that of the disastrous effects of man's loss of control over nature is not. This idea is carried further, of course, into the more frequently discussed theme, embodied most in the father, Annable and George, of the loss or rejection of rational, disciplined control over oneself.

Sometimes the introduction of the father is dismissed as an irrelevance to the story. In terms of plot, a case can be made for such an argument - although even here his significance should not be underestimated: 'The death of the man who was our father changed our lives' (WP 44). His appearance is structurally significant as a catalyst to the entry of Cyril and Lettie into the harsh and painful world of adulthood. It is arguable that, in terms of theme, mood and motif also, his presence in the book is entirely fitting.

For instance, George and Cyril come across Cyril's father as they saunter through the woods near Cyril's home. He is not identified in this relationship until the next chapter; here he is perceived merely as a vagrant, a wrecked human being. He is asleep on a lover's seat, 'where a great tree had fallen and remained mossed and covered with fragile growth' (WP 22). Such juxtaposition of the man and his natural surroundings work both associatively - as here with the image of the fallen tree - and also ironically. The setting of the lover's bower mocks his alienation from his wife and family and from society. It dramatizes his aloneness and the absence of love in his life while the delicate, wild geraniums and romantic associations emphasize his 'unpleasantness':

The cap had fallen from his grizzled hair, and his head leaned back against a profusion of the little wild geraniums that decorated the dead bough so delicately. The man's clothing was good, but slovenly and neglected. His face was pale and worn with sickness and dissipation. As he slept, his grey beard wagged, and his loose unlovely mouth moved in indistinct speech. He was acting over again some part of his life, and his features twitched during the unnatural sleep. He would give a little groan, gruesome to hear, and then talk to some woman. His features twitched as if with pain, and he moaned slightly.

The lips opened in a grimace, showing the yellow teeth behind the beard. Then he began again talking in his throat, thickly, so that we could only tell part of what he said. It was very unpleasant. I wondered how we should end it. Suddenly through the gloom of the twilight-haunted woods came the scream of a rabbit caught by a weasel. (WP 22)

In Chapter Four, 'The Father', Mrs Beardsall receives a letter from her estranged husband. He is dying. The view Cyril gives of his father is familiar to readers of the Lawrence biographies, Sons and Lovers, and some of the later essays.

The marriage had been unhappy. My father was of frivolous, rather vulgar character, but plausible, having a good deal of charm. He was a liar, without notion of honesty, and he had deceived my mother thoroughly. One after another she discovered his mean dishonesties and deceits, and her soul revolted from him, and because the illusion of him had broken into a thousand vulgar fragments, she turned away with a scorn of a woman who finds her romance has been a trumpery tale. When he left her for other pleasures - Lettie being a baby of three years, while I was five - she rejoiced bitterly. She had heard of him indirectly - and of him nothing good, although he prospered - but he had never come to see her or written to her in all the eighteen years. (WP 33)

The tone is dismissive and the perspective fully that of the injured wife. It has none of the warmth of subtext and imagery which makes the father a much more attractive character in Sons and Lovers. Yet it is interesting here that the mother expresses regret for her cruelty. Again, this is not subtly dramatized as it is in the later novel, but only referred to by means of rather flat statement:

'He would not have been as cruel as I have been.'...  
'I knew, yes, I did know he wanted me, and you, I felt it. I have had the feeling of him upon me this last three months especially ... I have been cruel to him.' (WP 33)

Cyril dissuades her from such remorse. They go together to the cottage where he has died and hear about the dead man from the withered old woman and the doctor. Both are avid tipplers. The doctor philosophizes about alternative modes of living:

'You can burn your lamp with a big draught, and it'll flare away till the oil's gone, then it'll stink and smoke itself out. Or you can keep it trim on the kitchen table, dirty your fingers occasionally trimming it up, and it'll last a long time, and sink out mildly.' (WP 40)

The first way is reckless, careless, Dionysian in its daring passion and destructiveness. Throughout the book this is portrayed as the way of nature - the splendid display of the dying elm, the dead wood-pigeon, Bizet's Carmen. The second way conserves life, is ordered, safe, efficient. More in the Appollonian spirit, it is sensible but unwilling to risk much and spend itself. We shall explore Lawrence's ambivalence about these two ways in due course. In this context, however, the father's reckless debauchery is portrayed in terms that are almost wholly unsympathetic. Cyril is profoundly shaken when he recognizes his father as the same man he and George came across in the woods:

I felt the great wild pity, and a sense of terror, and a sense of horror, and a sense of awful littleness and loneliness among a great empty space. I felt beyond myself, as if I were a mere fleck drifting unconsciously through the dark. (WP 37)

Outside in the sunshine he dismisses the ghastly vision of his wasted, dead father as 'a lie,... fading phrases of the untruth' (WP 41). Yet the father's presence and death is somehow of fundamental importance to the family. It changes their lives.

It was not that we suffered a great grief; the chief trouble was the unanswered crying of failure. But we were changed, in our feelings and in our relations; there was a new consciousness, a new carefulness. (WP 44)

The reason for this sense of failure is not made explicit. Part of it may be the sense of guilt expressed by the mother at having excluded the father, of having exacerbated his alienation and no doubt his decline. Another part of it is surely identification with one's own flesh and blood. In the woods, Cyril can afford to be detached, dignified and condescending. He is addressing, merely, a wasted tramp. The shock over his father's corpse is partly having to accept this specimen of human decadence as part of himself. The moral is made clear: man's loss of self-control, the allowing of his baser, instinctive nature to gnaw away at his rational, moral self, leads to disaster as surely as when the world of nature overwhelms the cultivated world of his civilization.

This theme, a crucial one in The White Peacock, is nowhere more explicitly explored than in the character of Annable. He is different from the father and George in the self-consciousness of his mode of living; he has developed it into an articulated, albeit simplistic, philosophy: 'Be a good animal' (WP 132). Even before he appears in the novel, the keeper is identified with the overgrown neglect of the countryside. On an evening walk, George and Cyril approach an old farm. They pass weeds and thistles, molehills and rabbit holes. The house is in darkness, 'several of the windows had been bricked in, giving a pitiful impression of blindness' (WP 60). They peep inside, and by the light of the moon, see a room that is dirty, littered and desolate. There is no fire in the hearth, only a 'distress of grey ashes' and 'piled cinders of burnt paper'.

In the yard, images of decay multiply: it is overgrown with nettles, and the gruesome remains of 'animal wreckage, even the remnants of a cat' are scattered around. They hear bats and are frightened by three large rats which run at them, teeth bared. There

is nothing fruitful there, no corn or straw or hay, and no apples in the orchard. The place is 'only choked with a growth of abnormal weeds' (WP 61); nearby, 'an army of rabbits bunched up, or hopping a few paces forward', is feeding. This, where the strongest images of civilization, neglected and overwhelmed by uncontrollable nature, accumulate, is the home of the gamekeeper. And when Annable himself appears in the novel in the following pages, his surly misanthropy is amply evident. George and Cyril confront him over a rabbit snare; he knocks down both of them.

A few pages later, after the episode with the wild dogs, Cyril and Emily come upon the gamekeeper's cottage. Once again the neglect and unkemptness of the vicinity is described. Cyril and Emily go in to attend to Emily's wound. The description of the interior is a study in domestic chaos, reminiscent of the barbarism of Wuthering Heights:

A woman came to the door. One breast was bare, and hung over her blouse, which, like a dressing-jacket, fell loose over her skirt. Her fading, red-brown hair was all frowsy from the bed. In the folds of her skirt clung a swarthy urchin with a shockingly short shirt. He stared at us with big black eyes, the only portion of his face undecorated with egg and jam....

The kitchen was large, but scantily furnished; save, indeed, for children. The eldest, a girl of twelve or so, was standing toasting a piece of bacon with one hand, and holding back her nightdress in the other. As the toast hand got scorched, she transferred the bacon to the other, gave the hot fingers a lick to cool them, and then held back her nightdress again. Her auburn hair hung in heavy coils down her gown. A boy sat on the steel fender, catching the dropping fat on a piece of bread, 'One, two, three, four, five, six drops' and he quickly bit off the tasty corner, and resumed the task with his other hand. When we entered he tried to draw his shirt over his knees, which caused the fat to fall wasted. A fat baby, evidently laid down from the breast, lay kicking on the squab, purple in the face, while another lad was pushing bread and butter into its mouth. The mother swept to the sofa, poked out the bread and butter, pushed her finger into the baby's throat, lifted the child up, punched its back, and was highly relieved when it began to yell. Then she administered a few sound spansks to the naked buttocks of the crammer. He began to howl, but stopped suddenly on seeing us laughing. On the sack-cloth which served as a hearth rug sat a beautiful child washing the face of a wooden doll with tea, and wiping it on her night-gown. At the table, an infant in a high chair sat sucking a

piece of bacon, till the grease ran down his swarthy arms, oozing through his fingers. An older lad stood in the big arm-chair, whose back was hung with calf-skin, and was industriously pouring the dregs of the teacups into a basin of milk. The mother whisked away the milk, and made a rush for the urchin, the baby hanging over her arm the while.

'I could half kill thee,' she said, but he had slid under the table; and sat serenely unconcerned. (WP 70-71)

Eventually a knitting needle is found, but Emily, significantly, flinches from the cauterizing, and it must be abandoned. Cyril and Emily flee the scene of confusion as ill discipline erupts into savagery.

Annable himself appears in the scene where Lettie, Emily and Cyril have discovered the snowdrops. The echo of Wuthering Heights, an interesting feature throughout The White Peacock, is again perceptible. The keeper is likened to 'some malicious Pan' (WP 130) as he mocks the genteel young folk with his crude reductionism. The bluntness, sometimes violence, of his speech is like Heathcliff's, and Annable, too, is not merely pagan but deliberately anti-human and hostile to cultural values. Conversation turns to his family. He describes them proudly in purely animal terminology:

'Aren't they a lovely little litter? - aren't they a pretty bag o' ferrets? - natural as weasels - that's what I said they should be - bred up like a bunch o' young foxes, to run as they would.'...

'They're natural - they can fend for themselves like wild beasts do.' (WP 131-132)

His appreciation of his wife is similarly expressed: 'She breeds well, the owd lass - one every two years - nine in fourteen years - done well, hasn't she?' (WP 132). Lettie challenges Annable for neglecting his duty; the keeper begins to expound his philosophy:

'It's natural! When a man's more than nature he's a devil. Be a good animal, says I, whether it's man or woman. You sir, a good natural male animal; the lady there - a female un - that's proper - as long as yer enjoy it.'

'And what then?'

'Do as th' animals do. I watch my brats - I let 'em grow.... They can be like birds, or weasels, or vipers, or squirrels, so long as they ain't human rot, that's what I say.' (WP 132)

That the life engendered by such an attitude does not make for a blissful pastoral idyll or even a comfortable hedonism is made all too clear in the very next scene. The couple's laughter is interrupted by the cry of a child. As they hurry towards the Kennels they hear 'the mad yelling and yelping of children, and the wild, hysterical shouting of a woman' (WP 133).

The mother was in a state of hysteria; her hair streamed over her face, and her eyes were fixed in a stare of overwrought irritation. Up and down went her long arm like a windmill sail. I ran and held it. When she could hit no more, the woman dropped the pan from her nerveless hand, and staggered, trembling, to the squab. She looked desperately weary and fordone - she clasped and unclasped her hands continually. (WP 133)

The visitors tend the bruised lad; they watch the mother's passionate reparation to her injured child, and listen to her despairing confession of her inability to cope. Lawrence's treatment of the gamekeeper who turns his back on civilization to live according to instinct could hardly be more different in The White Peacock and Lady Chatterley's Lover. The comparison is a measure of how far Lawrence travelled from and revised his early perspective. While Mellors' philosophy is privileged to the extent of almost unquestioned sanctity, Annable's is shown to be a failure within two pages. Not that Annable is treated without sympathy. Indeed, the chapter entitled "A Shadow in Spring" is devoted entirely to the narrator's growing friendship with the gamekeeper.

Cyril is strongly attracted to the keeper's 'magnificent physique, his great vigour and vitality, and his swarthy, gloomy face' (WP 146).

Annable is, according to Cyril, hated by 'all the world', 'to the people in the villages he was like a devil of the woods'.

He was a man of one idea: - that all civilisation was the painted fungus of rottenness. He hated any sign of culture. I won his respect one afternoon when he found me trespassing in the woods because I was watching some maggots at work in a dead rabbit. That led us to a discussion of life. He was a thorough materialist - he scorned religion and all mysticism.... When he thought, he reflected on the decay of mankind - the decline of the human race into folly and weakness and rottenness. 'Be a good animal, true to your animal instinct,' was his motto. With all this he was fundamentally very unhappy - and he made me also wretched. (WP 146-147)

The main conversation between Cyril and Annable takes place in the appropriate setting of an abandoned church. The signs of neglect and decay are by now almost predictable: the approaching path clogged with decayed leaves, the threshold overgrown with grass, and inside, a 'heap of fallen plaster and rubbish'.

In the twilight the pews were leaning in ghostly disorder, the prayer-books dragged from their ledges, scattered on the floor in the dust and rubble, torn by mice and birds.... I stooped and picked up a piece of plaster from the ragged confusion of feathers, and broken nests, and remnants of dead birds. (WP 147)

Outside in the graveyard, Annable tells Cyril what has led him to his present state: his Cambridge education, his curacy, his marriage with the Lady Chrystabel, and her insistence on treating him as an objet d'art, her animal. He describes how this led to his subsequent rebellion and rejection of civilization. It is in this scene that the peacock is introduced. It serves as a motif for a number of the novel's important themes. Most obviously here, Annable identifies it with the proud and potentially destructive soul of aesthetic woman. Cyril imagines a white peacock, thus emphasizing its association with the soul and spirit, and reinforcing the unnatural implications of a disembodied soul in the startling image of a colourless peacock. There

is also, however, a paradoxical elaboration here of the nature over culture theme. Despite the peacock's elaborate beauty - 'it showed us the full wealth of its tail glimmering like a stream of coloured stars' (WP 148) - it is still representative of the bestial world. Its wild scream which harshly penetrates the night, its ugly legs and awkward gait, bespeak baseness. It dirties the angel on which it is perched and seems to screech derision at the two men. In this context it is part of the natural world which scorns man's attempts to attain culture, self-expression and even immortality. If the church can be seen in Lawrence's fiction - among other things - as a tangible symbol of man's highest spiritual yearning, then its decay is similarly significant. "The church," said I, "is rotten. I suppose they'll stand all over the country like this, soon - with peacocks trailing the graveyards" (WP 149).

In the last analysis, Annable cannot avoid being a man and hence identified with what man has built, with the artefacts of human culture. He identifies himself with the rotten church in its hopelessness: "Oh my God! - I'm like a good house built and finished and left to tumble down again with nobody to live in it" (WP 149). His philosophy is ultimately despairing. In insisting on an acceptance of nothing beyond the random brutality of raw nature, Annable's belief is every bit as sterile as the one he rejects, and it leads to a hopeless hell. His unexplained death, crushed by rocks in the quarry, is, by its very meaninglessness, significant. It is also a vindication for the continuing assumption in the novel of the primacy of man's reason over his instincts.

George is a much more important character in the novel than either the father or Annable. He is also more complex. Nevertheless, it is clear that he is identified with the two older men in his mode of

living. While their fate is largely predetermined in the framework of the novel, we are frequently led to believe that George's fate is not inevitable - although this whole issue of freedom and determinism is a key question throughout the novel.

Right at the outset, George is identified with the complacent, over-ripe valley: "It's all right for a doss - here." "Your life is nothing else but a doss. I shall laugh when somebody jerks you awake" (WP 1).

This theme of awakening is also ominously foreshadowed in George's careless experiments with the young field-bees that he tries to torment into flight before they are ready. This apparent callousness is exemplified consistently in the early part of the novel as George's character is being established. He takes sardonic delight in displaying the calm indifference with which he drowns the household cat, injured in a gin. In his home he is domineering and deliberately irritating to his over-sensitive sister, Emily. In his early encounters with Lettie, he enjoys trying to shock and provoke her with his boorish behaviour and coarse terminology. Within the first few pages of the novel, Cyril satirically throws down the gauntlet to his sister when she shows interest in George: "You could make a man of him, I am sure" (WP 8). And indeed, Lettie's response to this challenge and the subsequent relationship between the two thwarted lovers constitutes a major part of the plot.

At the outset, George's 'philosophy' is very much like Annable's, except that George's is more genuinely natural and instinctive. His modus vivendi is not the product of a consciously articulated set of ideas as Annable's is, but is a spontaneous, nonreflective response to the circumstances of his life. As such, it is shown to be extremely attractive. There is real joy and exuberance, for instance, in his

dancing, and great satisfaction in his skill and pleasure in harvesting. When the women decry the callousness of the men hunting the rabbits, George says: "'what's the good finicking! If you feel like doing a thing - you'd better do it'" (WP 52).

It is Lettie who first seems to challenge his limited range of being:

'I'd rather "dance and sing" round "wrinkled Care" than carefully shut the door on him, while I slept in the chimney seat - wouldn't you?' she asked.

He laughed, and began to consider what she meant before he replied.

'As you do,' she added.

'What?' he asked.

'Keep half your senses asleep - half alive.'

'Do I?' he asked.

'Of course you do; - "bos - bovis; an ox." You are like a stalled ox, food and comfort, no more. Don't you love comfort?' she smiled. (WP 15-16)

Here, and later when George is referred to as her Taurus, her bull, the prefiguring of Annable's Lady Chrystabel is, of course, ominous. Later Lettie tells him: "'You are blind; you are only half-born. You are gross with good-living and heavy sleeping. You are a piano which will only play a dozen common notes'" (WP 28).

At this early stage in his writing career, Lawrence had clearly not espoused his later belief in the blood being wiser than the intellect. George is a man who lives by instinct rather than reason and his spiritual, intellectual dimension seems barely developed at the beginning. In this novel, interestingly, it is assumed that this is unacceptable, although the subtext also shows, as we shall see, how seductive. Life according to the blood, as it were, is something less than fully human. To live primarily from this centre is to be only half alive, half asleep. Lettie, and to a lesser extent Cyril, take on

the rôle of the awakener: they urge George to wake up, to take responsibility for his life, to shape his destiny deliberately and be more consciously in control. It is assumed that any kind of fulfilment demands this. It is also assumed that such an awakening will come through suffering:

'If you'd ever been sick; if you'd ever been born into a home where there was something oppressed you, and couldn't understand; if ever you'd believed, or even doubted, you might have been a man by now.... Things don't flower if they're overfed. You have to suffer before you blossom in this life.' (WP 28)

For George, however, such change is not easy. He embodies the inertia of the landscape overrun by nature; his will is lethargic, his attitude passive: "'What should I change for? - I'm comfortable at home. As for my future, it can look after itself, so long as no-one depends on me"' (WP 61). His failure to win Lettie seems largely due to his failure in acting purposively and his reluctance in surmounting obstacles. He puts up no resistance to Lettie's objections:

' - Look at me now, and say if it's not impossible - a farmer's wife - with you in Canada.'

'Yes - I didn't expect you like that. Yes, I see it is impossible. But I'd thought about it, and felt as if I must have you, should have you --. Yes, it doesn't do to go dreaming. I think it's the first time, and it'll be the last. Yes, it is impossible.' (WP 167)

Yet when George's father is teasing him about settling for second best in taking Meg and the Ram, Lettie says, "'I don't know." ... "You can generally get what you want if you want it badly enough"' (WP 188). Later, Lettie again seems to accuse George for his failure to take hold of his fate - and hers. When he makes a final bid for Lettie, she tells him it is too late:

'No, my dear, no. The threads of my life were untwined; they drifted about like floating threads of gossamer; and you didn't

put out your hand to take them and twist them up into the chord with yours. Now another has caught them up, and the chord of my life is being twisted, and I cannot wrench it free and untwine it again. I can't, I am not strong enough. Besides, you have twisted another thread far and tight into your chord; could you get free?'

'Tell me what to do - yes, if you tell me.'

'I can't tell you - so let me go.' (WP 215)

Even here, George seems unable to take responsibility, to take control. The result is once again shown to be tragic. George is betrothed to his cousin Meg. She is the woman he dreams of at night: she is soft, brimming with physical charm (WP 143) and 'voluptuous fascination' (WP 140). The arousal from his insentient state has been to no avail. It serves only to make his final decline a tragedy rather than the unconscious demise of a 'half-born' human being. He explains to Cyril his decision to marry Meg:

'You see it's not so much what you call love. I don't know. You see I built on Lettie' ... 'you must found your castles on something, and I founded mine on Lettie. You see, I'm like plenty of folks, I have nothing definite to shape my life to. I put brick upon brick, as they come, and if the whole topples down in the end, it does. But you see, you and Lettie have made me conscious, and now I'm at a dead loss. I have looked to marriage to set me busy on my house of life, something whole and complete, of which it will supply the design. I must marry or be at a loose end. There are two people I could marry - and Lettie's gone. I love Meg just as well, as far as love goes.... [she's] easy and lovely. I can have her without trembling, she's full of soothing and comfort.' (WP 238)

Predictably, this reversion to a mode of life without demands and challenges to spur on George's growth into full manhood hastens his degeneration. He drinks increasingly; his behaviour and taste grow more brutal; his family life starts to resemble the chaos of Annable's home, and his alienation within it that of Cyril's father from his. George ends in a kind of isolated hell, feeling

'like a vacuum, with a pressure on you, a sort of pressure of darkness, and you yourself - just nothing, a vacuum - that's what

it's like - a little vacuum that's not dark, all loose in the middle of a space of darkness, that's pressing on you.' (WP 287-288).

This is a powerful evocation of the terrifying, empty nothingness, emphasized again in the final lines of the novel: 'We were all uncomfortably impressed with the sense of our alienation from him. He sat apart and obscure among us, like a condemned man' (WP 325).

One striking way, then, in which the priorities of Lawrence's Eastwood Congregationalist inheritance are still a strongly shaping factor in the writing of The White Peacock is, by now, clear: the abandonment of control, whether it is the control inherent in man's divinely ordained lordship over nature, or his loss of control or failure to take responsibility for himself, leads to death and destruction.

Although this assumption dominates the subtext of The White Peacock, it is by no means unchallenged. Certainly, the pre-eminence of the natural over the spiritual or rational or cultural is disastrous, but in the subduing of the instinctive life a loss is also involved. The White Peacock is, of course, by no means a simple transformation of the Congregational values into fiction; it also embodies Lawrence's early struggle to transcend them. The novel's value-system is still largely shaped by certain Christian assumptions, but the evidence of a subversive mourning for what has been denied in such modes of Christianity is also apparent. This is perhaps nowhere more explicitly portrayed than in the scene where Cyril, George, Lettie and Leslie come across a carpet of snowdrops in the woods:

Below, in the first shadows, drooped hosts of little white flowers, so silent and sad; it seemed like a holy communion of pure wild things, numberless, frail, and folded meekly in the evening light. Other flower companies are glad;... but snowdrops are sad and mysterious. We have lost their meaning. They do not

belong to us, who ravish them.... Folded in the twilight, these conquered flowerets are sad like forlorn little friends of dryads.

'What do they mean, do you think?' said Lettie in a low voice, as her white fingers touched the flowers, and her black furs fell on them.

'There are not so many this year,' said Leslie.

'They remind me of mistletoe, which is never ours, though we wear it,' said Emily to me.

'What do you think they say - what do they make you think, Cyril?' Lettie repeated.

'I don't know. Emily says they belong to some old wild lost religion - They were the symbol of tears, perhaps, to some strange hearted Druid folk before us.'

'More than tears,' said Lettie 'More than tears, they are so still. Something out of an old religion, that we have lost. They make me feel afraid.'

'What should you have to fear?' asked Leslie.

'If I knew, I shouldn't fear,' she answered 'Look at all the snowdrops' - they hung in dim, strange flecks among the dusky leaves - 'look at them - closed up, retreating, powerless. They belong to some knowledge we have lost, that I have lost, and that I need. I feel afraid. They seem like something in fate. Do you think, Cyril, we can lose things from off the earth - like mastodons, and those old monstrosities - but things that matter - wisdom?'

'It is against my creed,' said I.

'I believe I have lost something,' said she. (WP 129-130)

The snowdrops represent the old pagan past, the 'old wild lost religion'. As Colin Milton argues, the later religion of Christianity represents, not a development from this, but a replacement of paganism with its ideological opposite: a religion which - at least in the Christianity of Reid's sermons - deals with the passions by taming, controlling and crucifying them.<sup>10</sup> The snowdrops are conquered, closed up, defeated and powerless. The loss is deeply felt, if not fully understood and articulated.

Annable exemplifies the deliberate attempt to live once again in a completely naturalistic, pre-Christian past. However, as Milton shows, his self-conscious awareness of his impulses is already an unnatural sign of broken instinct.<sup>11</sup> All that is left him is despair. Nevertheless, we are made to feel the seductiveness of his fierce animal energy and magnificent physique. The pages of description that relate to his funeral are remarkable: the mood is one of loss and lamentation, and yet also of joy and exaltation. The narrator slides into the present tense and this immediacy of language reflects the sudden burgeoning of a landscape in early spring. 'There was a certain thrill and quickening everywhere, as a woman must feel when she has conceived' (WP 155). That there are deliberate echoes here of the pagan death and burial of a vegetation god and the subsequent rebirth of nature seems very likely.

George, too, is portrayed as potently attractive; both Lettie and Cyril are deeply affected by his body, his physical presence. The raw, almost animal passion he epitomizes is also captured in at least two of the paintings which are so significant in the novel. Greiffenhagen's 'Idyll', the cultivated woman embraced by her barbarian lover just emerged from the woods, has a profound effect on George and Lettie. Later, the reproductions of Beardsley's 'Atalanta' and 'Salome' fascinate Cyril, Emily and particularly George, with the power of a revelation.

'I want her more than anything. - And the more I look at these naked lines, the more I want her. It's a sort of fine sharp feeling, like these curved lines.... Has she seen these pictures?'

'No.'

'If she did perhaps she'd want me - I mean she'd feel it clear and sharp coming through her.' (WP 160)

Emily is the most extreme example in the book of a supersensitive consciousness recoiling from brutal nature and the pagan economy which 'accepts and celebrates existence despite the conflict and suffering'.<sup>12</sup> In Nietzschean terms, she exemplifies the corrupting influence of Christianity which has made ascetic and idealistic attitudes instinctive. Yet it is she who, half accidentally, kills one of the strange dogs which has been harrying the sheep.

There, in the mouth of one of the kilns, Emily was kneeling on the dog, her hands buried in the hair of its throat, pushing back its head. The little jerks of the brute's body were the spasms of death; already the eyes were turning inward, and the upper lip was drawn from the teeth by pain.

'Good Lord, Emily! But he is dead,' I exclaimed, 'Has he hurt you?' I drew her away. She shuddered violently, and seemed to feel a horror of herself.

'No - No,' she said, looking at herself, with blood all on her skirt, where she had knelt on the wound which I had given the dog, and pressed the broken rib into the chest. There was a trickle of blood on her arm. (WP 67-68)

Emily is the most vehement critic of the menfolk's killer instinct; she is appalled to find herself thus implicated in such brutality. And yet this gruesome bespattering with blood seems to involve some kind of breakthrough for Emily. There is a breakdown of the inhibitions which make her over-refined and sensitive and unwilling to accept life boldly in its totality - an acceptance which must include man's inescapable involvement in the realm of natural destruction. For a few moments she displays a kind of abandon, a sensuous enjoyment from which she had hitherto recoiled. She asks Cyril to pick some guelder berries and bedecks her hair: "'I have always wanted to put red berries in my hair"' (WP 68). Her head is bare, her hair 'soft and short and ecstatic, tumbled wildly into loose light curls'. Cyril crowns her; she laughs and speaks with as much

courage and recklessness as she can muster before Cyril traps her once again in the limitations of her excessive spirituality. She is not Chloe or Bacchante, not a goddess or princess of the natural, sensual, pagan world, but a Burne-Jones damsel: troubled, sorrowful, caring only for the eternal pips of the apple and throwing its flesh away (WP 69). The character of Emily seems to represent the life-negating results of a life lived too much under the control of the cultured, refined, spiritual dimension. Something vital is lost; some fundamental reconnection with nature, even in the form of bloody, violent baptism is needed even to begin to recover wholeness of being. And yet, interestingly, Emily alone, of all the main characters, achieves happiness and fulfilment at the end.

The White Peacock is a novel about the leaving of childhood and the need to assume the responsibility to choose. While choice seems unproblematic in the stable, even rigid world of Eastwood Congregationalism, it is no longer so in the fictive world of Lawrence's first novel. It seems that this dilemma, a direct result of Lawrence's break with Chapel Christianity, is fundamental to the structure of The White Peacock. In his sermon on the imagination, Reid exhorts his hearers to choose the pure and shun the impure: what constitutes each of these realms does not seem to be at issue. But for Lawrence in The White Peacock, it is not simply a matter of willpower which seems to be wanting, but a radical ambivalence about what these realms consist of, and what, therefore, to aim for. The attraction of a pagan perspective is strongly felt, but this is still, ultimately, defeated by the dominating fear of the destructiveness of nature when unchecked by man.

The choice at the heart of the novel is the love choice which Lettie has to make. She is engaged to Leslie, the local affluent

eligible bachelor, but is in love with George, the boorish farmer with no prospects. The dilemma is classic, perhaps nowhere more powerfully embodied in fiction than in Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights. We know from Jessie Chambers that this book affected the young Lawrence deeply; indeed, it disturbed him so much that he forbade her to read the novel. Like Lettie, Cathy has to choose between two lovers - although in her case, because they involve such different kinds of love, she cannot believe that they are mutually exclusive. She loves Edgar 'as anybody loves'; her love is based on human qualities which she admires. It is a love understandable within the framework of conventional moral values. The relationship with Heathcliff defies adequate definition. Its elemental power seems to bypass (despite Emily Brontë's apparent intention) all our moral filters, rationality and social responsibility in a way that is quite impossible in real life.

Within The White Peacock, Bizet's Carmen makes a brief but important appearance. This opera, of course, is about a man who feels torn between two lovers: the demure, conventional 'Christian' lover and the wild, untamed 'pagan' gypsy girl, Carmen. In the strongly Nietzschean mood of the opera, it is the daring rhythms and haunting melodies of the Dionysian love songs which thrill and entrance the protagonist and the audience. Both Meg and George are strongly moved by this opera on the night of their wedding. It marks the beginning of George's 'trespass' beyond the limited bounds of Nethermere:

'Carmen' fascinated them both. The gaudy, careless Southern life amazed them. The bold free way in which Carmen played with life startled them with hints of freedom. They stared on the stage fascinated.... Then the music rose like a storm, and swept and rattled at their feet. On the stage the strange storm of life clashed in music towards tragedy and futile death. The two were shaken with a tumult of wild feeling. (WP 248)

Once again, we see how the choice of passion over convention results in 'futile death', in tragedy. And yet in the case of Lettie and George, the opposite 'choice' (for it is only choice by default) of convention over passion is also tragic, and leads, ironically, to the squandering of both their lives. George, as we have seen, 'lets himself go' and ends in a state of isolation and despair. Lettie, falling into a socially advantageous marriage with Leslie - 'you're bound to do what people expect you to do' (WP 120) - also endures a sad fate: that of the superficiality and boredom of a life lived only according to convention. Whereas earlier in the novel she uses Art to try and rouse George into a fuller kind of consciousness, by the end her aestheticism seems to have degenerated into shallow sterility, a matter of form merely, and a way of evading painful truths. This is most evident in her final encounter with George:

'I was only a warmth to you,' he said, pursuing the same train of thought. 'So you could do without me. But you were like the light to me, and otherwise it was dark and aimless. Aimlessness is horrible.'

She had finally smoothed his hair, so she lifted her hands and put back her head.

'There!' she said. 'It looks fair fine, as Alice would say. Raven's wings are raggy in comparison.'

He did not pay any attention to her.

'Aren't you going to look at yourself?' she said, playfully reproachful. She put her finger-tips under his chin. He lifted his head and they looked at each other; she smiling, trying to make him play; he smiling with his lips, but not with eyes.

'We can't go on like this, Lettie, can we?' he said softly.

'Yes,' she answered him, 'Yes why not?'

'It can't!' he said. 'It can't, I couldn't keep it up, Lettie.'

'But don't think about it,' she answered. 'Don't think of it.'

'I have to set my teeth with loneliness, Lettie,' he said....

'Yes! Hush now! Stand up and look what a fine parting I have made in your hair. Stand up, and see if my style becomes you.'

'It is no good Lettie,' he said, 'we can't go on.'

'Oh, but come come come!' she exclaimed. 'We are not talking about "going on"! We are considering what a fine parting I have made you down the middle, like two wings of a spread bird - she looked down, smiling playfully on him, just closing her eyes slightly in petition.

He rose and took a deep breath, and set his shoulders. 'No,' he said, and at the sound of his voice Lettie went pale and also stiffened herself.

'No!' he repeated. 'It is impossible. I felt as soon as Fred came into the room - it must be one way or another.'

'Very well then,' said Lettie, coldly. Her voice was 'muted' like a violin. (WP 302-303)

Nature controlled by convention, then, is shown in this novel to be almost as disastrous as uncontrolled nature. Is there another possibility? At this early stage in Lawrence's fiction, it seems that there is not. We have already seen that the blatant, repressive control of the 'Christian Herald couple' is a comic kind of living death. At the opposite end of the same spectrum the control of the higher nature, the aestheticism of a Lady Chrystabel which reduces her lover to an object, her animal, is equally unviable. It is this deadlock, this radical ambivalence which accounts for the much discussed paralysis in the relationship between Lettie and George and their apparent inability to break free, to take purposive action.

If George's capacity to take control of his life is radically impaired by his identification with a landscape choked with weeds and gnawed bare by rabbits, Lettie is haunted by the inevitable pain of adult life and confused by her own contradictory and unruly emotions. The failure to choose is just as much Lettie's as George's. If George fails fully to struggle free from his inertia, Lettie tries to evade

the adult world of pain, responsibility and choice. Part of this evasion she blames on her being a woman:

'If I were a man,' said Lettie, 'I would go out west and be free. I should love it.'...

'Well - you're not a man,' he said, looking at her, and speaking with timid bitterness.

'No,' she laughed, 'if I were, I would shape things - Oh, wouldn't I have my own way!'

'And don't you now?'

'Oh - I don't want to particularly - when I've got it. When I've had my way, I do want somebody to take it back from me.' (WP 211)

Later in this same chapter, her ambivalence continues to taunt and confuse George:

'Look,' she said, 'how we are netted down - boughs and knots of green buds. If we were free on the winds - - But I'm glad we're not.' She turned suddenly to him, and with the same movement, she gave him her hand, and he clasped it in both his. - 'I'm glad we're netted down here: - if we were free in the winds - Ah!' (WP 214)

This ambivalence, which is more than just a feminine ambivalence, is rooted in her desire for both security and freedom, a desire reflected throughout this chapter and, as in Wuthering Heights, throughout the novel. With only apparently impossible alternatives available, it is hardly surprising that so much of this book seems to be a lament for lost childhood. The responsibility of adulthood is portrayed as a frightening prospect: 'There are no more unmixed joys after you have grown up' (WP 69). '"Life is real, life is earnest"' (WP 285). 'To be responsible for the good progress of one's life - is terrifying. It is the most insufferable form of loneliness, and the heaviest of responsibilities' (WP 284). To shoulder this responsibility one needs to be aware, awake and conscious, and yet the

rousing from slumber is a painful and unwelcome disturbance. Part of the initiation into the adult world seems to be a new awareness of suffering:

We had lived between the woods and the water all our lives, Lettie and I, and she had sought the bright notes in everything.

Lately, however, she had noticed again the pitiful crying of a hedgehog caught in a gin, and she had noticed the traps for the fierce little murderers, traps walled in with a small fence of fir, and baited with the guts of a killed rabbit. (WP 44)

The sound of suffering animals almost constitutes a chorus in this novel: the disturbing evidence of 'nature red in tooth and claw' is unavoidable. 'If we move the blood rises in our heel-prints' (WP 13).

We know from the letters that the problem of pain was one which exercised Lawrence greatly at this time and was one of the stumbling blocks to his continuing adherence to Christianity. To Robert Reid he wrote:

At the present moment I do not, cannot believe in the divinity of Jesus. There are only the old doubts in the way,... I cannot be a materialist - but Oh, how is it possible that a God who speaks to all hearts can let Belgravia go laughing to a vicious luxury, and Whitechapel cursing to a filthy debauchery - such suffering, such dreadful suffering - and shall the short years of Christ's mission atone for it all?(13)

Beyond this preoccupation with suffering, however, is a general malaise in the face of the disintegration of an old way of life, of the known, stable community and one's place in it, of the old world-view. The secure, familiar, womb-like world of the valley of Nethermere is threatened by change and by the need to grow up and move on. 'My heart clung passionately to the hollow which held us all; how could I bear that it should be desolate!' (WP 66). And beyond the secure valley of childhood, one is left desolate, alone and insignificant:

'The sky was glittering with sharp lights - they are too far off to take trouble for us, so little, little almost to nothingness.

All the great hollow vastness roars overhead, and the stars are only sparks that whirl and spin in the restless space.' (WP 194)

Here Lawrence degenerates into a pathetic fallacy, a characteristic weakness of the novel. The security of mother earth is comforting:

The earth must listen to us; she covers her face with a thin veil of mist, and is sad; she soaks up our blood tenderly, in the darkness, grieving, and in the light she soothes and reassures us. Here on our earth is sympathy and hope, the heavens have nothing but distance. (WP 194-195)

The theme of desire to return to the womb is much more effectively portrayed in other ways. The glimpse of childhood we have in the novel demonstrates Lawrence's talent for describing infancy with beauty but without sentimentality. There is the lovely scene with George and his baby daughter who yet grows into the precocious young madam echoing her mother's sarcastic scoldings of the degenerating man. There are several mother and child scenes:

A woman who has her child in her arms is a tower of strength, a beautiful, unassailable tower of strength that may in its turn stand quietly dealing death. (WP 292)

In their completeness was a security which made me feel alone and ineffectual. (WP 292)

The man's vulnerability is exposed by the completeness of the mother/child bond; he is excluded from a security for which he deeply yearns.

It is in this context that we should understand the bathing scene when Cyril and George experience the novel's one moment of perfect love when George rubs Cyril down after swimming.

...he took hold of me and began to rub me briskly, as if I were a child, or rather, a woman he loved and did not fear.... It satisfied in some measure the vague, indecipherable yearning of my

soul; and it was the same with him. When he had rubbed me all warm, he let me go, and we looked at each other with eyes of still laughter, and our love was perfect for a moment, more perfect than any love I have known since, either for man or woman. (WP 222-223)

Within the homosexual overtones here which recur in The White Peacock and Lawrence's subsequent fiction, there is an evasion of sex and adulthood. The imagery is that of a child and mother, or of a relationship with the sexual danger and challenge somehow removed. The 'vague, indecipherable yearning of my soul' seems to be simply the desire for security, comfort and warmth.

Only three pages earlier, Cyril has come across a lark's nest in which:

...two little specks of birds lay side by side, beak to beak, their tiny bodies rising and falling in quick unison. I gently put down my fingers to touch them; they were warm; gratifying to find them warm, in the midst of so much cold and wet! I became curiously absorbed in them, as an eddy of wind stirred the strands of down. When one fledgling moved uneasily, shifting his soft ball, I was quite excited; but he nestled down again, with his head close to his brother's. In my heart of hearts, I longed for someone to nestle against, someone who would come between me and the coldness and the wetness. I envied the two little miracles exposed to any tread, yet so serene. It seemed as if I were always wandering, looking for something which they had found even before the light broke into their shell. (WP 220).

Surely this is akin to the yearning which is momentarily met in communion with George. It is a return to the womb and yet, for all its momentary superbness, is a dead end.

It is in the person of Lettie that the loss of childhood is particularly mourned: her brother Cyril is protective of the innocence of childhood.

She nestled up to the window, and leaned her head against the wooden shaft. Gradually, she dropped into sleep. Then she became wonderfully childish again - it was the girl of seventeen sleeping there, with her full, pouting lips slightly apart, and the breath coming lightly. I felt the old feeling of responsibility; I must protect her, and take care of her. (WP 44)

It is her rites of passage - her coming of age, engagement and marriage - which are followed; it is she in whom we see the most marked development, from a slightly mischievous, self-confident young woman growing more aware of the complexities and responsibilities of adult life, to the sophisticated but tragically empty and bored society lady.

Emergence from childhood is accompanied by a sense of profound loss and rootlessness. The White Peacock reflects Lawrence's own loss of the secure world of his youth. It reveals Lawrence still under the influence of the Eastwood Congregational world-view - and particularly with regard to the suspicion of unchecked nature - yet no longer content simply to remain there:

Nethermere was no longer a complete, wonderful little world that held us charmed inhabitants. It was a small, insignificant valley lost in the spaces of the earth....

The old symbols were trite and foolish. (WP 267)

## NOTES: CHAPTER THREE

1. Henry Savage, Review in Academy, 18 March 1911, lxxx, 328, in D.H. Lawrence: The Critical Heritage, edited by R.P. Draper (1970).
2. Keith Sagar, The Art of D.H. Lawrence (Cambridge, 1966), p. 9.
3. John E. Stoll, The Novels of D.H. Lawrence: A Search for Integration (Columbia, 1971), p. 41.
4. F.R. Leavis, D.H. Lawrence: Novelist (1955), p. 19.
5. Emile Delavenay, D.H. Lawrence: The Man and his Work, translated by K.H. Delavenay (1972), p. 89.
6. Milton, p. 232.
7. Graham Holderness, D.H. Lawrence: History, Ideology and Fiction (1982), p. 98.
8. Holderness, p. 115.
9. Robert Reid's sermon on 'Courage'; (See Appendix pp. 301-303).
10. Milton, p. 67.
11. Milton, pp. 71-72.
12. Milton, p. 67.
13. Letter to Robert Reid, 7 December 1907, in Letters, i, pp. 39-41 (p. 40).

## CHAPTER FOUR

## THE TRESPASSER

Lawrence began writing his second novel about March 1910. 'The Saga of Siegmund', as it was first called, was based on the experiences of his friend, Helen Corke, and her married lover who had committed suicide the previous year after returning from a holiday with Helen on the Isle of Wight. By coincidence (although they did not actually meet there), Lawrence had been holidaying on the island at the same time, which doubtless accounts for the novel's accomplished rendering of the 'spirit of the place'. As well as their long talks together, Lawrence had access to Helen's written reminiscences of the time. The plot, then, and also many of the episodes and observations, were derived from his friend, but the themes and preoccupations are his own. Indeed, the acutely personal nature of this book is revealed in one of Lawrence's letters to Edward Garnett:

But this is a work one can't regard easily - I mean, at one's ease. It is so much oneself, one's naked self. I give myself away so much, and write what is my most palpitant, sensitive self, that I loathe the book, because it will betray me to a parcel of fools. Which is what any deeply personal or lyrical writer feels, I guess....

I wish the Trespasser were to be issued privately, to a few folk who had understanding.(1)

The first version of 'The Saga' was complete within months. Initial responses from Lawrence's literary mentors were not encouraging and for a while he decided not to publish it, fearing it might damage his nascent reputation. However, the combination of his need to make a living from writing - he was reluctant to return to school teaching after a serious illness - and the enthusiasm of Edward Garnett, his

new-found publishing friend, were sufficient to reverse this decision.<sup>2</sup> Lawrence set to work on the revision early in January 1912. By early February it was complete, and by 8 March he had heard that Duckworth's had accepted it.<sup>3</sup> On 23 May 1912, The Trespasser was published.

Lawrence himself had been well aware of the faults of 'The Saga':

The book is execrable bad art: it has no idea of progressive action, but arranges gorgeous tableaux-vivants which have not any connection one with the other: it is 'chargé' as a Prince Rupert's drop (if you know that curiosity): its purple patches glisten sicklily: it is, finally, pornographic.(4)

Although somewhat happier with The Trespasser, he still had reservations: 'At the bottom of my heart I don't like the work.... I hate it for its fluid, luscious quality.'<sup>5</sup> He described it as 'too florid, too charge'.<sup>6</sup> Lawrence's critical instincts were sound. While its mannered prose appealed to many of his contemporaries,<sup>7</sup> it is largely because of this highly self-conscious aestheticism that subsequent critics have had little patience with Lawrence's second novel. Graham Hough's dismissal, 'almost an irrelevance',<sup>8</sup> has been typical.

Lawrence himself, however, balanced his criticisms with the recognition that The Trespasser was not merely an aberration, a retrograde step in his writing career; he believed that it did represent a progression in his work.<sup>9</sup> In addition, he was aware that it signified a distinctively Laurentian achievement: 'At any rate, not many folk could have done it, however they may find fault.'<sup>10</sup> It is inevitable that The Trespasser, a novel focused on the crisis period of a fervid relationship between two intense people on an island, should be claustrophobic and 'chargé'. Yet this very concentration and narrowness of scope allows for a certain psychological depth of exploration, perhaps unsurpassed (and unattempted) in Lawrence's later

fiction. It occasions some of his most indulgent prose, but it is a revealing indulgence. It is significant in ways subtle and searching, and not just ostentatiously in its laboured and high-flown rhetoric. For all its faults, then, which are many, obvious, and well catalogued, The Trespasser is important for the development it reveals in Lawrence's style and the shift it signals in his world-view.

Between the first and second drafts, the most significant loss of Lawrence's life occurred. His mother died. The most powerful link between himself and the Eastwood of his youth was thus severed. He had tried to offset this loss by his engagement to a local girl, Louie Burrows, but as he was completing the final version of the novel, he broke off the engagement. In his letter telling her of this, he wrote, 'My illness has changed me a good deal, has broken a good many of the old bonds that held me'.<sup>11</sup> We know that Lawrence had consciously broken the Chapel bonds before he left Eastwood in the autumn of 1908, yet we have also seen that a profound ambivalence remains embedded in the subtext of The White Peacock. This first novel ends in an impasse: the two proffered modes of living are equally untenable. The Trespasser also ends in impasse and tragedy. However, this book was first conceived and written about a year and a half after Lawrence's departure from Eastwood. It was revised a year and a half after that - over a year after Mrs Lawrence's death.

The time and the distance from Eastwood and its Chapel are evident in the novel's subtext. The two different value-systems represented in The Trespasser are broadly similar to those in The White Peacock. Lawrence still presents a cultured, aesthetic, ordered, controlled world at odds with a natural, spontaneous, instinctive one. But the authorial attitude has altered significantly; the struggle is less at the level of subtext and has become more explicit. There is little of

the great fear of uncontrolled nature which is so evident in the first novel. Far from continuing to demonstrate the subversiveness of natural passions, the main theme of The Trespasser not only challenges such an assumption, but reveals its own insidious subversiveness. The soulful woman denies the bodily life of the man and, by so doing, causes his death. And yet, of course, this is too simple. Certainly it is one of the defects of this book that it is too blatantly programmatic, but it also contains much richness that has been neglected. The dichotomy between body and soul is clear, but it is also complex. In what amounts to a radical critique of the values of late nineteenth-century rationalist idealism - which were most affectively mediated to Lawrence through Eastwood Congregational Christianity - the novel probes the very nature of reality.

The dialectic is not simply between the idealistic heroine and the sensuous hero. The story also takes place, literally, between two worlds. The mainland is the 'real world' - or at least the stage on which the lovers' ordinary everyday lives are played out. The island is where they escape to: a world of dream and make-believe, suspended, different, detached from ordinary reality. The language which characterizes each world is strikingly different. It is in the main 'island' section that the mannered metaphors run amok, whereas the restraint of the final section approaches Lawrence's mature style at its best. However, the uneven prose style also reflects the interplay between the worlds, just as the hero, in particular, struggles to relate them.

In The Trespasser, the values we have observed in Eastwood Congregational Christianity are incorporated in a much wider frame of reference, one which might be characterized as the idealist-aesthetic-ascetic-Christian world-view in the novel. This, of course, belongs

to Helena and to the island. It is also the world of the aesthetically ordered sitting-room of Helena's house where the novel opens with Lawrence's characteristic skill in setting the tone and suggesting significance by means of the subtext:

'Take off that mute, do!' cried Louisa, snatching her fingers from the piano keys, and turning abruptly to the violinist. Helena looked slowly from her music.

'My dear Louisa,' she replied, 'it would be simply unendurable.' She stood tapping her white skirt with her bow in a kind of apathetic forbearance.

'But I can't understand it,' cried Louisa, bouncing on her chair with the exaggeration of one who is indignant with a beloved. It is only lately you would even submit to muting your violin. At one time you would have refused flatly, and no doubt about it.'

'I have only lately submitted to many things,' replied Helena, who seemed weary and stupefied, but still sententious. Louisa drooped from her bristling defiance.

'At any rate' she said, scolding in tones too naked with love, 'I don't like it.'

'Go on from "Allegro",' said Helena, pointing with her bow to the place on Louisa's score of the Mozart sonata. Louisa obediently took the chords, and the music continued.

A young man, reclining in one of the wicker arm-chairs by the fire, turned luxuriously from the girls to watch the flames poise and dance with the music. He was evidently at his ease, yet he seemed a stranger in the room. (Tr 41)

The affectation, the deliberate adoption of poses, is obvious; the language is heightened, the self-consciousness marked, reflecting a heavy, almost cloying intimacy between the two women. The man is excluded. The talk is about music. The novel aspires towards aestheticism, undergirded by allusions to and correspondences with the art of music - Wagner's in particular. That life here is intimately interwoven with music, with art - indeed, to the extent that one imitates the other - is suggested in the issue of muting. Helena 'submits' to muting her violin as she has been forced to submit to

muting her life as a result of tragedy. The muting is both a consequence of her depressed spirits and a denial of, almost a rebellion against, life - which has been cruel to her.

The claustrophobic atmosphere within is framed, its intensity heightened, its significance deflated by the sudden introduction of the contrasting mundane world of 'reality' outside:

It was the sitting room of a mean house standing in line with hundreds of others of the same kind, along a wide road in South London. Now and again the trams hummed by, but the room was foreign to the trams, and to the sound of London traffic. (Tr 41)

The contrasts between the outside and inside are marked. In fact, the house is no different from hundreds of others. Against such unimaginative meanness, the aesthetic tone of the room rebels and transforms it into an island of serenity and order, remote from the exterior bustle. Yet outside, despite the intimation of dehumanizing mass identity, there is the sound of life: the traffic hums. Much later, on their return to London, Siegmund enjoys the city traffic - for him it is pulsing with life: 'the merry click-clock of the swinging hansoms, then the excited whirring of the motor-buses as they charged full tilt heavily down the road' (Tr 168). Siegmund is glad that Helena is not with him, 'for the streets would have irritated her with their coarse noise' (Tr 168).

Yet in shutting out the bustling, if disharmonious world, Helena frames her interior, aestheticizes it and, in the process, robs it of life:

The walls were of the dead green colour of August foliage, the green carpet with its border of polished floor lay like a square of grass in a setting of black loam. Ceiling and frieze and fireplace were smooth white. There was no other colouring.

The furniture, excepting the piano, had a transitory look: two light wicker arm-chairs by the fire, the two frail stands of dark, polished wood, the couple of flimsy chairs, and the case of books in the recess, all seemed uneasy, as if they might be tossed out to leave the room clear, with its green floor and walls, and its white rim of skirting-board, serene.

On the mantel-piece were white lustres, and a small soapstone Buddha from China, grey, impassive, locked in his renunciation. Besides these, two tablets of translucent stone, beautifully clouded with rose and blood, and carved with Chinese symbols; then a litter of mementoes, rock crystals and shells and scraps of sea-weed.

A stranger, entering, felt at a loss. He looked at the bare wall-spaces of dark green, at the scanty furniture, and was assured of his unwelcome. (Tr 41-42)

The frames within frames - the walls, carpet, floor - are all static, placed and ordered. What is frail or tentative is out of place. The ornaments echo the room's sense of stasis, its denial of life. The impassive Buddha, symbol of a religion whose chief aim is the extinction of desire - Nirvana, not-to-be - sums it up. The only 'objects of sympathy' in the room are the white lamp which glows on its stand, a large, beautiful fern 'which ruffled its cloud of green within the gloom', and the fire (Tr 42). These are precisely the features of the room which cannot be pressed into a lifeless stasis.

The sensibility behind Helena's room could be seen as a slightly more sophisticated version of the suspicion of the untamed impulse of Lawrence's Christian inheritance. The control motif is dominant in the opening scene. It is represented here with a more explicit implication - that the only things that can be completely controlled are dead - than is evident in the subtext of Lawrence's first novel. The writer's technical development is also revealed if we compare this scene to its equivalent in The White Peacock - that of the interior of the Christian Herald couple's home, where images of nature are also transferred indoors, 'aestheticized', and rendered lifeless in the process.

Once again, this theme has, in The Trespasser, been transposed beyond the milieu of Eastwood Congregationalism and become part of the wider value-complex, and part of Lawrence's evolving conception of the 'Christian principle'. Helena's identification with the Christian principle is most clearly demonstrated in her relationship with the only explicitly Christian symbol in the novel - the carved Christ on the cross in the graveyard of the Roman Catholic Chapel: 'There the carved Christ looked down on the dead whose sleeping forms made mounds under the coverlet. Helena's heart was swelling with emotion. All the yearning and pathos of Christianity filled her again.' (Tr 86) This scene of stasis amidst death recalls the opening description of Helena's sitting-room. It also causes Helena to be actively aware of the contrast between the 'sleeping dead' on one side of her, and her living lover, 'strong and vigorous', on the other. She is inspired to a mood of sacrifice.

The identification is more explicit later when the couple pass the chapel again, this time by moonlight. What is emphasized in this encounter is not the deadness, but the whiteness of the scene. The moon shines on the white gravestones, the sky is silver-grey and, face to face with the 'Christ-tragedy', Siegmund feels the need to take cover and hide in the dark shadows of a nearby pine copse. He thinks of Christ's as 'all the white beauty in the world' (Tr 108). Right from the outset, the reader has not been allowed to miss Helena's continual identification with the colour white. White is one of the predominant colours in her room. She is wearing a white skirt (or dress); her body is compared to the white stroke of a metronome; her neck is pure white; and her sleeve is made of long white lace (Tr 42). Like many of the women in Lawrence's writings, she is also identified with the moon, with its connotations of transcendent, intact womanhood

and deathly whiteness. As Siegmund lies at home, 'shut alone in his little cubicle of darkness' (Tr 51), he looks out on a world bathed in the glamorous pallor of moonlight. He envisages Helena:

... curled up asleep at the core of the glamour, like the moon;... She was so calm, and full of her own assurance. It was a great rest to be with her. With her, nothing mattered but love, and the beauty of things.... She had rest and love, like water and manna for him. She was so strong in her self-possession, in her love of beautiful things, and of dreams. (Tr 52)

The moon motif is double edged. The world bathed in glamour implies a luxurious ease, a maternal, soothing tenderness: peaceful, calm and tranquil. Yet the light is described as a pallor, which betokens sickness. 'Glamour' in itself is an ambivalent word which suggests something artificial and hard; the glamorous pallor casts shadows. Helena's self-possession, while profoundly attractive to the fragmented, dispersed Siegmund, is emphasized slightly too much to be accepted as entirely comforting. This tendency to the self-contained, the static, the framed, is reminiscent of her room; it reflects the desire to order and control, to exclude anything discordant. Her 'love of beautiful things and dreams' confirms this denial of fragile, often contradictory, sometimes ugly life - and part of the evolving tragedy is that Siegmund is very much a part of this confused totality.

It is Helena who imagines and organizes the holiday and it is in character that she chooses a place separate from the mainland: an island. Another strand in her character to which our attention is deliberately drawn, and something continuous with her self-sufficiency and 'strong reserve', is an isolation, an unworldly detachment, even a foreignness. She is likened to the sea which 'does not give and take' and 'has no traffic with the world' (Tr 76), and even her lover can never fully penetrate the barriers. She keeps her own room 'inviolable' (Tr 72); she remains essentially 'incommunicable' to him (Tr 143).

Amidst the crowd of hearty Germans on the train on the homeward journey, it is Helena who seems the foreigner to Siegmund:

It seemed to him he should never know her. There was a remoteness about her, an estrangement between her and all natural daily things, as if she were of an unknown race that never can tell its own story. (Tr 154)

Throughout the novel, we are regularly told of their inability to understand each other and their failure to grasp the other's meaning. This is to emphasize the difference between their two ways of seeing. Helena's detachment is related to what Colin Milton calls her 'idealistic negation of the real ... her ... inability to accept the natural world and the forces active in it'.<sup>12</sup> It is part of a sensibility which tries to transcend the ordinary, the 'real' world, with its physicality and cities and masses, and create a more appealing - if fanciful - alternative reality. At best, Helena sees the physical world as merely an embodiment of soiled sunshine:

Substance and solidity were shadows that the morning cast round itself to make itself tangible: as she herself was a shadow cast by that fragment of sunshine, her soul, over its inefficiency. (Tr 87)

The word 'fanciful' is often used to describe Helena's way of seeing. It is not just meant to be dismissive of her precious personifications of flowers, and a view of real life as 'brownies running and fairies peeping' (Tr 124). Nor is Lawrence's distrust of 'fancy' simply a sign of the puritan novelist's distrust of imagined worlds - although this, too, is an interesting feature of the book. Helena loves 'fancy more than imagination' (Tr 75). In other words, she chooses a way of seeing that is, according to the Coleridgean definition, only a superficial ordering of sense impressions into a mechanical pattern. 'Being a moralist rather than an artist' (Tr 125),

she often misses the deep underlying organic unity perceived by Siegmund in his more genuinely imaginative artist's vision. Helena's tendency is to see a welter of arbitrarily related detail. Like Cathy's enumeration of Linton's attributes in Wuthering Heights, Helena appreciates Siegmund 'feature by feature':

She liked his clear forehead with its thick, black hair, and his full mouth, and his chin. She loved his hands, that were small, but strong and nervous, and very white. She liked his breast, that breathed so strong and quietly, and his arms, and his thighs, and his knees. (Tr 57)

Siegmund's vision forms an organic whole:

For him, Helena was a presence. She was ambushed, fused in an aura of his love. He only saw she was white and strong and full fruited, he only knew her blue eyes were rather awful to him. (Tr 57)

Later, they compare how they remember beautiful scenes. Helena says she remembers the details, but never the atmosphere. Siegmund recalls the atmosphere, but not the details:

'It is a moment to me, not a piece of scenery. I should say the picture was in me, not out there....'

That is why you want to go again to a place, and I don't care so much, because I have it with me. (Tr 96)

Other examples of this fundamental difference in vision could be offered: Helena's preoccupation with separate detail, and Siegmund's more deeply synthesized, organic apprehension of reality. It is evidenced frequently enough to constitute a significant comment upon the contrasting world-views which are, beneath the wild metaphors and swooning love scenes, a major feature of the novel's subtext.

In The Trespasser, then, the idealist-'Christian' perspective of Helena is categorically dismissed. It is characterized as

isolationist, mechanical and life-negating in its demeaning of the mundane physical world as vulgar and ugly. Its properties of restraint and order and transcendence are revealed to be, ultimately, death-dealing. Gone is the ambivalence of Lawrence's first novel. The subtext is no longer struggling to free itself from the dictates of the supremacy of rationality, order and control. Through the character of Siegmund, a deeper, more creative and genuinely synthesized view of reality is being explored.

We are offered no simple resolution. Siegmund is, after all, a trespasser, and despite the irony in the theological overtones of the word here (the whole value-system which employs the concept is being questioned), he is often acutely aware of a sense of guilt. The island is Helena's world, and much of the purple prose is in keeping with the decadent, luscious sensibility which is so clearly being rejected in the book. Certainly, Siegmund comes to the island for a kind of salvation which he hopes to find through Helena. He is deeply weary with his ordinary life; Lawrence's description of his alienation from his family, especially after the holiday, is masterful. Yet Siegmund is not naturally an alien. He longs to connect: 'he recognised the great yearning, the ache outwards towards something, with which he was ordinarily burdened' (Tr 76). It is this longing which the self-contained, inviolable Helena fails to meet. 'She had no idea how his life was wrenched from its roots' (Tr 58).

As Siegmund's artist's imagination perceives the underlying unity in all things, so he tries to unify his sundered life. For a time, he is successful. His first love-making with Helena leaves him feeling deeply peaceful and whole. In their subsequent walk in the moonlight, he perceives all of nature in profound harmony and feels himself

utterly at home, 'as if I had come home, where I was bred' (Tr 70). It is Helena who seems to:

...connect him with the beauty of things, as if she were the nerve through which he received intelligence of the sun and wind and sea, and of the moon and the darkness. Beauty she never felt herself, came to him through her. (Tr 76)

She is the key which unlocks the relatedness. Later they delight in the apparent collapse of conventional time and the falling away of 'the labels' (Tr 98):

You know, he said, repeating himself, 'it is true. You seem to have knit all things in a piece for me. Things are not separate: they are all in a symphony. They go moving on and on. You are the motive, in everything' (Tr 98-99)

It is this sense of synthesis which persuades Siegmund that his trespass is right '- even righteous' (Tr 91).

But even through the happiness of the early days, warning notes sound like the persistent foghorn which makes Siegmund so uneasy. Whereas Siegmund yearns for and is fulfilled by the communion of sex, Helena is dispersed and destroyed by it. Siegmund's sensuality and creativity are interdependent; Helena's are radically divided: 'His dreams were the flowers of his blood. Hers were more detached and inhuman' (Tr 64). And Lawrence, in one of his didactic interruptions, intrudes to draw our attention to the fact that Helena belongs to a type of woman which, for centuries, 'has been rejecting the 'animal' in humanity, till now her dreams are abstract, and full of fantasy, and her blood runs in bondage, and her kindness is full of cruelty' (Tr 64). Helena admires - and is even grateful for - the 'new, soft beauty' of the strange new blossoms she helps to produce in her lover (Tr 69). She is consistently baffled, however, by the coexistence of the animal and the artist in the one man. Physical passion remains, to

her, bestial and crude. The morning after making love, she seeks the moon's absolution (Tr 70), presumably for the violation of her pure intactness. Again, she tries to wash herself 'with the white and blue morning, to clean away the soiling of last night's passion (Tr 76). Aware of Siegmund's need in the urgent knocking of his heart on her breast, she dismisses it as 'an unreasonable, and incomprehensible obsession' (Tr 10). Earlier, she is fascinated, but afraid and disturbed, as she listens to her lover's heart beat. It signifies something spontaneous, mysterious, beyond her ken - 'the God she knew not' (Tr 79). God embodied is part of a reality she cannot admit.

Helena's rejection of the bodily Siegmund is, like the long, raw scratch he receives from the submerged spur of rock (Tr 73) and the bruise from being dashed against the rock in the virgin bay (Tr 135), deeply wounding. 'Why does she not like me-?' thinks his physical self (Tr 74). It is Helena's underlying rejection of the essential, the embodied Siegmund, and their subsequent failure to connect deeply that provokes his ultimately nihilistic vision of reality. Lying on the warm, sandy beach of the virgin bay, Siegmund delights in its sensual pleasures as he delights in the body of his lover:

He spread his hands upon the sand: he took it in handfuls, and let it run smooth, warm, delightful, through his fingers. Surely, he said to himself, 'it is like Helena,' and he laid his hands again on the warm body of the shore, let them wander, discovering, gathering all the warmth, the softness, the strange wonder of smooth, warm pebbles... (Tr 88)

But as he burrows beneath the surface, the pleasant warm sensations give way to a shrinking from 'the cold mystery of the deep sand' under the surface. He is both thrilled and hurt by the 'deep weight of the dark, heavy coldness'. This image of a darker, more ominous reality beneath the surface of life, gathers significance as the novel

develops. A few pages later, Siegmund is struck by the childlikeness of Helena's fanciful view of things in contrast to his own more sombre visions: 'He himself might play with the delicious warm surface of life, but always he recked of the relentless mass of cold beneath, the mass of life which has no sympathy with the individual, no cognisance of him' (Tr 94).

In the island narrative, three important stages are catalogued in Siegmund's descent into despair: his sense of radical disintegration in the wake of Helena's strange ecstasy over him on the downs, the meeting with Hampson, and the aftermath of Helena's momentary despair and rejection.

What occurs on the downs in Chapters Eleven and Twelve prefigures the destructiveness of the moon-woman in The Rainbow, although here in the earlier novel it is much less clear what exactly has taken place. Helena's weeping, her strange, ecstatic, almost trance-like behaviour leaves Siegmund stunned and drained. Beneath the inviolable wholeness of the woman he feels helpless: 'This woman tall and pale, drooping with the strength of her compassion, seemed stable, immortal, not a fragile human being, but a personification of the great motherhood of woman' (Tr 103).

When he gets up, Siegmund suffers from a debilitating sense of physical and psychic disintegration. The features of the surrounding landscape lose their relatedness and coherence. He feels 'detached from the earth, from all the near, concrete, beloved things; as if these had melted away from him, and left him, sick and unsupported, somewhere alone on the edge of an enormous space' (Tr 109). For Siegmund these are, indeed, the forepangs of l'agonie, and he identifies himself with the tragedy of the dead Christ abandoned on the graveyard's carved cross.

The nihilistic character of Siegmund's accumulating despair is made more explicit in Chapter Thirteen. The sudden appearance of two battleships which disturb the tranquil bay is paralleled by the abrupt entrance of Hampson, a kind of alter ego, or 'Döppelgänger' as Siegmund calls him. Despite Lawrence's attempts to integrate the stranger more smoothly into the second version, he remains something of a deus-ex-machina whose sole purpose seems to be to offer a diagnosis of Siegmund's predicament. Hampson admits that he is, perhaps, 'a nihilist' (Tr 109), and the tenor of the conversation suggests that this identification is not to be taken purely politically but also philosophically. There are echoes of Conrad's powerful glimpse of nihilism in Heart of Darkness which are, in some aspects, even stronger in the first version of this chapter.<sup>13</sup> In the early version, Hampson describes man's interior as a 'roaring dark space', a 'ghastly black hole', the black horror "terror", 'where you never look, which you don't know' (Tr 321). In the published version, Lawrence has added the comment about not being able to 'turn round without finding some policeman or other at your elbow' (Tr 109), reminiscent, perhaps, of Marlow's ruminations on the concealingly protective façades of civilization: 'With a butcher round one corner, a policeman around another.'<sup>14</sup>

When Hampson is describing the infiltration of the darkness beyond he uses a metaphor Siegmund himself has used only a few pages earlier - that of leaking: 'the great mass of life that washes unidentified, and that we call death, creeps through the blue envelope of the day, and through our white tissue, and we can't stop it, once we've begun to leak' (Tr 110).

This nihilistic vision, then, involves a collapse of barriers, of differentiation, but far from the healing harmony of the artistic

imagination's deep synthesizing of disparate elements, it is beyond life, looking into a nothingness of black space. It makes Siegmund feel 'loose, and a long way off from myself' (Tr 112), - and confirms his earlier flippant remark to Helena, 'There's no reckoning with life, and no reckoning with the sea. The only way to get on with both is to be as near a vacuum as possible, and float' (Tr 85).

It is in this chapter that the allusions to the ominous, cold flux of indifferent reality under the warm surface of life - which are also comments on late nineteenth-century idealist religious dualism - are brought into the main movement of the novel. After Hampson's diagnosis, Siegmund's salvation is never really a possibility. The image of leaking (a metaphor used to moving effect in the much later poem 'The Ship of Death') connects with Siegmund's early appearance in the novel as a presence seeping out of his neglected violin case after his death.<sup>15</sup> It recalls the blood trickling from the wound on his thigh, and the bruise on his elbow. The metaphor becomes explicit after Helena's frantic and fatal outburst: 'But the sense of humiliation, which he had got from her the day before, and which had fixed itself, bled him secretly, like a wound. This hemorrhage of self-esteem tortured him to the end' (Tr 144). For as Lawrence - through Hampson - is at such pains to make clear, this disintegration into despair is the result of the 'dreaming woman's' failure to accept the natural, animal nature of man along with - even as essential to - his 'flowers of the spirit'. (Tr 112)<sup>16</sup>

The relationship between Siegmund and Helena is never quite the same after Siegmund's meeting with Hampson. A tone of fractiousness appears; Siegmund's faith in the rightness of his trespass is shaken and Helena is piqued at his apparent need of its endorsement 'in the eyes of the world' (Tr 116). This is yet another indication of her

capability for splendid isolation and his contrasting need for connection. After this exchange, they watch farmers at work in the fields below and Siegmund tells Helena of a deeply rooted desire to be a farmer. Again, her disdain of the 'mundane' ignores the underlying longing for primitive, essential connectedness.

It is later on, towards evening, that Helena suffers her bout of acute disillusion which ushers in the third stage of Siegmund's breakdown: 'Life, and hope were ash in her mouth. She shuddered with discord. Despair grated between her teeth. This dreariness was worse than any her dreary, lonely life had known. She felt she could bear it no longer' (Tr 125). What seems to precipitate her despair is the invasion of her idealized, romantic vision of Siegmund by a much coarser brutal alternative:

She looked at him, and again shuddered with horror. Was that really Seigmund, that stooping, thick-shouldered, indifferent man?... His radiance was gone, his aura had ceased. She saw him as a stooping man, past the buoyancy of youth, walking and whistling rather stupidly: in short, something of the 'clothed animal on end,' like the rest of men.

She suffered an agony of disillusion. Was this the real Siegmund, and her own, only a projection of her soul?... Was he the real clay, and that other, her beloved, only the breathing of her soul upon this. There was an awful blank before her. (Tr 125)

It seems for a moment that Helena's fancy fails her and the perception of a real man unclothed by a veil of romantic transcendentalism is too much for her to bear. She violently rejects Siegmund's baffled attempt to comfort her, and it is here, at the extremity of her rejection of him, that Siegmund's death is sealed: 'Quite stunned, with a death taking place in his soul, he lay still, pressed against the earth.... His consciousness was dark' (Tr 127). And not all of Helena's remorse and attempt to make amends can restore it. He is pushed deeper into despair; the shadow beneath, the darkness

surrounding the brief flame of life, is what has become, for Siegmund, the reality:

'For me, the day is transparent and shrivelling. I can see the darkness through its petals.... For me, quivering in the interspaces of the atmosphere is the darkness, the same that fills in my soul. I can see death urging itself into life, the shadow supporting the substance.' (Tr 159)

The healing and wholeness he has sought through Helena disintegrates into the ashy meaninglessness of hope denied as Siegmund returns to his family. There, with superb control of tone and detail, Lawrence evokes the tense, hostile attitude of the aggrieved family: Siegmund's characterization as a guilty man is powerfully cemented by the demeanour of his wife and children. His humiliation and utter isolation are confirmed with the confused retreat of his little girl when he longs to take her into his arms. He is left like 'a limb out of joint', unable to reset himself (Tr 201).

As earlier in the book, when the lovers are trapped between two equally intransigent elements - the cliffs and the sea (Tr 83) - Siegmund is caught between two equally impossible existences. On the one hand, he is destroyed by the accumulated legacy of Christian-idealist dualism embodied in Helena, which denigrates his body, and on the other his creativity and dreams are crushed in the oppressively sordid 'reality' of his unsympathetic family life.

From the time of the onset of Siegmund's disintegration, the language of sacrifice - used up until then largely to describe Helena's attitude to sex - appears in connection with Siegmund. We have already noted his identification with the tragic sacrifice (as he interprets it) represented in the crucifix. After his annihilation by Helena's rejection, he is described as the communicant in a vast natural temple; Helena is the 'bitter bread' of the sacrificed body (Tr 128). The next

morning he undresses 'by his usual altar-stone' (Tr 134), is bruised by being dashed against the rocks (Tr 135), and later feels Helena's rejection as 'the spear in the side of his tortured self-respect' (Tr 145). He has failed to be the god that she needs (Tr 144). On their last morning, Helena makes the analogy between Siegmund and Eros. It is interesting, in the light of the cluster of Christ-sacrifice associations which accumulate around Siegmund after his defeat, that in the first draft this identification had been with Jesus and not with Eros (Tr 240).

These echoes of the language of Christian sacrifice are not meant suddenly to identify Siegmund with the Christian-idealist principles: if anything they are to represent his life as tragically sacrificed to it and broken by it. They are also an indication of the shift from The White Peacock's ambivalence about it and reveal Lawrence more definitely committed to his more Nietzschean view of Christianity as an ascetic, life-negating and ultimately death-dealing religion.

Lawrence does not see at this stage how to get beyond this merely negative reaction towards it. This second novel, too, ends in an impasse. The hero dies, not for his trespass against the moral law - although this dimension is not despised by a hero who so longs to be united to and not severed from his environment: the isolation involved in his moral breaking of bounds takes its toll. It is, rather, what Lawrence would see as an even more fundamental trespass: the attempt to break through the limitations of a superficial, mechanical, even fancifully idealistic view of reality to achieve a deeper, more genuinely harmonious and creatively imaginative way of seeing. It is not just the constraints of the real story of MacCartney's suicide which dictate the tragic ending of The Trespasser. To get beyond a

rejection of Christian idealism and the value-system of the Eastwood Congregational Chapel, D.H. Lawrence has to explore it in a context that is much more personal: in the context of his third, and essentially autobiographical novel, Sons and Lovers.

## NOTES: CHAPTER FOUR

1. Letter to Edward Garnett, 21 January 1912, in Letters, i, pp. 353-354 (p. 353).
2. John Worthen, D.H. Lawrence and the Idea of the Novel (1979), p. 22.
3. Letter to Edward Garnett, 8 March 1912, in Letters, i, pp. 372-374 (p. 372).
4. Letter to Frederick Atkinson, 11 February 1911, in Letters, i, pp. 229-230 (p. 229).
5. Letter to Edward Garnett, 19 January 1912, in Letters, i, pp.351-352 (p. 351).
6. Letter to Edward Garnett, 29 January 1912, in Letters, i, pp.358-359 (p. 358).
7. Worthen, p. 19.
8. Hough, p. 17.
9. Letter to Edward Garnett, 19 January 1912, in Letters, i, pp.351-352 (p. 351).
10. Letter to Edward Garnett, 29 January 1912, in Letters, i, pp.358-359 (p. 358).
11. Letter to Louie Burrows, 4 February 1912, in Letters, i, p. 361.
12. Milton, p. 219.
13. This constitutes an appendix in the Cambridge University Press edition of The Trespasser.
14. Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness, Penguin (London, 1979), p. 68.

The connotation, of course, is different. Marlow is referring to the false sense of security this breeds; it offers protection from having to recognize the heart of darkness. Hampson's comment is provoked by frustration at a restriction to his freedom. Marlow shrinks from the horror of the darkness of nihilism; Hampson seems to see it as inevitable for a certain type of man in certain conditions.

There are a number of other interesting parallels between the books: In each book the woman is associated with the colour white and is in some way representative of a fanciful, decadent Christian civilization. Each hero is described as an artist; each is a trespasser, a breaker of bounds. Each dies.

Both novels use a form of frame technique to introduce the main narrative. In each case this augments a common theme: the problematic nature of language and meaning; of the difficulties of communicating unshared experiences, of relating two different

worlds. Both novels represent, in a sense, the watershed between the more stable Victorian sensibility and the unknown, frightening intimations of modernism.

15. Virginia Woolf's marvellous 'Time Passes' section in To The Lighthouse, is strikingly similar - although much more developed - to Lawrence's idea and technique in this image.
16. See Milton, pp. 212-214.

## CHAPTER FIVE

## SONS AND LOVERS

It is with his third novel that Lawrence first achieves significance as a major twentieth-century English novelist. Indeed, some critics view Sons and Lovers as Lawrence's greatest achievement. Its accomplishment is undoubted. But it also represents an important breakthrough for Lawrence: an opportunity to explore and come to terms with the forces that had helped to shape him and, by so doing, to achieve a measure of liberation from them and the possibility of moving on. As Lawrence himself expressed it in the now well-known words: 'But one sheds ones sicknesses in books - repeats and presents again one's emotions, to be master of them.'<sup>1</sup>

Lawrence had begun writing 'Paul Morel' in October 1910.<sup>2</sup> This was shortly after he had sent away the final proofs of The White Peacock, and within a couple of months of finishing the first draft of The Trespasser. We have already noted the significance of the transitions Lawrence was undergoing during the creation of his second novel. The two-year writing span of Sons and Lovers encompasses these and more. On 1 August 1910, Lawrence had finally broken off his engagement to Jessie Chambers. His mother became ill late that August, and a number of letters written between this time and her death, on 9 December 1910, show Lawrence outlining what he sees as the tragedy of his mother's married life. As John Worthen implies, it was his mother's impending death that first gave rise to Lawrence's need to recreate her life, and hence the earliest versions of 'Paul Morel'.<sup>3</sup> With his mother's death, the strongest link between Lawrence and his Eastwood youth was severed. His engagement to Louie Burrows as his

mother was dying could, as has already been implied, be seen as an attempt to offset the sense of terrible rootlessness of her dying. Not only was Louie strong, uncomplicated and 'glorious', she also had the approval of Mrs Lawrence. His break with her then, just over a year after his mother's death, signifies another important break with his 'Eastwood self'.<sup>4</sup>

Within a couple of months, Lawrence had met and fallen in love with Frieda Weekley. Married, foreign and aristocratic, she represented a very different world for Lawrence. She was also the last, and major, stage in his transition to a whole new life. Six weeks after they had met, the couple eloped, and it was in Italy, with Frieda's help, in the early months of their life together, that Lawrence completed Sons and Lovers. It was from the vantage point of this radical break - morally and spiritually as well as geographically - that Lawrence finished the novel which explores most explicitly the Eastwood world of his childhood and youth. It was published on 29 May 1913. For the first time, Lawrence seems to have had few misgivings about launching a new novel. His faith and confidence, evidenced in letters of the time, are in sharp contrast to the previous defensive apologies for the first two novels. 'I am fearfully proud of it,' he wrote to Edward Garnett. 'I reckon it is quite a great book.'<sup>5</sup>

In his first two novels, Lawrence's treatment of the forces that helped to mould him were, as we have seen, largely submerged. In The White Peacock, the insistence of the need for control and the concomitant sense of loss at the crushing of the mystery and power of a more primary religious impulse, constitute a significant subtext in the novel. In The Trespasser the struggle between two opposing systems is more explicit, but is transposed into a world quite remote from that of Lawrence's youth. Both novels end in impasse, the main characters

alienated or paralysed or killed - ultimately - by a clash of value-systems which they are impotent to transcend. Sons and Lovers does not end in an impasse. To be sure, the hero is rootless, exhausted and nearly despairs. But he finally rejects alienation and the drift towards death, and chooses to live. The novel, like all Lawrence's great fiction, thus remains open-ended: the possibilities inherent in continuing life still exist. This greater flexibility stems in part from the greater degree of complexity evident in Sons and Lovers. It also, I believe, bears testimony to the therapeutic value of the book for Lawrence and, incidentally, to his greater readiness to address the kind of dichotomies inherent in his religious background. Through it he is able to explore the milieu of his childhood with a directness unprecedented in his novels; and it is by naming his demons that he is able to exorcise them. This particularity also draws on Lawrence's greatest strengths as a writer: it gives form to his skill at evoking a particular environment and conveying a vivid sense of what it feels like to live within it. Lawrence himself was very much aware that Sons and Lovers represented a watershed, a breakthrough, in his career as a novelist: 'I shall not write quite in that style any more. It's the end of my youthful period,' he told Edward Garnett.<sup>6</sup>

An important part of what Lawrence was explaining and coming to terms with in his Bildungsroman was the Congregational inheritance of his upbringing. Granted, even in this most autobiographical of his novels, the Congregational Chapel where Lawrence spent so many of his youthful hours is excluded from the novel until Paul is about to break with it. And on the rare occasions when we are taken inside the Chapel, we learn little about the kind of religion espoused there. Nevertheless, its influence undergirds the entire action of the novel. It is this influence which shapes the primary clash in the novel:

between the mother's intellectual Christianity and the father's sensuous paganism, between the 'female-chapel-private' value-system and the male-coalfield-public' one.<sup>7</sup> This struggle is made more complex, however, by the introduction of a third mode. Congregational Christianity appears, in this novel, to have two very different manifestations: the hardy, pragmatic variety of Mrs Morel, and the more otherworldly, ethereal religion of Mrs Leivers and Miriam. The implications of this divergence will be discussed later. It is made clear in both cases that the women's sensibilities - even personalities - have been largely forged by their faith, and, of course, Mrs Morel and Miriam are the two most powerful characters against whom Paul must fashion his own sense of selfhood. In this way, then, the chapel inheritance plays a key rôle in setting the novel's agenda.

The primary opposition in the novel, that between Mr and Mrs Morel, is prefigured as the opening scenes are set. The focus moves deftly, in an almost cinematic fashion, from the wider context of a country's history to the concerns of one small boy on a particular summer's afternoon. Opposition, implicit in the very first sentence - '"The Bottoms" succeeded to "Hell Row"' - chronicles the change of a rural, natural landscape as it is being harnessed by a more determined, disciplined industrialization. At the outset, the cottages of the colliers 'in blocks, pairs here and there together with the odd farms and houses of the stockings, straying over the parish' are still haphazard, disorganized, spontaneous in their location. The gin pits are no threat to the countryside: 'The brook ran under the alder-trees, scarcely soiled by these small mines, whose coal was drawn to the surface by donkeys that plodded wearily in a circle round a gin'(SL 7). This pastoral rhythm of timeless continuance - in which man and nature still work together - is disrupted by the sudden change of a specific

time: 'Then, some sixty years ago, a sudden change took place. The gin-pits were elbowed aside by the large mines of the financiers. The coal and iron field of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire was discovered' (SL 7).

The first mine is on the edge of Sherwood Forest; the railway runs past the ruins of an old Carthusian priory and by Robin Hood's Well. The juxtaposition of romantic myth and otherworldly spirituality, with the pragmatism and implicit greed of the mining financiers extends the disparity between the old, natural, pastoral landscape and the new, regimented industrialism. Instead of the few miners' homes scattered innocuously throughout the countryside, accommodation is needed for 'regiments of miners'. Hell Row is burned down, the dirt cleaned away, and new buildings are planned and erected with geometrically ordered precision.

This contrast between a random, casual imprint on the environment which gives way to the more regulated ordering of the mining operations, is echoed in the description of the miners' dwellings:

The houses themselves were substantial and very decent. One could walk all round, seeing little front gardens with auriculas and saxifrage in the shadow of the bottom rock, sweet-williams and pinks in the sunny top block; seeing neat front windows, little porches, little privet hedges, and dormer windows for the attics. But that was outside; that was the view on to the uninhabited parlours of all the colliers' wives. The dwelling-room, the kitchen, was at the back of the house, facing inward between the blocks, looking at a scrubby back garden, and then at the ash-pits. And between the rows, between the long lines of ash-pits, went the alley, where the children played and the women gossiped and the men smoked. So, the actual conditions of living in the Bottoms, that was so well built and that looked so nice, were quite unsavoury because people must live in the kitchen, and the kitchens opened on to that nasty alley of ash-pits. (SL 8)

There is the discrepancy between the aspiration to prettiness, order and decency - the flowers and parlours and privet hedges seen from outside - and the actual squalor of the alley of ash-pits, the kitchens

which overlook the scrubby back gardens. Yet it is in the 'unsavoury' back portion that people actually live: the children play, women gossip, men smoke. The parlour is left uninhabited, the privet hedges in the front enclose and delimit cultivated gardens; the aesthetically framed order, suggested by the neat front windows and little porches, belies the lively grubbiness behind. Once again in Lawrence's fiction, the impulse to order and control and cultivate is associated with stasis and the absence of life. And once again, this impulse is identified primarily with the woman.

So before the Morels are even mentioned, a setting for their disparity has been established. The next sentences confirm it. For Mrs Morel, the move to The Bottoms is a move downwards. This sense of being superior to her surroundings, her 'delicate, but resolute mould', and her slight shrinking from the first contact with her neighbours, identify her with the womanly efforts to imbue distinction, order and refinement into the appearance of the home at least. Her sense of superiority over her husband is apparent from the outset: 'Her husband was a miner. They had only been in their new home three weeks when the wakes, or fair, began. Morel, she knew, was sure to make a holiday of it' (SL 9). Already, without a direct description of the man, we identify him with the gregarious life of the back alley, open and childlike, and rather despised by a wife who scorns the thriving vulgarity of the wakes.

Lawrence's early descriptions of Mrs Morel's character are frequently identified with her distinctive religious inheritance: 'Mrs Morel came of a good old burgher family, famous independents who had fought with Colonel Hutchinson, and who remained stout Congregationalists' (SL 14). The characteristics of the Coppards, as evidenced in her large handsome father, reflect the proud independence

of the dissenting temperament. Coppard is described as a 'haughty man', proud of his integrity, and the Coppards' temper - inherited, we are told, by Mrs Morel - is depicted as 'proud and unyielding'. She has also acquired the 'defiant blue eyes' of her father and is described as 'a delicate, rather proud child'. The accumulation of the word 'proud' and its synonyms and associates, highlights the bitter gall of Coppard's actual poverty. To achieve the differentiation, the superiority required by his lofty-minded sensibility is rendered all the more difficult because it involves a struggle against the odds. The overbearing manner of the father towards the gentle mother completes the sketch of a disposition inclined to dominate and control its surroundings. The imprint of this on Gertrude is again revealed in the brief synopsis of her relationship with John Field. She does not express the pleasure she feels at the lyrical compliment he pays her hair - 'her clear face scarcely showed the elation which rose within her' (SL 16) - and she pursues instead the question of his vocation, unwilling to accept a man's inability to shape and determine his own destiny. Her desire is that he follow his ambition to become a preacher.

These puritan characteristics of Gertude Coppard are thrown into sharp relief by her meeting with the young miner who is to become her husband:

Morel was then twenty-seven years old. He was well set-up, erect, and very smart. He had wavy black hair that shone again, and a vigorous black beard that had never been shaved. His cheeks were ruddy, and his red, moist mouth was noticeable because he laughed so often and so heartily. He had that rare thing, a rich, ringing laugh. Gertrude Coppard had watched him, fascinated. He was so full of colour and animation, his voice ran so easily into comic grotesque, he was so ready and so pleasant with everybody. Her own father had a rich fund of humour, but it was satiric. This man's was different: soft, non-intellectual, warm, a kind of gambolling. (SL 16-17)

So the winsomeness of Morel's initial appeal is described: the strong, virile masculinity, healthy, colourful and full of life, spontaneous, childlike and expansive. Lawrence's description of their meeting is balanced on a polarity which is, at this stage, magnetic rather than repellent. It is their difference from each other that sparks the primary fascination:

She herself was opposite. She had a curious, receptive mind, which found much pleasure and amusement in listening to other folk. She was clever in leading folk on to talk. She loved ideas, and was considered very intellectual. What she liked most of all was an argument on religion or philosophy or politics with some educated man. (SL 17)

Contrasted with the emphasis on Morel's physique and outer presence, Gertrude's mind and thought-life is given precedence in the description. This implicit contrast is continued in the description of her appearance:

In her person she was rather small and delicate, with a large brow, and dropping bunches of brown silk curls. Her blue eyes were very straight, honest, and searching. She had the beautiful hands of the Coppards. Her dress was always subdued. She wore dark blue silk, with a peculiar silver chain of silver scallops. This, and a heavy brooch of twisted gold, was her only ornament. She was still perfectly intact, deeply religious, and full of beautiful candour. (SL 17)

The impression is one of compactness and control, of undeviating directness and purity, and of discipline to the point of subduedness. Whereas Morel is open, even ostentatious, transparent and immediate, she is, to him, remote and seemingly unattainable and beyond his ken: 'that thing of mystery and fascination, a lady'. He is portrayed as bubbling, energetic, even wasteful of life; she is deeper, stiller and 'perfectly intact'. And while it is clear that each has qualities that the other lacks, and each has the potential to complete and complement the other, the emotional balance in this early description

is undoubtedly weighted towards the miner. He is contrasted with Gertrude's father, who is described again as:

proud in his bearing, handsome, and rather bitter; who preferred theology in reading, and who drew near in sympathy only to one man, the Apostle Paul; who was harsh in government, and in familiarity ironic; who ignored all sensuous pleasure. (SL 18)

Again, Gertrude is identified with her father's highminded, stern Puritanism, and it is the contrast of her suitor's easy expansiveness with the restraint and control of her inherited mind-set, which seems to make him all the more attractive to her:

Therefore the dusky, golden softness of the man's sensuous flame of life, that flowed off his flesh like the flame from a candle, not baffled and gripped into incandescence by thought and spirit as her life was, seemed to her something wonderful, beyond her.

He came and bowed above her. A warmth radiated through her as if she had drunk wine. (SL 18)

The very sound of the words used to describe the miner - the accumulation of soft 'f', 'fl' and 's' consonants and long, leisurely vowels - contrast with the more detached effect of the shorter vowels and sharper consonants in the phrases relating to the woman. The golden warmth of Morel is likened to the diffuse, merging flame of a candle, gentle and easy, and is counterpoised with her more intense, focused, but harsher light. The image of the flowing candle flame coheres with the man's innate gregariousness, his indiscriminate embracing of life, while the woman's gripped incandescence is consistent with her dry wit, her pure intactness, her strong, controlling will. Morel warms and relaxes and intoxicates her. But the darkness of the underground which is the native element of his work - and, of course, of his instinctive, unconscious mode of being - makes Gertrude feel blind. It is potentially claustrophobic. Nevertheless,

she idealizes this new tract of life, sees the miner as a hero, and marries him.

The story unfolds to follow Lawrence's classic portrayal of this disastrous marriage of opposites. Morel turns out to be deceitful, devoid of a decent sense of responsibility, and with little real moral integrity and consistency beneath his extrovert 'showiness'. The young wife's sense of betrayal is deepened by her loneliness: he cannot converse with her as she would like and she gradually realizes that they have very little in common. So begins the 'fearful, bloody battle that ended only with the death of one' (SL 23). She criticizes, goads and disdains; he irritates, drinks and bullies. She increasingly withdraws into silence, hatred and eventually indifference, totally undermining his manhood and rigidly making no concessions to his weaknesses:

The pity was, she was too much his opposite. She could not be content with the little he might be, she would have him the much that he ought to be. So, in seeking to make him nobler than he could be, she destroyed him. She injured and hurt and scarred herself, but she lost none of her worth. She also had the children. (SL 25-26)

While Morel, trapped in the deadening relationship, lets himself go, she stubbornly endures, clings to life all the more tenaciously with a tightness and almost flint-like quality which characterizes her throughout the novel - and nowhere more so than at her dying. Although she is usually triumphant, the reader's sympathy is often with the loser. As Clara reflects when she meets Mrs Morel much later in the novel, 'she would not care to stand in Mrs Morel's way. There was something so hard and certain in his mother, as if she never had a misgiving in her life' (SL 392).

As Lawrence is establishing the character of Mrs Morel in the early pages of the novel, this hardness and certainty are explicitly presented as part of the Puritan inheritance of the Coppards. We have already noted the references to their pride, unyielding superiority and defiance. That the values of this religious inheritance coincide with those of Eastwood Congregationalism is clear enough too: the tendency towards dogmatism; the preference for order, control, detachment and differentiation; the insistence of the spiritual and intellectual at the expense of the instinctive and sensuous, of reason over passion, morality over mystery. The couple's marriage is a battle, not simply between two different kinds of personality, but between two totally different ideologies. Morel's - really an anti-ideology - is portrayed as unconscious, spontaneous and natural; he is incapable of change: 'I curl because I canna help it' (SL 19)' Mrs Morel's is characterized as a direct result of a religious inheritance going back generations:

She still had her high moral sense, inherited from generations of Puritans. It was now a religious instinct, and she was almost a fanatic with him because she loved him, or had loved him. If he sinned, she tortured him. If he drank, and lied, was often a poltroon, sometimes a knave, she wielded the lash unmercifully. (SL 25)

Here is a rigorously moral view now embedded as an instinct, a reflex. Mrs Morel's reaction to her husband is shown to be as inevitable as his own. She cannot help trying to change and shape him, but unlike his instincts, hers are revealed to have been grafted in, created and shaped by a religious tradition. Its transmitted values and world-view perfectly exemplify Bernard Lord Manning's description of Congregationalism's uncompromising inheritance of intensity and its

refusal to accommodate the comforts of natural man. This inheritance is thereby a fundamental ingredient in the Morel's embattled marriage:

She fought to make him undertake his own responsibilities, to make him fulfil his obligations. But he was too different from her. His nature was purely sensuous, and she strove to make him moral, religious. She tried to force him to face things. He could not endure it - it drove him out of his mind. (SL 23)

As the children come, they are enlisted on the side of the mother, and time and again, the battle is shown to be rooted in a crusading religious purpose beyond mere personality. She imagines her son as a hero of the faith: 'a few shocks of corn in a corner of the fallow stood up as if alive; she imagined them bowing; perhaps her son would be a Joseph' (SL 49). She decides suddenly, and without really knowing why, that her third child shall be named Paul. His nickname as he grows up is 'Postle. The Apostle Paul has already been identified with her father's proud, intolerant breed of Christianity, and this new baby, born at the height of her struggles to force her husband into the virtues of such a value-system, is identified, even before his birth, with the mother's aspirations and battle.

When Mrs Morel is thrust out into the cold moonlight by her drunken husband, the unborn child's implication in its parents' battle is made clear. As she furiously recalls the row, 'the child boiled within her' (SL 34); the brand burning her own memory is, by association, searing the consciousness of the child within. Likewise, the infusion of the 'great white light' of the moonlight and the absorption of the powerful perfume of the tall white lilies mingles with the child's blood as well:

She melted out like scent into the shiny, pale air. After a time the child, too, melted with her in the mixing-pot of moonlight, and she rested with the hills and lilies and houses, all swum together in a kind of swoon. (SL 35)

We have seen that in Lawrence's pattern of imagery, the colour white - especially when associated with the moon - often suggests a pure intactness and remote transcendence continuous with his interpretation of Christian spirituality; and the white lily is also a symbol of the Virgin Mary. It seems, then, that the child in the womb is absorbing not only the mother's hatred but also the ideology and spirituality which fuel it. The scene in which the mother's blood - shed when she is cut by a drawer thrown by the father - drips on to the baby's hair and soaks through to its scalp, vividly confirms this idea of its baptism into her sufferings, and is again suggestive of their religious significance.

Despite Mrs Morel's suffering - which is conveyed with feeling and fullness - she is characterized as the strong one, the victor in the battle between the couple. Morel's weaknesses are fully exposed, sometimes with a comic touch which draws the reader into a superior sympathy with Mrs Morel. Yet, although her irritation at his childishness and her hatred of his bullying are rendered entirely understandable, her proud, rigid refusal to compromise, and her continual, merciless undermining of his self-worth, evoke a strong sympathy for her husband. She laughs at his fat, ignominious bundle 'slunk into its corner in the dark, with its ends flopping like dejected ears from the knots' (SL 59) which she finds in the coal place after he has 'left home'. She is at no pains to spare his humiliation before the children, and forces him to the final humiliation of fetching it in himself. Her undermining of him is reflected in his physical shrinking: 'as he sank from his erect, assertive bearing, his physique seemed to contract along with his pride and moral strength' (SL 38). There is real pathos in the father's exclusion from the

family: he is 'quite alone', 'the outsider' - the more so in the light of his inarticulate and unsuccessful attempts to reach out:

His soul would reach out in its blind way to her and find her gone. He felt a sort of emptiness, almost like a vacuum in his soul. He was unsettled and restless. (SL 63)

He was shut out from all family affairs. No one told him anything. The children, alone with their mother, told her all about the day's happenings, everything.... But as soon as the father came in, everything stopped. He was like the scotch in the smooth, happy machinery of the home. And he was always aware of this fall of silence on his entry, the shutting off of life, the unwelcome. But now it was gone too far to alter.

He would dearly have liked the children to talk to him, but they could not. (SL 81)

His exclusion from the family emphasizes his vulnerability and inarticulate helplessness, which is highlighted at times of illness. His desire to help Paul when the lad is ill is rejected and met with a request for the mother; Morel's helplessness and exclusion when his wife is dying underline his estrangement.

The reader's sympathy for Morel is, of course, by no means confined to a feeling of pity. Although his weaknesses are damningly exposed, a sense of abundance and livingness is also conveyed in his character. The moral, intellectual judgement may favour the neglected wife rather than the 'dissipated' husband, but the imagery and detail - affective at a more subliminal level - often touch the reader's emotions differently. The contrasting light imagery of their first meeting - his soft and sympathetic, golden, flowing and candle-like glow; her harsher, more intense and gripped incandescence - continues, in the novel's subtext, to shape our sympathies. His is the gregarious, yellow light of the vibrant, comradely pub; the warm glow of the hearth where he warms his pit clothes and 'crozzles' his breakfast bacon, and fixes and makes things for the home, absorbed in his task. Hers is the white moonlight which drains colour and bestows

pallor; it is mysterious and ethereal. When Morel, in a drunken rage, pushes his pregnant wife outside, he is clearly in the wrong, morally. And yet, even here, the evocative use of the different kinds of light with which each is identified constitutes a subtext that suggests an alternative emotional response: - 'He tried the latch. It opened - and there stood the silver-grey night, fearful to him, after the tawny light of the lamp. He hurried back' (SL 31).

The continuing vibrance of Morel's presence in the family, despite his increasing alienation, is more concretely embodied in other ways: his beautiful whistling, his lively stories of life down the pit, his boisterous preparation when sprucing himself up to go out, his utter contentment in the peace and simple routine activity of the early morning hour before setting off for the mine. It is surely this vitality which causes Paul, much later in the novel, to want to identify himself, not with the mother's middle-class values, but with those of the 'common people':

'You know,' he said to his mother, 'I don't want to belong to the well-to-do middle class. I like my common people best. I belong to the common people....'

.... from the middle classes one gets ideas, and from the common people - life itself, warmth. You feel their hates and love.'  
(SL 313)

Mrs Morel refuses to accept Paul's identification and it is ridiculed here as she challenges him with the actuality of his intellectual friends. 'She frankly wanted him to climb into the middle classes' (SL 314). Paul's rejoinder, 'But - there's the life -', reveals again, despite the frequent portrayal of his hatred for his father, the deep - if usually inarticulate - affirmation of the values and mode of life his father represents. And the rejection of the intellectual,

middle-class aspirations is also an implicit rejection of their associated spiritual aspirations which, of course, are those of his mother.

Paul's announcement of solidarity with the common people, follows the information that 'religion was fading into the background. He had shovelled away all the beliefs that would hamper him' (SL 313). This represents his shaking off of the puritan inheritance infused by his mother into his blood even before his birth. He had 'come more or less to the bedrock of belief that one should feel inside oneself for right and wrong, and should have the patience to gradually realize one's God. Now life interested him more' (SL 313). This more naturalistic, instinctive kind of religious belief, while in keeping with the father's non-reflective approach to life, diverges diametrically from the religious sensibility of the puritan Congregationalists. The Congregational Chapel in Eastwood, as we saw in Chapter Two, was very much associated with middle-class aspirations. And there, as here in Sons and Lovers, these social aspirations of 'getting on', of differentiating oneself from the masses, of not wasting or squandering oneself, but living usefully and prosperously, are a direct result of a certain mode of dissenting religion. This is characterized - largely through Mrs Morel - as extremely self-assured in its austere morality, and transcendent in its desire to be separate from the world, to rise above the common, and to impose shape and order on what is haphazard or inchoate. Associated imagery evokes a gripped, willed intensity, intact and remote rather than heedlessly merging.

Mrs Morel is not, of course, the only representative of Congregational Christianity in the novel. The young clergyman who visits her every day and sometimes has tea with her, while he does not correlate with what we know of the three ministers at the Eastwood

Congregational Chapel during Lawrence's experience of it, nevertheless embodies some of Lawrence's responses to it. In Sons and Lovers, Mr Heaton serves as a foil for both Mr and Mrs Morel. His intellectual middle-class gentility emphasizes again the total contrast between the cultivated, refined chapel milieu - with which Mrs Morel naturally and deliberately identifies - and the sweaty, grimy workaday reality of the miner's world. The comic potential of the scene, with the diffident young minister shrinking from the dirty, damp pit singlet Morel proffers him so he can feel the sweat of the miner's labour, is exploited superbly. So too is the way the different characters - simply by this juxtaposition - comment on each other. As the miner's boorishness is highlighted by the minister's immaculate decorum, and his childish self-pity by his wife's deflating cynicism, so the rosy haze of the minister's lofty idealism is sharply dispelled by the miner's sweaty singlet, his token of hard physical labour. The clergyman's 'quaint and fantastic' ideas and romantic spiritualizing are offset by Mrs Morel's very pragmatic, down-to-earth and more sardonic interpretation of the faith: 'She brought him judiciously to earth' (SL 46).

The Congregational minister is, here, an extrapolation and embodiment of one aspect of his Congregational inheritance that Lawrence is rejecting: its tendency to spiritualize and hence distort or demean the ordinary and its consequent out-of-touch effete-ness, tentativeness and even fear when coming into contact with hard reality. This technique of criticizing aspects of his religious inheritance through an embodied representative is exemplified much more damningly in a short story he was writing and revising around the time of the composition of Sons and Lovers. Mr Massey in "Daughters of the Vicar" is one of Lawrence's most objectional fictional characters. Although

he is an Anglican and not a Congregational clergyman, Mr. Massey embodies Lawrence's most brutal rejection of the negative influence of Christianity, which is imagined in him to an extreme and almost caricatured degree. In fact, Mr Massey is barely embodied: he is drastically underdeveloped, 'a little abortion',<sup>8</sup> padding around almost totally abstracted from the people around him. 'As far as he could conceive it, he was a perfect Christian.' He has a 'certain inhuman self-sureness', lives from his 'strong philosophical mind', and lacks 'the full range of human feelings.' Mr Massey's appalling abstraction is far removed from the innocuous young clergyman in Sons and Lovers - but perhaps in degree rather than in kind - and his self-sureness while extreme to the point of being 'inhuman', is reminiscent of Mrs Morel's.

A similar version of the Congregational spirituality of Mr Heaton is more fully explored through the characters of Mrs Leivers and Miriam. This introduction of a third element, a third mode of living, offsets the simple polarity of the novel's parental dualism. This is part of what helps Lawrence's third novel go beyond the deadlocked impasse of the first two, enabling more complex consideration of the influences of his past. In the same way that Lawrence juxtaposes the young clergyman and Mr and Mrs Morel, so the parents, in the wider structure of the novel, are juxtaposed with Miriam. This adding of a perspective, as it were, from which the others may be highlighted, helps to bring a new dimension of fullness, solidity and depth to the characters in Sons and Lovers. As the focus on conflict shifts and the respective polarities are relieved from the obligation of constant pitched battle, the author and the reader are permitted a greater degree of detachment and freedom and space in which to evaluate and make more subtle judgements. Not that the various modes of living receive such equal, fair treatment as this would suggest. This novel

was conceived, we remember, as Lawrence's mother was dying and as he was describing the awfulness and tragedy of her married life in letters to his friends. In this sense, it begins as some sort of justification, apology, even tribute to the women who had been his central pivot and greatest love.<sup>9</sup> And yet it grew into the novel of his own emancipation from her stultifying influence on him, an influence shaped by her own deeply engrained religious heritage. This conflict of interests is evident in the novel most obviously in the frequent disjuncture between the story's surface and subtext - as in the episode already discussed, when Mrs Morel is pushed out of the house. Sometimes this is a weakness, as when Lawrence, the teller, offers a judgement not rooted in the texture of the tale. Sometimes it creates a richer complexity, as we have seen in the interplay of the intellectual and moral judgement invited by the narrative with the more subliminal emotional response evoked by the imagery.

It is this conflict of interests, this desire to find significance in his mother's gruelling life, and his own need to shed her influence, that accounts for Lawrence's treatment of the third element in Sons and Lovers. Jessie Chambers was right when she saw Miriam as the scapegoat for Mrs Morel in the novel. Although the mother's influence is repeatedly linked with - even explained in terms of - a controlling Christianity, it is the character of Miriam who has to take the full thrust of Lawrence's rejection of Christianity. D.M. Newmarch is persuasive in pointing to a divergence of the Congregational tradition manifested in the very different spiritualities of Mrs Morel and Miriam. It is worth remembering, however, that Lawrence is 'shedding sicknesses' as much as re-creating cultural history. He is re-creating a past he is rejecting, and this re-creation has to contain the justification for his rejection. What we have in the novel is

Lawrence's feelings and attitudes transposed into fiction and, as Newmarch acknowledges, 'it is the deeply affective influences in the Congregational ethos that we should least expect to see simply and immediately transmitted.'<sup>10</sup> In the light of Lawrence's need both to justify and reject his mother, it is also possible to argue that it is his need to differentiate between Mrs Morel and Miriam that makes the differences seem much greater than they really are. A number of times we are told how different Miriam is from the mother and how grateful Paul is for his mother's mode. Yet an examination of the subtext and a closer look at their respective characterizations, suggests that there is more in common than Lawrence - or Paul - wants to acknowledge. The character of Miriam is used - as are those of Mrs Heaton and Mr Massey, although of course not nearly so blatantly - to some extent as a personification of Lawrence's belief in the negative effect of Christianity on the formation of a personality and sensibility. In this character are accumulated the characteristics which Lawrence was rejecting but was reluctant, or unable yet, to associate with his mother. In particular, he explores through Miriam the anti-physical strain of Christianity, its ascetic rejections of and detachment from the world, and its idealized, internalized vision of reality. Through and beyond this he considers the destructive nature of Miriam's mode of spiritualized Christian love.

Miriam's physical tentativeness and fear is made clear right from Paul's first meeting with her when he and his mother visit Willey Farm. Yet her physical beauty is also regularly mentioned: 'She had a beautiful warm colouring' (SL 156); 'her beauty - that of a shy, wild, quiveringly sensitive thing - seemed nothing to her' (SL 178); 'she was nearly sixteen, very beautiful, with her warm colouring' (SL 179); 'her beautiful warm face' (SL 187); 'she was ruddy and beautiful' (SL 194);

'she was a well-developed girl, and very handsome' (SL 211); 'She had the most beautiful body he had ever imagined' (SL 353). Our awareness of Miriam's natural beauty - and the fact that it is a warm, ruddy, healthy beauty - only serves to emphasize the unnaturalness of her distrust of the body, and to highlight the devitalizing, enervating and corrupting influence of the religious value-system which lies behind it.<sup>11</sup>

Paul's first real contact with her comes when she shrinks from her brother's challenge to let the chickens peck corn from the palm of her hand. The merciless brothers taunt her physical cowardice: 'Dursn't jump off a gate, dursn't tweedle, dursn't go on a slide, dursn't stop a girl hittin' her' (SL 158) and indeed, as Miriam's character is being established, this physical timidity is frequently exemplified. One of the most effective scenes is when Paul and Miriam try out the new swing in the barn:

'It's a treat of a swing,' he said.

'Yes'.

He was swinging through the air, every bit of him swinging, like a bird that swoops for joy of movement. (SL 187)

Paul's perfect co-ordination, the total integration of his physical movements and the motion of swinging are counterpoised with Miriam's gripped fear:

She felt the accuracy with which he caught her, exactly at the right moment, and the exactly proportionate strength of his thrust, and she was afraid. Down to her bowels went the hot wave of fear. She was in his hands. Again, firm and inevitable came the thrust at the right moment. She gripped the rope, almost swooning.

'Ha!' she laughed in fear. 'No higher!'

'But you're not a bit high,' he remonstrated.

'But no higher.'

He heard the fear in her voice, and desisted. Her heart melted in hot pain when the moment came for him to thrust her forward again. But he left her alone. She began to breathe.

'Won't you really go any farther?' he asked. 'Should I keep you there?'

'No; let me go by myself,' she answered.

He moved aside and watched her,

'Why, you're scarcely moving,' he said.

She laughed slightly with shame, and in a moment got down.

(SL 187-188)

Her stiff awkwardness and fear, her distrust and inability to let herself go and become one with the swing, and her shrinking from Paul's inevitable thrusting suggests - and indeed prefigures - her 'instinctive' recoil from sexual relationship. 'She could never lose herself' (SL 188). Yet she is fascinated by Paul's abandon: 'There was something fascinating to her in him. For the moment he was nothing but a piece of swinging stuff; not a particle of him that did not swing' (SL 188). The soft, flowing, merging light of the father is suggested in Paul's comparison to a flame 'that had lit a warmth in her whilst he swung'.

To an even greater extent than in the case of Mrs Morel, the roots of Miriam's negative ambiance - and especially here with regard to her negative attitude to the body - are revealed to be religious:

All the life of Miriam's body was in her eyes, which were usually dark as a dark church, but could flame with light like a conflagration. Her face scarcely even altered from its look of brooding. She might have been one of the women who went with Mary when Jesus was dead. Her body was not flexible and living. She walked with a swing, rather heavily, her head bowed forward, pondering. She was not clumsy, and yet none of her movements seemed quite the movement. Often, when wiping the dishes, she would stand in bewilderment and chagrin because she had pulled in two halves a cup or a tumbler. It was as if, in her fear and self-mistrust, she put too much strength into the effort. There was no looseness or abandon with her. Everything was gripped stiff with intensity, and her effort, overcharged, closed in on itself. (SL 190-91)

What is brought out here is the radical disjuncture between Miriam's mind, spirit and body, and Lawrence's implicit criticism of the deathly Christian dualism that so much of his writing sets out to challenge. The body, an embarrassment to the Christian (or idealist) who aspires to transcendence and would rather be a disembodied spirit, is repressed and subdued. This instinctive relationship or synthesis between mind and body is thus disrupted and the result in Miriam is a lack of co-ordination, an out-of-touchness with her physical movements, and a leaden lifelessness about her body. Her effort and stiff, gripped intensity recall Mrs Morel's baffled flame of life 'gripped into incandescence by thought and spirit' (SL 18) while the looseness and abandon she lacks are the qualities of Mrs Morel's pagan sensuousness as imagined in the flowing golden candle-flame.

Of course, a strong argument could - and frequently has - been made that this attitude to embodiedness is not orthodoxly Christian but represents a gnostic heresy. Frank Bottomley and Charles Davis take this line when they argue that the puritan 'who sees the body merely as a sensual obstacle to the moral and religious life' is as mistaken as 'the libertine who sees the body as a mere instrument of pleasure',<sup>12</sup> and that both are aberrations from 'the very essence of the Christian, incarnational and sacramental and therefore material and bodily view of life'.<sup>13</sup> While I believe that this is true, aberrations are often an important and influential part of the tradition. This ascetic, life-negating aspect of Lawrence's inheritance as presented through Miriam constitutes, then, a persuasive element in the justification of his rejection of it.

The failure of the relationship between Paul and Miriam is shown to be, on the face of it, essentially a physical one:

There was some obstacle; and what was the obstacle? It lay in the physical bondage. He shrank from the physical contact.... It

seemed as if virginity were a positive force, which fought and won in both of them. (SL 340)

While Paul accepts his own part in the failure to establish a sexual relationship, his aversion is shown, primarily, as the result of his own sensitivity to Miriam's fear:

Miriam was exceedingly sensitive, as her mother had always been. The slightest grossness made her recoil almost in anguish. Her brothers were brutal, but never coarse in speech. The men did all the discussing of farm matters outside. But, perhaps, because of the continual business of birth and of begetting which goes on upon every farm, Miriam was the more hypersensitive to the matter, and her blood was chastened almost to disgust of the faintest suggestion of such intercourse. Paul took his pitch from her, and their intimacy went on in an utterly blanched and chaste fashion. It could never be mentioned that the mare was in foal. (SL 201)

When they try to break through this repugnance, the results of their love-making are deathly. Miriam's soul stands apart 'in a sort of horror' (SL 350) and Paul is left sad; his peace is the stillness of the desire to lapse out, not-to-be. Later, in her grandmother's cottage, Miriam's response to Paul's love-making is that of a sacrifice, 'like a creature waiting immolation' (SL 354), and while she tries, intellectually, to believe that 'loving, even in that way, is the high-water mark of living' (SL 355), it is clear that her mother's ominous warnings and her own ascetic, dualistic religiosity have solidified into instinct which makes her frigid.

The spiritual origin of this tendency towards the negation of instinct is made explicit time and again. When Miriam first feels stirrings of desire for Paul, she imagines this as the 'serpent in her Eden', in other words as a temptation to be resisted, battled with, and thwarted:

She searched earnestly in herself to see if she wanted Paul Morel. She felt there would be some disgrace in it. Full of twisted feeling, she was afraid she did want him. She stood self-convicted. Then came an agony of new shame. She shrank

within herself in a coil of torture. Did she want Paul Morel, and did he know she wanted him? What a subtle infamy upon her! She felt as if her whole soul coiled into knots of shame.... Yet there she stood under the self-accusation of wanting him, tied to that stake of torture. In bitter perplexity she knelt down and prayed:

'O Lord, let me not love Paul Morel. Keep me from loving him, if I ought not to love him.'

Something anomalous in the prayer arrested her. She lifted her head and pondered. How could it be wrong to love him? Love was God's gift. And yet it caused her shame. That was because of him, Paul Morel. She was to be a sacrifice. But it was God's sacrifice, not Paul Morel's or her own. After a few minutes she hid her face in the pillow again, and said:

'But, Lord, if it is Thy will that I should love him, make me love him - as Christ would, who died for the souls of men. Make me love him splendidly, because he is Thy son.' (SL 212)

The rationale for Miriam's purely sacrificial mode of Christianity is given in her identification with an essentially sacrificial conception of divinity: 'she fell into that rapture of self-sacrifice, identifying herself with a God who was sacrificed, which gives to so many human souls their deepest bliss' (SL 212).

As with her instincts towards the body and sex, so the way Miriam perceives reality has been deeply shaped by her mother's other-worldly religion. Paul is both fascinated and repelled by the intensity of the atmosphere in the Leivers' home, where each activity and each motive is given a spiritual significance - 'the mother exalted everything - even a bit of housework - to the plane of a religious trust' (SL 182). This heightening of feeling initially appeals to Paul: it coincides with the adolescent need for intensity. It also helps to stimulate and sharpen the artist's emerging sensibility. It is to Mrs Leivers, and increasingly to Miriam, that Paul brings his paintings and sketches for encouragement and affirmation:

It was not his art Mrs Morel cared about; it was himself and his achievement. But Mrs Leivers and her children were almost his disciples. They kindled him and made him glow to his work,

whereas his mother's influence was to make him quietly determined, patient, dogged, unwearied. (SL 185)

Later, the nature of the inspirational influence of Miriam is contrasted again with his mother's more earthy contribution to his creativity. Mrs Morel gives him the 'life-warmth', the 'strength to produce', and it is interesting how, in proximity to Miriam, Mrs Morel takes on some of the warmth hitherto associated with Mr Morel, while it is Miriam in the subtext here who is identified with the deathly characteristics of white light. Miriam stimulates Paul into consciousness, 'into knowledge of the work he had produced unconsciously' (SL 196). Her intellectual and spiritual focus urges him into the greater conscious, intellectual awareness essential for the artist; through her contact, 'he gained insight; his vision went deeper.... Miriam urged this warmth into intensity like a white light' (SL 196).

The contrast between the ethereal remoteness of Miriam's imagined worlds and Mrs Morel's more vigorous pragmatism also represents a conflict of needs within Paul. Although he needs Miriam's heightened consciousness and intense, spiritual sensitivity to spur on his creativity, he is disconcerted by its rarified remoteness and its essential failure to connect: 'there was a vague, unreal feel about her' (SL 273). By contrast, his mother is for him utterly solid and firmly rooted. Her ambitions for her son are made concrete, more practical and worldly:

After all, the life beyond offered very little to Mrs Morel. She saw that our chance for doing is here, and doing counted with her... Paul was going to ... alter the face of the earth in some way which mattered. (SL 273)

Miriam's intense spirituality pulls in precisely the opposite direction towards a rejection of idealization of 'this life':

And she was cut off from ordinary life by her religious intensity which made the world for her either a nunnery garden or a paradise, where sin and knowledge were not, or else an ugly, cruel thing. (SL 185)

Miriam's perspective, then, is idealized and romantic; her vision of reality is highly subjective and intensely personal. The radical dualism of her sense of self and its drastic mind/body split is reflected here again in her sharply polarized interpretation of reality, a polarizing strikingly reminiscent of that evident in Robert Reid's sermon on the imagination. The fanciful, escapist tenor of Miriam's imagined world is far indeed from the staunch utilitarianism which is the thrust of Reid's sermon, and of course very different too from Mrs Morel's hard-headed realism. Nevertheless, there is congruity in the way she rigidly categorizes and judges things as 'higher' or 'lower', whatever is worldly - a preoccupation with appearance, manners, position, and whatever is vulgar - jollity, levity, the roisterous 'insufferably stupid' Coons - is firmly despised and rejected. Miriam differentiates between Paul's higher and lesser self; she believes his higher self is the true, essential Paul and it is this spiritual, refined sensitive Paul which belongs to her. She rationalizes Paul's relationship with Clara as a temporary aberration, a transient succumbing to his lower, physical earthly being. His outburst: 'I'm so damned spiritual with you always!' (SL 232) expresses not only his protest at being made to feel like a 'disembodied spirit', but echoes the rebellion of Miriam's sister and brothers against this enervating spirituality of trying to transcend one's normal, full humanity.

To greater and lesser extents, then, Miriam is like Mr Heaton and Mr Massey, like Helena in The Trespasser and a prototype for Hermione in Women in Love. Her idealized vision cuts her off from the vast tracts of reality she rejects. It alienates her from ordinary people and precludes normal relationships on casual planes. She is out of touch, detached and alone : 'She did not fit in with the others; she could very rarely get into human relations with anyone' (SL 205).

Miriam is characterized both as a victim in the grip of a religious ideology now embedded as an instinct, and also as actively desiring and promoting her own distinctiveness and differentiation. She promotes her alienating superiority by her mysticism and the cultivation of her thought-life and intellect. Both are rooted in her desire for transcendence. Miriam's mysticism - like nineteenth-century religious idealism - involves a rejection of the ordinary, mundane and earthly. She seeks to unite herself with an ethereal, esoteric, higher spiritual reality. Her desire for learning is also a desire to establish her difference and superiority from those around her:

... she was mad to have learning whereon to pride herself. For she was different from other folk, and must not be scooped up among the common fry. Learning was the only distinction to which she thought to aspire. (SL 178)

As with Hermione in Women in Love, this mystical, intellectual bid for transcendence is exposed as a perverted will to power. In the case of Miriam, this is explicitly rooted in her idealistic Christianity; Lawrence's criticism of this aspect of his Congregational inheritance - of its insistence on the precedence of the rational and spiritual over the material, as in Reid's sermons on the imagination, temperance and hope especially - is thus fairly overt. With Hermione, as with Helena, this trait is presented as part of its wider value-system, of an intellectual idealism which negates genuine spontaneity and

physicality. Each woman sees knowing and communing as one and the same thing, and both, for them, involve a kind of control. This alienation and detachment from the world creates an unhealthy vacuum which makes balanced relationships impossible. The ego is portrayed as both terribly fragile and brittle, and yet overwhelmingly strong. In fact, it is the strength of weakness, the parasitic strength - as with the Christian Herald couple in The White Peacock - of the martyr-temperament.

It is significant that Miriam seems able to love only what is weaker than herself and what she therefore thinks she can control. It is when Paul is ill that she can first imagine the possibility of loving him:

Then he was so ill, and she felt he would be weak. Then she would be stronger than he. Then she could love him. If she could be mistress of him in his weakness, take care of him, if he could depend on her, if she could, as it were, have him in her arms, how she could love him! (SL 178)

Miriam's need for power, of course, is again the result of her tremendous vulnerability and sense of weakness which makes it almost impossible for her to trust what she cannot control. We have already witnessed - in her tortured prayer to God about loving Paul Morel - her fundamental distrust of her own stirring feelings. And if we recall the suspicion of ungoverned passions in Robert Reid's sermons - particularly the ones on imagination and temperance - the representative nature of Lawrence's critique of Miriam here (she also represents the negative emphases of chapel religion) becomes apparent. It is only when something is absorbed within herself that she feels safe from the possibility of hurt and rejection, and of being 'taken over'. Miriam's suffocating love for her little brother Hubert is one of many examples of this continual need to collapse boundaries to achieve an absorbing and absolute kind of love. Paul's frenzied

reaction to her lack of restraint and the absence of her true sense of otherness, is the result of his own threatened sense of independent selfhood:

Often Miriam kneeled to the child and drew on him to her.

'Eh, my Hubert!' she sang, in a voice heavy and surcharged with love. 'Eh, my Hubert!'

And, folding him in her arms, she swayed slightly from side to side, with love, his face half lifted, her eyes closed, her voice drenched with love.

'Don't!' said the child, uneasy - 'don't Miriam!'

'Yes; you love me, don't you?' she murmured deep in her throat, almost as if she were in a trance, and swaying also as if she were swooned in an ecstasy of love.

'Don't!' repeated the child, a frown on his clear brow.

'You love me, don't you?' she murmured. (SL 190)

Paul shares Hubert's unease and consternation:

'What do you make such a fuss for?' cried Paul, all in suffering because of her extreme emotion. 'Why can't you be ordinary with him?'

She let the child go, and rose, and said nothing. Her intensity, which would leave no emotion on a normal plane, irritated the youth into a frenzy. And this fearful, naked contact of her on small occasions shocked him. He was used to his mother's reserve. And on such occasions he was thankful in his heart and soul that he had his mother, so sane and wholesome. (SL 190)

While Paul is right in contrasting this with his mother's proud reserve and customary reluctance to express her emotions, the superficial difference masks a more essential similarity. It is the nakedness of the contact which seems to shock Paul, but perhaps also implicit is the shock of recognition. After all, Mrs Morel's desire to dominate and control and absorb her son is not so very different from Miriam's, and the incestuous overtones and naked passion of their embrace (SL 262) is surely more shocking. Usually, however, Mrs Morel is more adept, skilful and covert about it.

A misfit in the human world, Miriam compensates, we are told, by substituting nature as 'her friend, her companion, her lover' (SL 205), and her excess of rhapsody is most frequently exposed in her desire for communion with flowers - often white flowers:

To her, flowers appeared with such strength she felt she must make them part of herself. When she bent and breathed a flower, it was as if she and the flower were loving each other. Paul hated her for it. There seemed a sort of exposure about the action, something too intimate. (SL 214)

And later on, Miriam's lavish fondling of the daffodils brings on a violent verbal attack from Paul:

'Aren't they magnificent?' she murmured.

'Magnificent! it's a bit thick - they're pretty!'

She bowed again to her flowers at his censure of her praise.

He watched her crouching, sipping the flowers with fervid kisses.

'Why must you always be fondling things!' he said irritably.

'But I love to touch them,' she replied, hurt.

'Can you never like things without clutching them as if you wanted to pull the heart out of them? Why don't you have a bit more restraint, or reserve, or something?'

'You wheedle the soul out of things,' he said. 'I would never wheedle - at any rate, I'd go straight.'

He scarcely knew what he was saying. These things came from him mechanically. She looked at him. His body seemed one weapon, firm and hard against her.

'You're always begging for things to love you,' he said, 'as if you were a beggar for love. Even the flowers, you have to fawn on them --'

Rhythmically, Miriam was swaying and stroking the flower with her mouth, inhaling the scent which ever after made her shudder as it came to her nostrils.

'You don't want to love - your eternal and abnormal craving is to be loved. You aren't positive, you're negative. You absorb, absorb, as if you must fill yourself up with love, because you've got a shortage somewhere.' (SL 267-268)

Paul's words - all the more so because 'he scarcely knew what he was saying' and is thereby speaking from his instinctive self<sup>14</sup> without trying to protect Miriam's dangerous fragility - accurately cut to the heart of Miriam's personality. Here it is clearer than anywhere else - although it is frequently implicit - that Lawrence's rejection of Miriam's spirituality is essentially Nietzschean. Christianity is seen as a corrupting force which inhibits and cripples natural desire, thereby dividing the psyche against itself. The absence, the vacuum in the personality this creates, reduces the enervated individual to an emotional parasite.

A further feature of the Christian sensibility which Lawrence is exploring and rejecting in Sons and Lovers - and, like all the others, one that constitutes part of the Christian-idealist system which Lawrence attacks more vehemently and more explicitly during the war - is its insistence on personality and the personal. What Paul discovers in sex is the ecstasy of passion, the transcendence of individual personality: 'To be rid of our individuality, which is our will, which is our effort - to live effortless, a kind of conscious sleep - that is very beautiful, I think; that is our after-life - our immortality' (SL 351). In the light of Miriam's desire for ecstasy and transcendence, one would have thought that she, too, might find such fulfilment in sex. However, just the opposite is true. Miriam is frightened by the impersonality of Paul's passion:

Often, when he grew hot, she put his face from her, held it between her hands, and looked in his eyes. He could not meet her gaze. Her dark eyes, full of love, earnest and searching, made him turn away. Not for an instant would she let him forget. Back again he had to torture himself into a sense of his responsibility and hers. Never any relaxing, never any leaving himself to the great hunger and impersonality of passion; he must be brought back to a deliberate, reflective creature. As if from a swoon of passion she called him back to the littleness, the personal relationship. He could not bear it. 'Leave me alone - leave me

alone!' he wanted to cry; but she wanted him to look at her with eyes full of love. His eyes, full of the dark, impersonal fire of desire, did not belong to her. (SL 347)

Yet this seeming paradox of Miriam's desire for transcendence and her rejection of the impersonality of passion, is consistent with her need for control. The fragile ego demands recognition and affirmation. She is insulted when Paul categorizes her and 'mixes her up with women in a general way' (SL 215). She needs to be special, to be different, to be unique in his eyes. And it is precisely this individuality and uniqueness which is threatened in the impersonality of passion. It is this, due to her craving to be recognized and not to be set aside, which she needs acknowledged and must therefore recall to Paul's consciousness. It is Miriam's rejection of her bodily, physical self, which causes her insistence that it is her intellectual, conscious, spiritual self which Paul must recognize: it is this personal, reflective part of her which she insists is the essential, the true self. So Miriam's desire for transcendence is baffled by the equally strong desire to maintain the intactness of her personality. She is incapable of the 'letting go' of the self which is the basis for true mystic union. Her inherited religious values of control, order and differentiation are thereby crippling rather than conducive to the wholeness of the truly salvific.

Miriam is a perfect example of Paul Tillich's diagnosis of the 'theology of consciousness' mentioned in Chapter Two. He suggests, we recall, that a certain kind of moralistic Christianity overburdens the personal centre and cuts the personality off from the vital basis of existence. Like Rudolf Otto (and Bottomley and Davis), Tillich argues that this failure to involve the whole person - the subconscious and non-rational, as well as the conscious and rational - is an aberration from the full meaning of Christian salvation, and from the Protestant

holistic understanding of it in particular. Nevertheless, it is this 'theology of consciousness' which constituted the dominant influence of Lawrence's youth, and it is this particular mode of spirituality from which Paul tried to break free in Sons and Lovers.

His questioning of 'the orthodox creed' is more than a dispassionate search for truth. Its wildness and destructiveness suggest that it is more than an intellectual system that Paul is smashing; it is an existential fight for freedom, a battle for his wholeness against Miriam's influence on him:

All the way he went cruelly smashing her beliefs ... he did not spare her. He was cruel. And when they went alone he was even more fierce, as if he would kill her soul. He bled her beliefs till she almost lost consciousness. (SL 237)

Later, he rejects the intellectual, self-conscious and self-reflective religiosity so much associated with Miriam:

'It's not religious to be religious,...'  
'I don't believe God knows such a lot about Himself,' he cried. 'God doesn't know things, He is things. And I'm sure He's not soulful.' (SL 307)

This is Paul's attempt to replace the theology of consciousness with a theology of being, to reject the emphasis on rationality of Christian idealism which dominated his late nineteenth-century Congregational inheritance, and to restore a more unselfconscious, embodied, integrating understanding of life. This endeavour is fundamental to the structure of the novel.

The great weight of Sons and Lovers is on the negative side of rejection, of Paul's need to break free from his mother and Miriam. I have been arguing that this struggle for emancipation is, at a deeper level, the struggle to free himself from the specific Christian influences which, through them, make claims upon him. Implicit in this

is the belief that the values embodied in Mrs Morel and Miriam are, essentially, those which hold sway in the Congregational Chapel. Its values, its world-view, its milieu, are a crucial factor in determining the novel's agenda. D.M. Newmarch has argued that Mrs Morel and Miriam each represents a very different spirit of Congregationalism. While their differences are important and instructive, I believe that the similarities between the two women are even more so. We have already suggested that Lawrence deliberately exaggerates the differences between Mrs Morel and Miriam, certainly he emphasizes these more than their similarities. Our exegesis so far demonstrates that - despite certain specific manifestations of difference - the underlying sensibility, texture and influence of the characters of Mrs Morel and Miriam are fundamentally the same. Both are usually characterized by the intense, white light of the intellect; both desire to order, shape and control their environment, their destiny and their man. Although Miriam transposes these values to a more idealized plane than Mrs Morel, the basic tendency is the same. In both women, this ordering and shaping is part of the impulse towards transcendence, to rise above the undifferentiated masses and mundanities of their circumstances. In each case, it is both cause and effect of the intactness of their personalities, an intactness, nonetheless, which seeks to absorb and possess the 'significant other' and is, ultimately, deathly. Both women tend to deny the natural instincts. The tone of Mrs Morel's disgust of 'bits of lads and girls courting' (SL 200) indicates a response based on more than jealousy as, perhaps, does her insistence on chaperoning William and Lily when they stay up late at night. Her disapproval of Lily's exposed shoulders (which Paul finds lovely) in the first photograph William sends home and her own austere sense of dress, reflect her puritanical sense of modesty - even discomfort - with the body.

There are, however, important differences. Mrs Morel's marriage is based on physical, sensuous attraction, and there are indications throughout the novel that she continues to admire her husband's fine physique. It is in this down-to-earthness that she is most strikingly different from Miriam. With Miriam carrying the weight - being the scapegoat, as it were - for Lawrence's rejection of Christianity, and providing, as she does, a foil other than the father whereby to explore the mother, Sons and Lovers is delivered from an inevitable and schematic polarity. By contrasting Mrs Morel with Miriam, Lawrence lessens the gap between Mrs Morel and her husband. Undoubtedly, part of this can be explained in terms of narrative: Mrs Morel mellows; the intensity of the first battles abates and she realizes that, though bad, her marriage could have been a lot worse. It also allows Lawrence to explore differences in the texture of his rejection. By contrasting his own home with Miriam's, Paul becomes aware of and grateful for a certain richness and balance which Willey Farm seems to lack. This is often conveyed in the extraordinary vividness with which Lawrence describes the ordinary household occurrences: ironing, the baking of bread, preparing a meal. At Christmas-time when the whole family anticipates William's first homecoming, the excitement and sense of well-being is made all but tangible through Lawrence's use of the vividly specific: 'The kissing bunch of berried holly hung with bright and glittering things, spun slowly over Mrs Morel's head as she trimmed her little white tarts in the kitchen. A great fire roared.' (SL 101)

In the first sentence, the independence of the individual sound of the words with their varying, brief vowel sounds and the frequency of firm consonants give the very words and phrases a kind of darting merriness which is beautifully counterpointed with the full, spacious vowels which convey a sense of leisurely, expansive luxury in the last

sentence. At such times there is the real beauty of harmony and balance in the household, a glimpse, perhaps, of the potential fruitfulness of the Morels' marriage of opposites. Foregrounded by Miriam, what the Morels have, and not just what they lack, is brought out. The potential for wholeness and integration (as achieved by Louisa and Durrant in 'Daughters of the Vicar') rather than the inevitability of the disaster of polarity is suggested. In the face of this potential - as in the case of Miriam's beautiful body - the corrupting, destructive nature of the religious instinct which forces Mrs Morel to battle rather than tolerate, is made all the clearer. It is to Miriam that Paul struggles to describe the essential, passionate reality of his parent's marriage:

'My mother, I believe got real joy and satisfaction out of my father at first. I believe she had a passion for him; that's why she stayed with him;'

'That's what one must have, I think', he continued - 'the real, real flame of feeling through another person - once, only once, if it only lasts three months. See, my mother looks as if she'd had everything that was necessary for her living and developing. There's not a tiny bit of feeling of sterility about her.'(SL 386)

Miriam seems to remain rather unconvinced, but it is this 'baptism of fire through passion' that Paul is after - and to some extent achieves - in his affair with Clara.

From the time he first sees her, Clara's physical confidence, her 'defiant carriage' is contrasted with Miriam's 'bowed, meditative bearing' (SL 227). Clara is the antidote to Miriam's repression of the body and of sexuality. Again, it is made clear that it is not just individuals to whom Paul is responding, but the worlds they represent: 'Miriam was his old friend, lover, and she belonged to Bestwood and home and his youth. Clara was a newer friend, and she belonged to Nottingham, to life, to the world' (SL 337-338). With Clara, Paul

knows 'the immensity of passion' and, he thinks, the true communion of transcending individuality. Once achieved, however, Paul seems dissatisfied at its transience and at the fact that Clara has been a means to an end - the baptism of fire in passion - and not, beyond the passion, someone who can 'hold his soul'. The entire Clara episode is rather unsatisfactory. Too much is stated, too little flows convincingly from the tale itself. Hence the fairly sudden ebbing of Paul's interest in Clara and the rather incredible handing of her back to her husband, suggest that Lawrence's real interest is elsewhere. As Miriam is a useful foil for Mrs Morel, so Clara is a necessary balance for Miriam. The focus of the novel is on Paul's rejection. Clara is economically and carelessly dealt with so that Paul can return to the real business of his shedding of his mother and, finally, of Miriam.

The emerging of self-definition in contradistinction to - as well as in co-operation with - one's environment and associates, is surely one of the central traits and *raison d'etres* of the Bildungsroman. In Sons and Lovers I have suggested that Paul's development and self-determination is, has to be, defined against the influence of chapel religion. Because this is the dominant world-view of his youth, the one which seeks actively to claim him, Paul's (and Lawrence's) mature self-identity depends on his exploration and critique of this value-system. It is not because it is the dominating influence of his youth, but because he finds it ultimately stultifying, enervating and death-dealing that Paul must finally reject it. It is this rejection, this exorcism, that liberates Paul and also liberates Lawrence the novelist:

But no, he would not give in. Turning sharply, he walked towards the city's gold phosphorescence. His fists were shut, his mouth set fast. He would not take that direction, to the darkness, to follow her. He walked towards the faintly humming, glowing town, quickly. (SL 511)

The gold and glowing town, with its faintly humming pulse of life, carries the positive associative imagery of the father's life-affirming mode. Certainly, the novel's ending is positive, affirmative and indicative of new life, of promise. However, to say that Paul is rejecting his mother's way and choosing his father's is too simple. After all, it is towards the town and work, products of man's ordering, controlling, differentiating tendencies, that Paul walks at the end. And the city's gold phosphorescence, reminiscent of the new Jerusalem, suggests aspirations of transcendence. It would be reductive, then, to overstate the totality of Paul's rejection of his mother and Miriam. It is relinquishment as much as a rejection, a painful, reluctant letting go as much as a repudiation. The long anguish of the mother's dying - so brilliantly and agonizingly described by Lawrence - and Paul's return to Miriam to try, yet again, to make their relationship work out, bear testimony to the fact that these women have something he desperately needs. They are - or have been - necessary for Paul's artistic achievements. Without their various influences, it is implied, Paul could not have created as he did. What is common to both women is the mind-set which orders, controls and differentiates. Such a mind-set is, surely, essential to artistic creation; without it the father's mode of inchoate, merging heedlessness would never develop into significant form. And yet the domination of the ordering and controlling of rational consciousness leads to dead form, to dry, detached artefacts. Sons and Lovers represents Lawrence's attempt to free himself from the potentially crippling effect of such domination, from its tendency to drain out the life-blood. The fact that, for the first time in a Lawrence novel, the protagonist is not finally defeated, suggests that Lawrence is more interested in sketching out

such emancipation from a polarity that inevitably mutilates. The fact that both poles are implied in the final paragraph suggests the possibility of reconciliation and integration. Upon this huge quest, Lawrence's fourth novel is structured.

## NOTES: CHAPTER FIVE

1. Letter to Arthur McLeod, 26 October 1913, in Letters, i, pp. 89-91 (p. 90).
2. Letter to Sydney S. Pawling, 18 October 1910, in Letters, i, pp. 184-185 (p. 184).
3. Worthen, pp. 28-30.
4. Helen Corke, In Our Infancy (Cambridge, 1975), p. 200.
5. Letter to Edward Garnett, 19 May 1913, in Letters, i, pp. 550-551 (p. 551).
6. Ibid., p. 551.
7. This is Anthony Rees' distinction. See 'The Politics of Industry', p. 42.
8. D.H. Lawrence, 'Daughters of the Vicar', in The Prussian Officer and Other Studies, edited by John Worthen, (Cambridge, 1983), p. 48-50.
9. See Worthen, p. 215.
10. Newmarch, p. 215.
11. Miriam's uncertainty about her sexuality is also, of course, compounded by her isolation - due to training and background - from a normal social context.
12. Charles Davis, Body as Spirit: The Nature of Religious Feeling, (1976), p. 44.
13. Bottomley, p. 174.
14. Milton, p. 133.

## CHAPTER SIX

## THE RAINBOW

It is time that the schism ended,... It is time that man shall cease, first to live in the flesh, with joy, and then, unsatisfied, to renounce and to mortify the flesh, declaring that the Spirit alone exists, that Christ he is God.(1)

These words appear in Lawrence's 'Study of Thomas Hardy', written in the last few months of 1914. Their biblical rhythm and vocabulary are particularly typical of Lawrence's writing around this time. So too is their theme. The need for integration and wholeness is a recurring preoccupation of the 'Study' and of the contemporary letters. The related themes of new birth and resurrection are also important concerns; around the Christmas of 1914 Lawrence adopted the phoenix as his symbol, his 'badge and sign'.<sup>2</sup> The final revision of The Rainbow was begun just after the completion of the 'Study', and Lawrence's fourth novel is, in terms of its language and symbols and motifs, the one most obviously indebted to his Christian heritage. If Sons and Lovers embodies Lawrence's critique of and emancipation from the negative domination of the Congregational influence, The Rainbow is the first novel in which Lawrence is not so much controlled by his Eastwood Congregational heritage as seeking to control it. Interestingly, it is in this novel, after he has liberated himself from the restrictive confines of his mother and Jessie Chambers and Eastwood and its chapel, that Christian terminology and motifs are used more explicitly and that the Church appears more visibly and frequently than anywhere else in Lawrence's fiction. In The Rainbow the church is Anglican and not Congregational. Although this novel contains Lawrence's fullest and most direct fictional critique of his Congregational background, it is

as if he here transposes Christianity to a wider setting and uses some of the myths, symbols and language of its older inheritance to help him explore and express the new area of experience into which he is venturing. This new area of experience may be religious, but it is not essentially Christian, and the problems inherent in Lawrence's use of a Christian vocabulary will be addressed later in this chapter.

Two books in particular - Jane Harrison's Ancient Art and Ritual and Mrs Henry Jenner's Christian Symbolism - coincided with Lawrence's interests and needs as he was writing The Rainbow. In October 1913 he was fascinated by Jane Harrison's analysis of, in Lawrence's words, 'art coming out of religious yearning'.<sup>3</sup> After freeing himself from Eastwood Congregationalism's notions of religion, Lawrence seems to find indicated here a way of exploring his religious needs through his art, and of finding in it the possibility of a more complex exploration and expression of what it means to be religious. As he was writing the final draft of The Rainbow, Mrs Henry Jenner's book on Christian symbolism is mentioned in his letters. 'It puts me more into order,'<sup>4</sup> he tells Gordon Campbell in a letter in which he stresses the need to 'grasp the Whole'...'try to conceive the Whole, to build up a Whole by means of symbolism'. Mrs Jenner's book seems to have suggested to Lawrence the possibility of finding within Christian symbolism an expression of the Whole necessary to 'get the greatest truth into your novel'.<sup>5</sup> He sees Christianity as a symbol, a metaphor, 'a very great conception which, when one feels it, satisfies one'.<sup>6</sup> The possibilities of a sort of Christian synthesis are thus - albeit temporarily - restored to him through the evocative powers of symbolism. Religious symbolism offers access into the more numinous dimension of religious experience beyond the analytical reductionist

tendency of words. The Rainbow maintains Lawrence's critique of the atrophy of religious feeling and mystery, which results from the largely rational, intellectual approach that so dissatisfied him in Eastwood Congregationalism. But it goes beyond this and examines what, in 'Hymns in a Man's Life', Lawrence remembers as the more positive, lasting influence: the more subliminal sense of wonder which was also a part of his Congregational heritage. In The Rainbow, Lawrence is exploring religion as mystery, and not dismissing it as just morality.

The Rainbow, then, represents a new departure for Lawrence. As Graham Hough comments, it 'marks the transition from books which others might have written to books which no one but Lawrence could write'.<sup>7</sup> The more conventional style and theme of Sons and Lovers no longer interested him; they were inadequate for what he was now trying to do. 'I have to write differently,'<sup>8</sup> he told Edward Garnett who was unsympathetic to this new thing Lawrence was attempting, wanting him instead to continue in the successful formula of Sons and Lovers. Yet this new thing was very hard for the novelist himself to apprehend:

I am doing a novel which I have never grasped. Damn its eyes, there I am at page 145, and I've no notion what it's about.... it's like a novel in a foreign language I don't know very well - I can only just make out what it is about.(9)

Nine months later when he was still struggling to distinguish the statue from the marble, to get it out clean,<sup>10</sup> Lawrence was more aware of the nature of his difficulties. 'It is hard to express a new thing, in sincerity,' he protests to the still unappreciative Garnett. 'Primarily I am a passionately religious man, and my novels must be written from the depth of my religious experience.'<sup>11</sup> Shortly afterwards he told Garnett, in the even more famous words:

I see something of what I am after.... - that which is physic - non-human, in humanity, is more interesting to me than the

old-fashioned human element - which causes one to conceive a character in a certain moral scheme and make him consistent.... it is the inhuman will ... that fascinates me.(12)

A few months later he writes to Gordon Campbell:

We want to realise the tremendous non-human quality of life - it is wonderful. It is not the emotions, nor the personal feelings and attachments, that matter.... Behind us all are the tremendous unknown forces of life, coming unseen and unperceived as out of the desert to the Egyptians, and driving us, forcing us, destroying us if we do not submit to be swept away.(13)

Lawrence, then, sees his motivation and aim as religious while he is describing his new terrain as that which is non-human, beyond the moral scheme and the 'old stable ego'.<sup>14</sup> His emancipation from the moral, rationalistic assumptions of Eastwood Congregational spirituality has helped to free him to explore the alliance between religion and the non-human, amoral dimensions of experience. This, of course, lies at the root of his difficulty: how does one express and find a form for what is inarticulate and subliminal and preconscious? This is Lawrence's main concern, both technically and thematically, in The Rainbow; it is his problem as a novelist and the problem, the quest, of his characters. Neither the novelist nor his characters is wholly successful.

Despite Lawrence's great excitement at and satisfaction with the finished version - 'I feel like a bird in spring that is amazed at the colours of its own coat,'<sup>15</sup> he tells Bertrand Russell on the day of its completion - he is still writing on the very next day, about the difficulty of adequately expressing what he means:

I wish I could express myself - ... Not me - the little, vain, personal D.H. Lawrence - but that unnameable me which is not vain nor personal, but strong, and glad, and ultimately sure, but so blind, so groping, so tongue-tied, so staggering.... I would rather struggle clumsily to put into art the new Great Law of God and Mankind - not the empirical discovery of the individual - but

the utterance of the great racial or human consciousness, a little of which is in me. And if I botch out a little of this utterance, so that other people are made alert and active, I don't care whether I am great or small, or rich or poor, or remembered or forgotten. What is it to me. Only there is something I must say to mankind - and I cant say it by myself - I feel so dumb and struggling.(16)

As in T.S. Eliot's expression of the poet's struggle in Four Quartets, the intransigence of the words stems from the utterly new thing the writer is trying to express, as 'words after speech, reach / into the silence':

... Words strain  
Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,  
Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,  
Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,  
Will not stay still.

(Burnt Norton V)

The suspicion of words and the knowledge of their inadequacy is reflected, too, in The Rainbow's characters. 'Writing words on paper had nothing to do with him and her' (R 307), thinks Ursula in a reflection which is fairly typical of all the characters in the novel. When Will and Anna sit together in the evenings, they cannot utter what is really between them: 'their words were only accidents in the mutual silence' (R 215). The use of dialogue is seldom more sparingly used in any of Lawrence's novels.

The total success of The Rainbow is also qualified by the self-imposed magnitude of Lawrence's task. What may be read as his challenge to himself comes at the end of the 'Study of Thomas Hardy':

It needs that a man shall know the natural law of his own being, then that he shall seek out the law of the female, with which to join himself as complement....

Out of this final knowledge shall come his supreme art.... There shall be the art which knows the struggle between the two conflicting laws, and knows the final reconciliation, where both are equal, two-in-one, complete. This is the supreme art, which

yet remains to be done. Some men have attempted it, and left us the results of efforts. But it remains to be fully done. (STH 127-128)

The pretentiousness of Lawrence's style here is in marked contrast to the more humble tentativeness of his remarks to Russell quoted above. The uncertainty of 'so groping, so tongue-tied, so staggering' has, after Lawrence has actually written his novel, replaced the superlatives of 'final knowledge', 'supreme art', 'final reconciliation' and the magisterial 'shall', which are typical of the prior 'Study'. Lawrence began writing his final version of The Rainbow shortly after writing the 'Study', and the relationship between the two works is interesting. Whether or not the 'Study' enabled Lawrence to write the novel - as Mark Kinkead-Weekes suggests<sup>17</sup> - it certainly gives us an insight into some of the novelist's major preoccupations at the time and offers an entrance, as it were, into one of the most beautiful and complex and remarkable of Lawrence's fictional creations.

The 'Study' is a difficult, pompous, and often tortuous document - partly, no doubt, because Lawrence never managed to rewrite it, despite his good intentions. Its basic thrust, however, is clear enough: man shall not live by bread alone. Like the extravagant poppy, he needs to do more than merely exist or survive but must spend himself and create of and out of himself: he must express himself. On the basis of man's double need - both to live in the flesh, and survive, and to aspire towards expression and be fulfilled - the whole study is structured. Lawrence describes, in evolutionary terms, man's need to be differentiated from the 'mass', the 'great, unquickened lump' (STH 42), and to be singled out into the increasing 'purity' of individuality. With echoes of his early redefinition of the Congregational minister's call to conversion and spiritual rebirth in the letter to Robert Reid

of 3 December 1907,<sup>18</sup> Lawrence associates this process of individuation with being born again:

'Ye must be born again,' it is said to us. Once we are born, detached from the flesh and blood of our parents, issued separate, as distinct creatures. And later on, the incomplete germ which is a young soul must be fertilised, the parent womb which encloses the incomplete individuality must conceive, and we must be brought forth to ourselves, distinct. (STH 44)

Later on in the 'Study', Lawrence associates the differentiating, separating impulse with Christianity - that is, the Christianity of the New Testament and Christ - while he interprets the sensuous monism of the flesh as the natural mode of Old Testament religion. The religion of Christ is an expression of the male principle: it brings awareness of 'that which is Not-Me' (STH 65), of the separateness of existence, of one's distinct identity. The religion of Jehovah and Job expresses the female principle: its awareness is only of 'these things which are incontrovertibly Me', of one's own incorporate existence, of one's identification within the 'Whole' (STH 64-65). Lawrence describes how different ages or different races have tended to favour exclusively either one or the other principle, to dire effect. He states that it is time for the schism to end. Reconciliation, he argues, is essential for life and creativity:

And everything that has ever been produced, has been produced by the combined activity of the two, in humanity, by the combined activity of soul and spirit. When the two are acting together, then Life is produced, then Life, or Utterance, Something is created. And nothing is or can be created save by combined effort of the two principles, Law and Love. (STH 125)

Continuing in this grandiose language and dogmatic tone, Lawrence states that the 'greatest utterances' are expressions of the relation between Love and Law, or Law and Love. When the contact is suppressed or described only as conflict, he tells us, the result is invariably

abstraction and death - and inferior art. Lawrence argues that Dostoievsky, Hardy and Flaubert, in showing 'Love in conflict with the Law, and only Death the resultant, no Reconciliation' (STH 126), produce art that is not, in the last analysis, satisfying. Theoretically, in the 'Study', Lawrence has already moved some distance from his 'great religion' as 'a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect'.<sup>19</sup> He might have added his own early novels to the examples of conflict resulting only in death. The 'Study' is the harbinger of Lawrence's own attempts to break into what he believed was the realm of 'great utterance', and for Lawrence in the 'Study', such a breakthrough depended on the recognition of the need to seek out and achieve reconciliation.

According to Lawrence, then, the great artist must pursue the reconciliation between the male and female principles. And this is what he is trying to achieve in The Rainbow. Whereas Sons and Lovers is based upon the conflict between men and women and between the two principles, The Rainbow is structured upon and named for their attempted reconciliation. The terminology of Lawrence's essays and the image patterns of his fiction become confusing if one simply identifies the male principle with men and the female principle with women. In The Rainbow, as in all Lawrence's writing, the male principle is more likely to be dominant in a woman (as in Lettie, Emily, Helena, Mrs Morel and Miriam) as the female principle is in a man (as in George, Siegfried and Mr Morel). But each woman and each man contains elements of both principles. The focus of The Rainbow is not only the marriage between men and women, but also the attempt to balance and reconcile the male and female principles within and between individuals.

With its suggestion of an arch of reconciliation, and the wholeness of the complete colour spectrum, the rainbow is appropriate

as title and key metaphor for Lawrence's novel of reconciliation. Lawrence also appropriates and adapts the rainbow's further, biblical significance to try to convey the kind of ultimate, religious reconciliation he is talking about in the 'Study'. The fact that The Rainbow contains what are possibly the most deadly battles between the sexes to be found in Lawrence's fiction, demonstrates how difficult it was for him, even imaginatively, to achieve such reconciliation.

This theme of the 'marriage of opposites'<sup>20</sup> is to the novel as a melody to a symphony, and with each successive Brangwen generation comes a more complex variation on the theme. The theme is most simply stated in the novel's opening pages. The scene of the Brangwen generations is set in the unhurried, rhythmic, pastoral idyll, 'on the Marsh Farm, in the meadows where the Erewash twisted sluggishly through alder trees' (R 7). The life is rich and abundant, 'heaven and earth teeming around them':

They felt the rush of the sap in spring, they knew the wave which cannot halt, but every year throws forward the seed to begetting, and, falling back, leaves the young-born on the earth. They knew the intercourse between heaven and earth, sunshine drawn into the breast and bowels, the rain sucked up in the day-time, nakedness that comes under the wind in autumn, showing the birds' nests no longer worth hiding. Their life and inter-relations were such; feeling the pulse and body of the soil, that opened to their furrow for the grain, and became smooth and supple after their ploughing, and clung to their feet with a weight that pulled like desire, lying hard and unresponsive when the crops were to be shorn away. The young corn waved and was silken, and the lustre slid along the limbs of the men who saw it. They took the udder of the cows, the cows yielded milk and pulse against the hands of the men, the pulse of the blood of the teats of the cows beat into the pulse of the hands of the men. They mounted their horses, and held life between the grip of their knees, they harnessed their horses at the wagon, and, with hand on the bridle-rings, drew the heaving of the horses after their will. (R 7-8)

The rhythm of these early passages is powerful, wave-like, inevitable, and the relation between man and this pulse of nature is one of profound identification: 'blood-intimacy'. The land and crops are

imbued with a life-force that is personalized; the sexual imagery intensifies the strong sense of vibrancy, of pulsing, teeming life. Yet, in the rich fruitfulness there is a sense of cloying over-ripeness and relentless continuance. The sunshine is drawn in, the rain is sucked up, the soil clings and pulls like desire:

The limbs and the body of the men were impregnated with the day, cattle and earth and vegetation and the sky, the men sat by the fire and their brains were inert, as their blood flowed heavy with the accumulation from the living day. (R 8)

Within the surfeit of life, there is just a hint of death, almost a drowning in sensation. Clearly, the Brangwen men are an embodiment of the 'Study's' female principle: they are identified with the flesh, with the physical, sensuous life of the earth. Right from the outset, this identification of blood-intimacy is characterized by the element of water, the element of merging, non-differentiation.

In Chapter Two, we mentioned the parallel between Lawrence's imagery in The Rainbow and that employed by Robert Reid in his sermon on the imagination, where he likens the impure mind to a bog or a swamp. What is striking in Reid's sermon is the utter severance between the debased 'marshy' element and its pure, 'dry' opposite. In Lawrence's terminology, the conflict between the female and male principles, between Law and Love is, in Reid's world-view, total. Undoubtedly it is this rigidly moral influence, combined with the radical dualism embodied in Lawrence's parents, that makes the sense of split, of schism, much more acute in Lawrence than in most writers. It is his reaction against this influence that underlies the urgency of the 'Study's' call for reconciliation, and which helps to shape Lawrence's artistic attempt at 'wholeness' in The Rainbow. It is a wholeness which endeavours to transcend the notions of good and evil so

confidently defined in Reid's version of Christian morality. The Rainbow reveals a new freedom in which Lawrence has moved beyond the impulse to the simple negative reaction of 'the blood being wiser than the intellect'. Instead he offers in this novel a remarkable attempt to explore and convey and evaluate what is involved in both the contrasting modes of 'marshy' and 'dry':, to show how both together are essential conditions of life. This exploration and evaluation is one way - fundamental to The Rainbow - in which we see demonstrated the much greater measure of critical distance and control Lawrence now has over the constituents of his Congregational heritage. The polarity of the earlier novels has moved beyond the destructive conflict of an antithetical dualism towards a more complex and creative attempt to realize some kind of dynamic synthesis.

The Brangwen man is only vaguely aware of the church tower on his horizon as 'something standing above him and beyond him in the distance' (R 7). He turns back to the horizontal land, unheeding. But it is towards this different, distant world that the Brangwen woman sets her gaze; her impulse, in the novel's early pages, is towards a 'dry' differentiation beyond the sensuous life of the farm:

Her house faced out from the farm-buildings and fields, looked out to the road and the village with church and Hall and the world beyond. She stood to see the far-off world of cities and governments and the active scope of man, the magic land to her, where secrets were made known and desires fulfilled. She faced outwards to where men moved dominant and creative, having turned their back on the pulsing heat of creation, and with this behind them, were set out to discover what was beyond, to enlarge their own scope and range and freedom; whereas the Brangwen men faced inwards to the teeming life of creation, which poured unresolved into their veins.

Looking out, as she must, from the front of her house towards the activity of man in the world at large, whilst her husband looked out to the back at sky and harvest and beast and land, she strained her eyes to see what man had done in fighting outwards to

knowledge, she strained to hear how he uttered himself in his conquest, her deepest desire hung on the battle that she heard, far off, being waged on the edge of the unknown. (R 9)

This desire for a further life beyond the Marsh shares the 'Study's' assumption that life involves something more than just the 'given'. The women, looking outwards, looking beyond, are fascinated by the active scope of men, where man creates from and of himself a social and intellectual fabric in which he extends the possibilities of being human. This extension depends upon the differentiation of social systems - of language, symbols, conventions - which create order out of the unresolved chaos. The fight is for knowledge, for expression and utterance which create 'the spoken world beyond' (R 8). The church is a representative of this other world, this 'finer, more vivid circle of life' (R 10), and the vicar moves in a sphere beyond that of her own menfolk. He is described as 'dark and dry' (R 9); his children are separate, distinct, superior (R 10). It is towards this refinement, this purity of individuality that the male impulse within the Brangwen women aspires.

The novel's primary oppositions are thus embodied and 'a basic language which we must apply to the novel as a whole'<sup>21</sup> is established. The polarity is between male and female, outer and inner, light and darkness, expression and aspiration, form and feeling. Yet such is the marriage that Lawrence achieves between metaphysic and art in this novel, so embedded in the story's texture and embodied in its characters are these oppositions, that The Rainbow is far from being as crudely schematic as a bald recitation of the essential polarities might imply. Neither mode is self-sufficient, neither can, without mutilation, predominate. The 'beyond' is not always, or simply, the articulate world of knowledge and utterance craved by the Brangwen

women. The quest of each of the main characters is for completion, for the fulfilment which its complement will bring.

Just as a shadow of surfeit is suggested in the teeming life of the farm, so there is a hint of the threats implicit in civilization. With the second part of Chapter One, history breaks into the timeless generation of the Marsh Farm and a canal 'trepasses' across the farm meadows. A colliery springs up nearby, 'crude houses plastered on the valley in masses' (R 12) appear, trains begin hurtling past.

With the differentiation of history comes the focus on individual Brangwens, and with it, the more complex exploration of the primary impulses established at the outset. The mother of this period follows the desire of her predecessors 'to achieve this higher being, if not in herself, then in her children' (R 10). She is especially determined that her youngest and favourite son, Tom, will move beyond the limited life of the farm and pushes him to the grammar school in the hope that he is clever and shall become a gentleman. In Tom, Lawrence creates a character who is instinctive, sensuous and emotional. He turns out to be no scholar and cannot apply himself to deliberate learning or understanding. He assumes responsibility for the farm and continues in the inarticulate blood-intimacy of the Brangwen menfolk.

But Tom's natural, spontaneous mode of living is disrupted by his first major disillusion. He is seduced by a prostitute, and the paucity of the encounter comes as a shock. What is threatened is the possibility of finding in a woman 'the embodiment of all his inarticulate, powerful religious impulses' (R 20), and through this shock, Lawrence is able to open the narrative out into his central theme of 'what a man shall live by'. At home on the Marsh Farm, 'the woman was the symbol for that further life which comprised religion and love and morality' (R 19) on which the men depend for stability, for

completion. Tom's disillusion makes him aware of his hitherto unconscious and unarticulated assumption: 'he had something to lose which he was afraid of losing' (R 20). What has so far been safely guaranteed in his own mother and sister - the embodiment of his polar complement - may not be assumed in every woman, and as Tom grows into manhood and no longer has mother and sister with him, Lawrence charts the stages by which Tom's need to establish for himself his marriage of opposites grows more urgent.

Its shape is first suggested in his encounter with the girl and her foreign lover at Matlock. Here, for the first time, Tom seems able to overcome the dichotomy he feels between sex and personal relationship with a woman. More significant for him, however, is the fascination that the foreigner holds for him. The older man is beyond Tom, not only because of his exotic background, his gentlemanliness and 'exquisite graciousness' (R 24), but because in his texture, his element, he suggests the complement that Tom is seeking. The older man is 'dry-skinned', he is 'tactful and reserved' (R 25), small, withered: 'dry'. His elements are air and fire, the discriminating complements to the merging female elements of earth and water which are Tom's. The wizened foreigner and his girl 'had set fire to the homestead of his nature, and he would be burned out of cover' (R 25). Lawrence's use of the natural elements as an integral component of the novel's fabric is a highly effective and apparently unselfconscious method of helping to evoke and establish character. The subtle involvement of an element in the accumulation of a character not only roots him in the wider landscape, but it also helps to suggest his quality and texture and furthers Lawrence's attempt to capture what is beneath 'the old stable ego' and to convey what is 'essential', 'elemental' and beyond personality. It is, in addition, a language which enables Lawrence to

explore and try to reconcile the two apparently exclusive modes of religion he experienced in Eastwood Congregationalism: the religion of dry, analytical moralism, and that of wonder and awe which invites communion and absorption rather than restraint and detachment. This unresolved tension undoubtedly helps to shape the wider dialectic of the novel, and it in turn is given a new substance as it is embodied and complexified in the novel's characters.

After his experience at Matlock, Tom is, for a while, torn apart by the discrepancy between his dream of a different element, a further life, and 'the mean enclosure of reality' (R 26) of his customary life. He drinks to get drunk, in order to evade the discomfort of the detachment of self-consciousness, and thus tries to restore his sense of at-one-ness with himself and with his environment. 'But he had achieved his satisfaction by obliterating his own individuality, that which it depended on his manhood to preserve and develop' (R 28). It is the encounter at Matlock which prepares Tom for his instantaneous recognition of the older, black-clad, foreign woman when he meets her on the road near Cossethay: '"That's her," he said involuntarily' (R 29). It is in Lydia Lensky, a Polish refugee and widow, that he recognizes the promise of fulfilment he has been seeking. 'She would bring him completeness and perfection' (R 41). In this relationship, Lawrence begins the novel's first main exploration of the process of marriage, of reconciliation. It is sometimes described as if it were the most uncomplicated and straightforward of the relationships in the novel, and to some extent, this is undoubtedly true. But there is an important distinction between what Lydia represents for Tom, and what she actually is, which makes this first relationship in the novel more complex and interesting than is often suggested.

On the face of it, Lydia represents what the Brangwen women have aspired to and represented to their men. She is undeniably and obviously from a world far beyond the confines of the Marsh Farm. She is of high birth, her language is indeed 'other' and, with her husband, Lydia has been involved in the active world of men and the tumult of revolution. Her husband - like the vicar and the foreigner at Matlock - was dark, dry and small, an intellectual, an active man of ideas (R 256), even something of a fire-eater (R 50). Lensky was 'ardent and full of words' hard and separate, driven by a fixed idea to the extent of burning-out, of ceasing to live in the flesh. To some degree Lydia partakes of her first husband's identity, and as we are made to see her at first largely through Tom's eyes, and from the perspective of his needs and hopes, she appears to represent, like the foreigner at Matlock, Tom's polar complement. It is in her remoteness and otherness and separateness that Tom sees the possibility of his completion and fulfilment. And in a way he is right. But their union is not the simple marriage of opposites it may seem to be at first. The fact that she is not English is what makes Lydia seem so foreign to Tom and not that she is, essentially, of a contrasting pole or principle or element. This subtle difference between what she seems and what she is, is apparent in the powerful courting scene which is so often cited to affirm their utter difference. The imagery is structured on the contrast between light and dark: falling night enfolds the brightly lit vicarage kitchen; inside the mother sits by the fire holding her daughter. The fire-warmth is 'reflected on the bright cheeks and clear skin of the child' (R 43); her fair hair gleams like spun glass and her 'face was illuminated till it seemed like wax lit up from the inside'. The bright, light cosiness inside is dramatically contrasted with the booming wind outside, where the man stands, suspended in the shadow,

clad in black, with the night's falling darkness behind him. His entry is described as 'an invasion from the night' (R 44). The yellow daffodils he holds already foreshadow his entry into the brightness inside. The woman's kinship with the darkness outside is less overt but more insistent. Her face is dark; she sits 'as if in shadow' and looks, not into the fire but stares into space. Later, when Tom has gone, she puts the daffodils aside without noticing them (R 49). It is around the little girl that the images of light are mainly clustered. It is she who objects to her mother's foreign-tongued song which she cannot understand, and she who challenges her mother's 'unmoved far-awayness' (R 43) by trying to rouse her into presence and awareness in the bright vicarage kitchen.

When the woman agrees to marry Tom, she leans slowly towards him with her 'dark face' (R 46) and a gesture that causes him to lapse into momentary darkness. After their first kiss he goes, for a few seconds, 'utterly to sleep, asleep and sealed in the darkest sleep, utter, extreme oblivion'. When he comes to, they are silent, 'involved in the same oblivion, the fecund darkness'.

The imagery - echoing the emphasis on the woman's dark clothing of the earlier meetings - suggests the meeting of similar rather than contrasting elements. And as Lydia's character is further established, her nature is seen to have much more in common - like Tom's - with the female principle than the male world of her first husband. Whereas Lensky was confident, grave, a 'hard authority', the surroundings of her upbringing had been 'loose, lax, disordered, a welter' (R 256). 'She was passive, dark, always in shadow' (R 51).

Part of Lydia's darkness is ascribed to the suffering she has experienced. The loss of husband, two children and native land make her as 'one walking in the Underworld, where the shades throng

intelligibly but have no connexion with one' (R 51). Lydia's refuge in darkness, her state of being 'blotted safely away from living' (R 53), is challenged by light reflected in nature: the 'strange insistence of light from the sea' (R 52), the glimmer of primroses, the light of the yellow jasmine (R 54). In these passages about Lydia's return from the underworld, Lawrence extends and enriches the images of light and darkness and furthers our imaginative grasp of the process of integration. Darkness, which has formerly contained the chaos of the booming night wind and also the promise of unknown bliss, here signifies repose and refuge. But it is the refuge of death, and against this the cosy light of the vicarage kitchen assumes the more piercing properties of the moon's white light as it intrudes into Lydia's shadowy existence, hurting and provoking her into attention. 'Resistant, she knew she was beaten, and from fear of darkness turned to fear of light' (R 54). Lydia's reluctant return to consciousness and life is described as a rebirth, bloody and agonizing, though irresistible: 'The first pangs of this new parturition were so acute, she knew she could not bear it. She would rather remain out of life, than be torn, mutilated into this birth,...

In these passages describing Lydia's 'resurrection', the biblical echoes are subtle and effective. They are not, as is sometimes the case later, press-ganged into service and made to carry the weight of the meaning alone. The imagery here hints at Christian perceptions of new birth and salvation but the allusion is open, gathering significance also from the prose rhythms, the natural imagery and the Persephone myth. It is when Lawrence achieves such fusions that he is at his most successful in forging a more adequate language with which to explore what is most elusive, and delicate in human experience.

Tom Brangwen completes Lydia's reawakening, her return to life, but although she is made aware, Lydia continues, essentially, to epitomize the shadowy female mode of vague unconsciousness and dark sensuousness rather than light intellectuality. It is her 'ugly-beautiful mouth' (R 48), rather than her eyes which draw attention. And it is in the 'elemental embrace' that she and Tom are mated, and not in their 'superficial foreignness' (R 59).

It is this superficial foreignness that ensures for Tom Lydia's continuing identification with what is remote, unknown and beyond him. He finds this both fascinating and unbearable: 'They were such strangers, they must forever be such strangers, that his passion was a clanging torment to him. Such intimacy of embrace, and such utter foreignness of contact!' (R 49). Tom's inarticulate feelings are powerfully reflected in his vision of the night sky, fragmented and chaotic:

Big holes were blown into the sky, the moonlight blew about. Sometimes a high moon, liquid-brilliant, scudded across a hollow space and took cover under electric, brown-iridescent cloud-edges. Then there was a blot of cloud, and shadow. Then somewhere in the night a radiance again, like a vapour. And all the sky was teeming and tearing along, a vast disorder of flying shapes and darkness and ragged fumes of light and a great brown circling halo, then the terror of a moon running liquid-brilliant into the open for a moment, hurting the eyes before she plunged under cover of cloud again. (R 49)

This echoes Tom's earlier sense of insignificance under the night sky, but instead of his own fragmentation and helplessness being emphasized by the order, direction and cohesion of the heavens, the night sky too is described here as being in upheaval.

The moon, such a powerful image in Lawrence's novels, and richly suggestive in its significance, is often, as we have seen, associated with woman and the idea of an intact, transcending ego, usually destructive. The light/dark contrast of the courting scene continues a

more dangerous interplay here: the high, 'liquid-brilliant' moon, infinitely desirable but only tenuously attainable, now obliterated by the darkness; the mysterious, radiant vapour; the strange, disturbing, and jarring effect of the dark clouds scudding across the light, and finally, the even more terrifying fullness of the moon, destructive, searing in its bright, intact transcendence. Tom's new life is thus precariously ushered in with portents of the upheaval of the coupling of darkness and light, the self scattered and regathered in the vast disorder. For Tom, then, Lydia represents elements of the pale, male, differentiated otherness of the moon. This scene is one of a number in which woman is characterized by the moon's white light struggling to maintain its intactness against the invasions of the darkness of the man.

Like Lydia, Tom also must endure the pain, the relinquishment of the second birth. In his case, too, it is a gradual, arduous process involving the letting go of self-centredness and ideals of perfect fulfilment, of separation into his own individuality. As in Sons and Lovers, 'salvation' is described in terms of losing oneself to find oneself, and of dying before being resurrected to new life:

She was beyond him, the unattainable. But he let go his hold on himself, he relinquished himself, and knew the subterranean force of his desire to come to her, to be with her, to mingle with her, losing himself to find her, to find himself in her. (R 95)

Consummation is described in a language approaching that of religious mysticism; it is a union of darkness, of purely sensuous communion. 'Blind and destroyed, he pressed forward, nearer, nearer, to receive the consummation of himself, be received within ... the blazing kernel of darkness,..' (R 95). Their coming together is likened to the 'baptism to another life', as 'complete confirmation', as 'the entry into another circle of existence'. They had passed through the doorway

into the further space,...' 'She was the doorway to him, he to her' (R 96) and their achievement is heralded, in such biblical terminology, as 'the transfiguration, the glorification, the admission'. It is described as a revelation - even a dwelling-place - of God himself.

Lawrence's use of this weighty Christian rhetoric seems particularly conscious and deliberate in the first part of the novel. Beyond his adaptations of rebirth, baptism, confirmation and revelation, are the yet more specific biblical allusions such as Tom's awareness of his marriage as 'the time of his trial and his admittance, his Gethsemane and his Triumphal Entry in one' (R 58). The established consummation of their marriage is likened to the Lord's manifestation as the pillar of fire and pillar of cloud when he leads the children of Israel out of captivity in Egypt. The novel's first full arching of the rainbow, signifying the union, the final reconciliation of the couple, is of course an allusion to the rainbow of God's covenant to Noah and all the earth in the wake of the flood. Although these allusions are most prominent and explicit in the novel's first cycle, the biblical symbols and images continue throughout The Rainbow. They include the structurally fundamental references to the Flood, the Ark, and Noah. There are also allusions to the tablets of stone of the Law, to the fountain issuing from the smitten rock (R 130) and to the fiery furnace. There is Anna's 'Magnificat' and her dancing, like David, naked before the Lord; and family life within the rhythmic cycle of the Christian year. In the second generation, there is the constant presence of the church and the importance of Christian art; the stained-glass windows; Will's books on cathedrals and religious paintings: his carvings of the phoenix and of Adam and Eve, and Lincoln Cathedral. Will's innate religiosity is juxtaposed with Anna's criticism of the church, and both stances are carried forward in

Ursula's longing for religious mystery and her rejection of New Testament Christianity.

Of all Lawrence's novels, this one draws most heavily on Christian motifs and language and carries the most conscious echo of the great biblical theme of redemption. But Lawrence's appropriation of this Christian framework for his own purposes raises some basic critical questions. The risks inherent in importing - or even adapting - elements of an established language with its own internal meaning and accumulated ambiance are considerable. And Lawrence himself was at least partially aware of the problems. 'It is very dangerous,' he wrote to Gordon Campbell, 'to use these old terms lest they sound like Cant.'<sup>22</sup> Lawrence's aim is clear enough. In an impulse reminiscent of that of such Victorian prophets as Thomas Carlyle and Matthew Arnold, he wanted to reconstruct and revivify the old language and the traditional religious forms to meet new needs:

But if only one can grasp and know again as a new truth, true for ones own history, the great vision, the great, satisfying conceptions of the world's greatest periods, it is enough. Because so it is made new.(23)

But The Rainbow's failure to sustain the weight of the most blatant Christian rhetoric begs the questions: How does one grasp and know again the great old truths? Is it enough? And how is it made new? What Lawrence is sometimes guilty of in The Rainbow, is the mere appropriation of the old language rather than its creative revivification. He takes terminology, images and events which have a specific biblical context and meaning and transfers them too crudely into a quite different context where he expects them to serve a very different kind of purpose. As in his 'pollyanalytics' when Lawrence sometimes makes rhetoric do for rigorous thought, so at times in The Rainbow he tries to substitute the achieved resonances and significance

of a borrowed vocabulary for the more hard-won achievement of his own imaginative realization. But because Lawrence has failed to create an adequate language for himself, which is rooted in and grows from the experience actually portrayed in the novel, the appropriated biblical language rings false. It is too obviously imported, too much like a linguistic deus ex machina, and in this instance, drastically limits Lawrence's attempt to 'knit all Words together into a great new utterance'.<sup>24</sup>

Yet to be indiscriminately critical of Lawrence's use of biblical language in The Rainbow would be foolhardy. The biblical rhythms so inextricably woven into the novel's texture account for much of its richness and help to shape the nature of its success. Rhythms which sound pretentious in the 'Study', fall naturally into place in the novel when they are allowed to evoke - rather than state - the delicate combination of the simple and the momentous. S.L. Goldberg's distinction between programmatic and spontaneous symbolism in The Rainbow is instructively discriminating.<sup>25</sup> He suggests that the programmatic symbols - the rainbow/arch/doorway, or the Cathedral/church/spire - are like devices imposed onto the novel. Their designs upon the reader are fairly overt - even manipulative - and therefore less genuinely affective than the more organic spontaneous symbolism (such as the moon, darkness and the bird imagery) which seems to spring more naturally and less self-consciously from the work itself. A similar distinction can be made in Lawrence's use of the Bible in The Rainbow. At times the biblical terminology is imposed upon the narrative and we feel the pressure of Lawrence's intention rather than its achieved accomplishment. At other times, however, and particularly in the middle cycle with Will and Anna, the biblical echoes seem to grow more naturally from the experience of the

characters and are fused more effectively into the new language that Lawrence is trying to create on the edge of silence.

From his attempt at a great novel of reconciliation, Lawrence needed a comprehensive frame of reference. He employs the biblical myths because they are a fundamental basis of Western civilization, and for the reconciliation to achieve the dimensions that Lawrence aspired to, it had, as he saw, to gather up the old expressions, translating and remoulding them into a continuing significance. The reconciliation had for Lawrence religious, as well as cultural and sexual, significance. The biblical vocabulary which Lawrence chose often evokes the numinous dimension of religion, its mystery and otherness. The Rainbow is Lawrence's artistic attempt to recapture and restore the wonder denied by the analytical, reductive tendencies of Reid's sermons; to redress the balance, as Lawrence saw it, too long weighted by the Northern races towards the flesh-denying religion of the Son (STH 80). The heightened language of 'transfiguration' and 'glorification' and 'admission' is being used to try to convey Lawrence's sense of the religious significance of Tom and Lydia's marriage. The accomplishment of their union is described as something ultimate and eternal; Lawrence wants to emphasize that it is something beyond mere human volition or rational choice, like an epiphany, even a manifestation of the divine. Lawrence's messianic aim, evident also in his letters of the time, is to raise 'his' people to a more adequate religious awareness, to revivify sensibilities towards non-rational and bodily redemption and the marriage of the flesh, which he believed had been too long overshadowed by Christianity's insistence on purely spiritual consummation.

Despite the emphatic use of religious language to affirm the ultimate nature of the achievement of Tom and Lydia's marriage, the

success of the marriage - like that of the language - is only partial. So within the novel itself is the essential criticism - or at least challenging - of the 'ultimates' of the Christian rhetoric. Tom and Lydia's is the full consummation of marriage in the flesh, but complete reconciliation requires the spiritual, intellectual union as well. As Lawrence notes in the 'Study':

There must be marriage of body in body, and of spirit in spirit, and Two-in-one. And the marriage in the body must not deny the marriage in the spirit, for that is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; and the marriage in the spirit shall not deny the marriage in the body, for that is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. But the two must be forever reconciled. (STH 87)

While Tom's speech at Anna's wedding affirms the supremacy of marriage, his pain at losing Anna reveals sharply to him his continuing lack of establishment, despite the achieved physical union with his wife. 'He loathed himself for the state he was in over Anna. Yet he was not satisfied. It was agony to know it'. (R 129). It is 'the further, the creative life with the girl' he needs as well as sensuous intimacy, and he doubts the ultimate validity of 'the long, marital embrace with his wife'. The inner life in the dark, unknown and unknowable 'beyond' in which Tom has lived with Lydia, had answered one need. Yet it is a vast, indiscriminate, shadowy world, and man is also a conscious, social being.

Tom's tragic death by drowning is, therefore, structurally and thematically fitting. That it should happen as he returns home to the Marsh at night, drunk, after the canal waters have broken through the embankment and flooded the farm, fulfils the shadowy premonition of drowning in sensation seen in the novel's opening pages. It also echoes Robert Reid's sentiments in his sermon on temperance: 'Nothing can be more destructive to nature than power escaped from control.'

Flood and fire and tempest are terrifying in their riotous force.' When subdued to the control of man - as the canal had been - the elements are, Reid says, beneficial and not destructive. In the sermon on temperance, we remember, he makes explicit the analogy with human passions. 'Escaped from the control of reason and the moral sense, they are wasteful and destructive.... The due restraint of passion is the true cultivation of power.' Lawrence sees the lack in terms of complement rather than control. In the terms of his 'Study', Tom's marriage is a blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, the Reconciler, because it is only marriage in the flesh. Tom's elements of earth and water have not been balanced by their complements, and as Lawrence was to write later in 'The Two Principles', 'life ... exists within the strange and incalculable balance of the two elements'.<sup>26</sup> Where one exists alone, life has withdrawn. Tom has failed to find his true marriage of opposites.

The quest for reconciliation passes on to the next generation. Already as a little girl in the bright vicarage kitchen, Anna has been identified with the lightness of knowledge, understanding and distinctiveness. Her mother's dark absorption has forced the child into early awareness; her independence, her birth into her own separate individuality begins in childhood and seems confirmed with the arrival of Tom and Lydia's first child and the established union of their marriage.

As a little girl, Anna is shown to be imperious and detached: 'like a wild thing, she wanted her distance. She mistrusted intimacy' (R 98). As she grows up, her feelings about the dark, silent, passionate intensity of the atmosphere at the Marsh are mixed. The richness of the 'deep, inarticulate' interchange (R 105) makes 'other places seem thin and unsatisfying'. Yet she is desperate, also, to

escape from the sensuous unconscious mode of existence at home. But Anna is also dissatisfied by language - or at least by the words, the language of the Church. She is disappointed by the discrepancy between the magical 'moonlight and silver' of her mother-of-pearl rosary and the insignificance of what it means in words (R 104-105). In church, too, the language seems false: 'She hated to hear things expressed, put into words. Whilst the religious feelings were inside her they were passionately moving. In the mouth of the clergyman, they were false, indecent' (R 106).

It is this relationship between religious feeling and expression, and the discrepancy that Anna feels between essential, intuitive religion and the Church's attempt to express and articulate it, that is an important cause of conflict between Anna and Will. And it is in this conflict that the tension in Lawrence's own religious inheritance between morality and mystery is most directly and fully explored. Anna and Will's struggle is not only to find integration of each with the other, but also to achieve a satisfactory relationship between the inner and outer life of each, between their deepest needs and yearnings and the expression and shape of these. This process of finding an adequate form for the deepest, religious impulses is central to Lawrence's art. Most crudely manifested in The Plumed Serpent, it receives a much more sensitive, interesting exploration in The Rainbow, especially in the relationship of Anna and Will. An important focus in exploring this theme is their relationship to the Church, to formalised religion.

Will's life is vitally bound up with the Church. Anna's first real awareness of him comes, significantly, in the context of a church service when she is overcome by a giggling fit. This is described with an astute eye for the comic which is often ignored in Lawrence's

writing, all but eclipsed by the more characteristic tone of high seriousness. The humour involves an obliquely delicate but telling criticism of a religion become purely formal and cut off from the roots of living experience; the innocuously pompous aura of conventional religiosity is conveyed beautifully in the rolling sea metaphor with its double-edged suggestion of aspiring grandeur and monotonous passivity. (This recalls the earlier comment on a sermon, when Tom goes to church with his sister: 'The old clergyman droned on, Cossethay sat unmoved as usual' (R 33).) Will's absorption in the sermon is contrasted with Anna's detachment, his vague drifting with her acute consciousness. Deeply embarrassed by her own breaking of the conventions of church solemnity - and the very absence of genuine religious awe, wonder and mystery indicates the extent to which reverence has become simply a convention - she tries to 'gather herself together' and place her consciousness once again within the bounds of the formally agreed morés. The breaking out, as it were, of the insignificant bit of flowering currant suggests the fragility of these conventions and the discrepancy between the spontaneous, unconscious, natural world and the formal, artificial world created by man. This scene, something of a prelude to the more expansive cathedral episode, sketches the outlines of some of the basic differences in the couple's outlooks. It also indicates the essential contrast in their natures. Anna is confirmed in her individuality and critical detachment. Will is revealed as non-reflective, more inward and absorbed. Like the earlier Brangwen men, he embodies the female principle; his awareness is of his identification within the "Whole", with 'these things which are incontrovertibly Me' (STH 64-65). His earthiness, his powerful physical presence is, in the rarefied spiritual atmosphere of the church, just as incongruous as his loud responses and uninhibited

singing. Will exists with a dark non-human, subterranean realm. His 'curious head, black as jet, with hair like sleek, thin, fur' reminds Anna of 'she knew not what: of some animal, some mysterious animal that lived in the darkness under the leaves and never came out, but which lived vividly, swift and intense' (R 107).

In Anna and Will's developing relationship, light and darkness are again important differentials. While Anna is primarily identified with light, Will's natural element is the 'darkness of obscurity'. In his undifferentiating, shadowy state, he finds the space between himself and Anna hard to accept. This is strikingly portrayed in the scene where they are stacking sheaves in the moonlight. As they work, each is aware of their separateness, their singleness in the atmosphere of 'heavy silver' of the moonlit landscape. Yet in the interplay between light and dark, they are aware not only of the moonlight which defines and thus separates, but also of the darkness which obliterates differences and draws them together. Will's desire to merge, to overtake and bring Anna into his own incorporate existence, again identifies him with the darkness:

Why was there always a space between them, why were they apart? Why, as she came up from under the moon, would she halt and stand off from him? Why was he held away from her? His will drummed persistently, darkly, it drowned everything else. (R 123)

In their embrace, the elements of light and darkness, moonlight and shadow are increasingly intertwined - 'he was silvery with moonlight, with a moonlit, shadowy face' (R 124):

All the moonlight upon her, all the darkness within her! All the night in his arms, darkness and shine, he possessed of it all! All the night for him now, to unfold, to venture within, all the mystery to be entered, all the discovery to be made. (R 124)

This promise does indeed seem to be fulfilled in the beatific days of the honeymoon when it seems to Will 'as if the heavens had fallen, and he were sitting with her among the ruins, in a new world, everybody else buried, themselves two blissful survivors, with everything to squander as they would' (R 144). Yet the tenor of Will's possessiveness and dominance, the hint of his desire to obliterate and absorb Anna in his darkness, is also borne out in the early days of their marriage. It is this promise and this threat which is so exhaustingly and remarkably explored in the chapter 'Anna Victrix'.

Anna and Will are more complex characters than Lydia and Tom. Even the light imagery in the aforementioned moonlight scene reflects the more sophisticated interplay of the elements within and between them. Anna is 'light', rational and detached, but is totally unconcerned about the outer moral, social world. She is a law unto herself, the more purely differentiated in her individuality. Will embodies the Law, not just in its manifestations of the female principle, but also in its apparently contrasting mode of conventionality and subservience to the social code. He is delighted but also disturbed as the Law is revoked in the seamless other world he has discovered with Anna: 'It troubled Will Brangwen a little, in his orderly, conventional mind, that the established rule of things had gone so utterly. One ought to get up in the morning and wash oneself and be a decent social being' (R 149). Anna's disposal of 'his qualms, his maxims, his rules' is likened to the dislodging of his 'Tablets of Stone [which] went bounding and bumping and splintering down the hill' (R 149-150).

The honeymoon world is described in terms of a new birth, a new dispensation, and in the language of numinous religious experience: they are 'like the Lord in two burning bushes that were not consumed'

(R 150). The language here is more successful than in that used to try to convey the religious significance of Tom and Lydia's consummation, largely because in this instance Lawrence allows religious allusions and images to grow more naturally from the particular experience and environment of the couple. The 'Lord in two burning bushes', for example, is not crudely superimposed to add a veneer of heightened significance, but is a more continuous development of the notion of Anna and Will living 'kindled' to each other. The fact, too, that it takes its place as part of a cluster of images drawn from the story of Moses means that a vocabulary is being developed which gathers its significance more gradually and more subtly and, therefore, more successfully than is sometimes the case. Lawrence also uses the language of mystical union. He describes the outside, surface, phenomenal world of 'houses, factories, trams' (R 150) as the discarded mind, illusory and unreal. Again, because Lawrence usually manages here to root the mystical language in images which are concrete and mundane, and because the absolutes of 'core of living eternity' (R 145), 'unflawed stillness ... beyond time', and 'the centre [of] utter radiance' are credibly woven into the vividly particularized experience of Anna and Will - feeling hungry, eating breakfast, finding the two sprigs of yellow jasmine in the saucer covering the milk - Lawrence's attempt to convey the ultimate nature of the change engendered by marriage is more likely to carry the reader with it rather than alienate and exclude her.

The first breach of this idyllic harmony comes when Anna decides to have a tea party, and Will is furious and terrified that their newly-discovered 'eternal' order is about to be lightly discarded and forfeited for the old shallow and worthless reality. What is threatened, for Will, is the absoluteness of each to the other in the

womb of the honeymoon world. The outer world of relativity challenges the totality of his identification - even merging - with Anna. This proves to be the crux of their subsequent battles and reaches a climax during Anna's first pregnancy. Will's dependence, his desire to possess and merge with Anna makes her feel 'borne down by the clinging, heavy weight of him, that he was pulling her down as a leopard clings to a wild cow and exhausts her and pulls her down' (R 185). The use of animal (and bird) imagery to convey the savage brutality of the battle between them is particularly common in this middle part of the novel. As with the religious imagery and language, but in general more successfully, its aim is to convey movements of character and relationship which are pre-conscious, pre-civilized, and pre-rational.

Another exhaustive - and exhausting - feature of Lawrence's writing, again particularly in describing the Anna/Will relationship, is the technique of realizing each perspective, each consciousness, as fully as possible. We are made to identify completely with Anna, to see what Will's dependence and devouring need feel like from her side; within lines we are made to feel with Will and to understand his drowning sense of helplessness.

Like Tom, Will is ashamed of his need and deeply frustrated by his dependence, unwilling to accept Anna's singleness, threatened and excluded by her apparent fulfilment, separateness and self-sufficiency in her pregnancy. He feels cut off, fragmented, 'unsatisfied, unfulfilled, he raged in torment, wanting, wanting' (R 182). The flood that literally engulfs Tom threatens also to drown Will - metaphorically, but in language more explicit and powerful in its allusions:

She was the rock on which he stood, with deep, heaving water all round, and he was unable to swim. He must take his stand on her, he must depend on her.

What had he in life, save her? Nothing. The rest was a great heaving flood. The terror of the night of heaving, overwhelming flood, which was his vision of life without her, was too much for him. He clung to her fiercely and abjectly.

She was the ark, and the rest of the world was flood. The only tangible, secure thing was the woman....

For how can a man stand, unless he have something sure under his feet? Can a man tread the unstable water all his life, and call that standing? Better give in and drown at once....

Why did life, without Anna, seem to him just a horrible welter, everything jostling in a meaningless, dark, fathomless flood? Why, if Anna left him even for a week, did he seem to be clinging like a madman to the edge of reality, and slipping surely, surely into the flood of unreality that would drown him? (R 186-187)

What is threatened in Will's nightmare vision is his grasp of meaning, of significance. Like an infant in the womb, unwilling to be born, but the umbilical cord broken, he is engulfed in an assimilating 'that which is me' which now threatens to drown him. Like Tom, Will is forced to realize the inadequacy of submersion only in the female mode of indiscriminating, heedless merging. The 'horrible welter', the 'jostling in a meaningless, dark, fathomless flood' of chaos is, ultimately, as deathly. The woman - independent, detached and 'dry' - is portrayed, in the images of biblical salvation, as a rock, an ark. She is a solid, hard refuge, firmly established in the rational, conscious world above the heaving flood; she is - like the Church - a vessel of salvation, of hope, of potential completion and life for Will. But Anna casts Will off. She forces him through the darkness and flood into a new birth which results in a more secure identity, rooted not in others but in oneself. In 'Anna Victrix', Will's desire for oneness is implicitly criticized as immature and self-centred. Anna's victory is thus also presented as a kind of moral one; through her refusal to indulge Will, he has been forced into a greater self-consciousness, to take root and define himself - which is of the

outer, male world - self-sufficient and distinct, rather than coalescing in subterranean darkness.

Will's achievement is not, of course, final. The conflict in 'Anna Victrix' establishes the terms of the continuing battle of their opposing religious modes. Christianity and Christian symbolism are a forge on which Anna and Will's relationship is hammered out. But it is not used merely as prop or scenery; the exploration embodies Lawrence's own re-evaluation of the various dimensions of his early Christian experience.

Anna's girlhood oscillation between what Lawrence describes as the deep, mysterious, unspoken aura of her home and her fascination and subsequent dissatisfaction with the formalized religion of the Church is explored in greater depth in the relationship between Will and Anna. She increasingly adopts the pose of the rationalist, indifferent in the face of Will's unthinking 'dark-souled desires' (R 173). The dichotomy presented is not simply between belief and rejection but is also between a religion that is human and conscious and one that is mysterious and numinous. Surfeited with the heavily surcharged world of the Marsh, Anna's tendency is towards consciousness. The church - as is clear from the novel's very first page - is a symbol for the further life. As an aspiring adolescent, Anna listens to the sermons to 'try to gather suggestions' in order to help her fulfil her desire 'to be a lady,... to fulfil some mysterious ideal' (R 157). 'The vicar told her to be good in this way and in that. She went away feeling it was her highest aim to fulfil these injunctions.' Yet this has obviously failed to satisfy her. Anna has 'ceased to come "to church" with any anticipation'.

The tenor of the church sermons in The Rainbow - and I cannot think of anywhere else in Lawrence's fiction where we are told anything

about a sermon - is obviously a reflection of the sermons of Robert Reid that Lawrence heard in the Eastwood Chapel each week during his own adolescence and young manhood. In the sermons referred to in the novel, there are hints of a somewhat grandiose rhetorical style. Their substance is portrayed as essentially moral, stressing one's social duty and the ethics of the New Testament, rather than being evocative of the mysterious or wonderful in religion:

She was not very much interested in being good. Her soul was in quest of something, which was not just being good, and doing one's best. No, she wanted something else: something that was not her ready-made duty. Everything seemed to be merely a matter of social duty, and never of her self. They talked about her soul, but somehow never managed to rouse or to implicate her soul. As yet her soul was not brought in at all....

The Church told her to be good: very well, she had no idea of contradicting what it said. The Church talked about her soul, about the welfare of mankind, as if the saving of her soul lay in her performing certain acts conducive to the welfare of mankind. (R 157-158)

For Anna, as for Lawrence, this is inadequate:

Was this what she had come to hear: how, by doing this thing and by not doing that, she could save her soul? She did not contradict it. But the pathos of her face gave the lie. There was something else she wanted to hear, it was something else she asked for from the Church. (R 158)

Exactly what this something else might be is never made clear. The vagueness reveals both a strength and a weakness in Lawrence's art in The Rainbow. The open-endedness is a tribute to his refusal to impose on the novel a dogmatic scheme, as he tended to do in some of his later novels. It is also presented in Anna as a feature of her character and an integral part of her dissatisfaction. The elusiveness of the object, the continual pushing back of the 'beyond' is central to the experience of quest as Lawrence portrays it. Particularly in the third cycle with Ursula, as the urgency of the quest intensifies with each

successive disillusion, this loss of an adequate focus is presented as part of the dilemma of being 'modern'. But what Lawrence implicitly criticizes in Anna's character is not always distinguishable from a failing of his own: her reaction - and he sometimes gives no indication that it is distanced from his - often fails to move beyond what is reductively and destructively critical.

Anna is presented as a rationalist; she believes in 'the omnipotence of the human mind' (R 173) and resists Will's sensuous pseudo-ecstatic religion. Anna's resistance to Will's form of religion is partly one of jealousy. The church is almost like his lover or mistress: it challenges her supremacy in his life and excludes her. Her jealousy is also because Will finds a satisfaction in religion which eludes her. 'It exasperated her beyond measure. She could not get out of the Church the satisfaction he got' (R 159). Yet Anna's disillusion is also shown to be the result of her own refusal. She clearly feels the pull of the attraction that the church holds for Will, but time and again refuses it: 'Something dark and powerful seemed to extend before her. Was it wonderful after all? But no - she refused it' (R 162). Will's 'dark, inhuman' soul (R 159) and 'dark, nameless emotion' (R 158) are intolerable to Anna because of their threat to the intactness of her self-hood, to her conscious, critical, individuated being. The dark, fusing absorption of Will's religiosity is alien to Anna's spirit: 'She wanted her own, old sharp self, detached, detached, active but not absorbed,... (R 200).

Her critical intellect is also irritated by the apparent inconsistency and indulgence of his mode of Christianity. Will is indifferent to the moral claims of Christianity. Unlike Anna, he is able to put aside his human, social self in his soul's worship. She resents his indifference to the church's teachings, the total

separation between his mysterious, sensuous religion and his daily life. It is the symbols and images of Christianity, and the Gospel accounts of the miracles, that evoke wonder and a sense of the mysterious in Will; it is these - rather than intellectual reflection, analysis and conscious, articulate meaning - that form the centre of his 'dark emotional experience of the Infinite, of the Absolute' (R 159). He is loath to have the keystones of his inner life dragged out into the light by Anna and denuded of the mystery that gives them such imaginative power. She ridicules the symbol of the Lamb, the possibility of changing 'so much rain-water' into 'grape-juice, wine' (R 171) and tries to force her husband out of his unquestioning somnolence. Will is made to concede that she is right in fact but that the wonder of miracles remains true for his soul.

Here again, Lawrence's method is dialectical in the way it leads us to understand first one perspective and then the other. Both religious modes are being criticized.<sup>27</sup> The cruel destructiveness of Anna's rationalistic jeering is apparent even to herself - it is most vividly demonstrated when Will burns his wood carving of the Creation after she has mocked it. Anna realizes something beautiful has been destroyed; what remains is imagined in terms of ashy desolation, the remnants of the destructive force of fire, the aftermath of something burnt out. Yet Will's blind, dark-souled desires are also criticized, presented as suffocating (R 173) and as a self-reflexive impulse rather than a genuine religious ecstasy.

The conflict reaches its climax in the passages describing their visit to Lincoln Cathedral, where it receives its most graphic analysis. In the cathedral - the most imposing and concrete and impressive of the Church's forms in the novel - Will finds his yearning for the Infinite, the Absolute, perfectly embodied. In images

reminiscent of the cosmic microcosm of the honeymoon scene, the language reaches, stretches, even strains to convey what is absolute and timeless and ultimate. In the images of the womb or seed, the church is seen to contain potential for all birth and death, and in the images of light and darkness, the 'jewelled gloom' (R 201) of twilight where night meets day, and sunrise and sunset become one, time in the cathedral is imagined as seamless, suspended and eternal. The cathedral thus exemplifies Lawrence's observations in the 'Study' of 'movement resolved and centralised, of absolute movement, that has no relationship with any other form, that admits the existence of no other form, but is conclusive, propounding in its sum, the One Being of All' (STH 65). In both works, Lawrence sees the cathedral as a predominantly female expression of worship to the male Christ; as such it represents a kind of mystic marriage of female and male, and it is the sexual language of union and ecstasy with which Lawrence most strikingly tries to convey the absolute achievement represented in the vast 'collective impulse [risen] into concrete form' (STH 65).

Here the stone leapt up from the plain of the earth, leapt up in a manifold, clustered desire each time, up, away from the horizontal earth, through twilight and dusk and the whole range of desire, through the swerving, the declination, ah, to the ecstasy, the touch, to the meeting and the consummation, the meeting, the clasp, the close embrace, the neutrality, the perfect, swooning consummation, the timeless ecstasy. There his soul remained, at the apex of the arch, clinched in the timeless ecstasy, consummated. (R 202)

Thus the promise contained in the rainbow's arch is transposed to these magnificent man-made arches of stone. The cathedral is a marvellously conceived metaphor for Will's religious yearning and its expression, not least because it allows Lawrence's impressive description to draw out the reader's sympathetic, imaginative identification with Will's sense of wonder and awe, while also exposing the limitations of his impulses through the limitations of the architecture. Even at the

height of the ecstatic possibilities of the arches, Will's soul remains 'clinchd' and 'locked'. The very limitation in these words betrays the illusion of the absolute nature of the cathedral's form.

Anna also feels - as the sympathetic reader is compelled to feel - the magnificence of the great church, and the awe it evokes. But again she resists the mystic absorption and resents Will's 'transports and ecstasies' (R 202):

Her soul too was carried forward to the altar, to the threshold of Eternity, in reverence and fear and joy. But ever she hung back in the transit, mistrusting the culmination of the altar. She was not to be flung forward on the lift and lift of passionate flights, to be cast at last upon the altar steps as upon the shore of the unknown. There was a great joy and a verity in it. But even in the dazed swoon of the cathedral, she claimed another right. The altar was barren, its lights gone out. God burned no more in that bush. It was dead matter lying there. She claimed the right to freedom above her, higher than the roof. She had always a sense of being roofed in. (R 203)

Anna refuses to relinquish control, to be swept along in the flood of religious passion; she is likened to a bird, struggling to rise above the heaving sea - in which Will, in his native element, is so naturally immersed. It is she who points out the cathedral's false front and is sensitive to the limitations, even the deadness embodied in the 'fixed, surcharged motion': 'she would never consent to the knitting of all the leaping stone in a great roof that closed her in' (R 203). Anna resists this 'ultimate confine' and becomes aware of all that the cathedral fails to include - 'the open sky... where stars were wheeling in freedom, with freedom above them always higher.'

In his discussion of cathedrals in the 'Study', Lawrence writes:

There was, however, in the Cathedrals, already the denial of the Monism which the Whole uttered. All the little figures, the gargoyles, the imps, the human faces, whilst subordinated within the Great Conclusion of the Whole, still, from their obscurity, jeered their mockery of the Absolute, and declared for multiplicity, polygeny. (STH 66)

So Anna finds her vindication, her counter-action in the cathedral's sculptured witnesses to imperfection:

These sly little faces peeped out of the grand tide of the cathedral like something that knew better. They knew quite well, these little imps that retorted on man's own illusion, that the cathedral was not absolute....

These little faces had separate wills, separate notions, separate knowledge, which rippled back in defiance of the tide, and laughed in triumph of their own very littleness. (R 204)

Anna thrusts these before Will's attention that his spell, too, may be broken. She succeeds in destroying his illusion. 'Whereas before, the church, like the ark, had been 'as a world to him within a chaos: a reality, an order, an absolute, within a meaningless confusion' (R 205), Anna has forced him out of the secure but self-enclosed womb. In true Protestant spirit, she refuses to allow him to rest in what - despite all its splendour - is still only a man-made construct, still a merely human expression of the divine. As such, its worship is idolatry: its transcendence is false; it fails to offer true ecstasy. Will's religious experience is exposed as a kind of religious autism. Anna's iconoclasm echoes her earlier dislodging of Will's Tablets of the Law, as her individuated male religion of the Son challenges his absorption in the merging female religion of the Father. He is forced to admit the more relative multiplicities outside the church.

Will imagines the loss of his ideal as 'the ruins of the Grecian worship': 'it seemed a temple was never perfectly a temple, till it was ruined and mixed up with the winds and the sky and the herbs' (R 206). Will is made conscious that the cathedral, although splendid, is still circumscribed within the bounds of man's highest reaching - and there is still life beyond that. The image of the ruined church here is taken further than the representation of the collapse of formal religion as it is in The White Peacock. The ruined temple is man's

highest attainment transcended, broken through, even destroyed in its formal perfection and mingled with unconfined and undefined space and nature beyond. In losing his absolute - even though it is a false absolute - Will is diminished: 'His life was shifting its centre, becoming more superficial. He had failed to become really articulate, failed to find real expression. He had to continue in the old form. But in spirit, he was uncreated' (R 206).

The struggle between the religious sensibilities of Will and Anna resemble the dialectic we have observed within Lawrence's own religious inheritance between the 'wonder' evoked in the images of the hymns and the Bible, and the analytical interpretation which tended to suffocate it. As in his own experience, the conflict is destructive rather than complementary and creative: each dimension is impoverished and undermined by its criticism from the other; each is exposed as a kind of failure, and there seems to be no real possibility of them existing together.

But in The Rainbow it is Will's failure which is presented most sympathetically. He has failed to find the spiritual marriage, the spiritual consummation he needs for wholeness and mature individuality. In Will is echoed most clearly the need of all the novel's characters - and of their creator: the need to give utterance, to express and find form for their deepest desires. Will - and apparently Lawrence - fail to find this expression within the Church. The failure at Lincoln Cathedral is 'the essential criticism' within the novel itself of its 'system of morality', its conception of the 'whole' (STH 89). Lawrence's continuing attempt to articulate this expression in religious terms is most explicitly - even blatantly - evident in his later, much less satisfying novel The Plumed Serpent where the whole plot involves the attempt to formulate a new religion adequate to the needs of a particular people at a particular time.

In The Rainbow Will's inability to integrate his own inner and outer life, his own feelings and their expression, leads to a resolution of his relationship with Anna which is based on the dichotomy: 'they remained as separate in the light, and in the thick darkness, married' (R 216), and it is in the body of his wife that Will now seeks and seems to find the 'realisation of this Supreme, immoral, Absolute Beauty' (R 237). We are told by Lawrence that this fulfilment of the inner, subterranean life, deliberately described as 'immoral and against mankind', somehow sets Will free to take his place in 'the whole of purposive mankind' (R 238) in his work as a night-class teacher of woodwork. But the resolution here is once more unconvincing; again an inflated vocabulary claims more than Lawrence has actually managed to convey imaginatively. And even in Laurentian terms, the success of this second generation of Brangwens is still drastically qualified. For Will it is an achievement based on a polarization between the male and female principles more deeply established than ever; for Anna, the lapse into childbearing and the relinquishment of 'the adventure to the unknown' (R 196) represents a somewhat surprising settling down into the drowse of blood-intimacy. Lawrence's carelessness about each cycle's resolution creates the impression that he had explored as far as he could or wanted to in one generation and is eager to conclude it and move on quickly to the next.

The focus shifts to Anna and Will's first child, Ursula, and again with the subsequent generation comes greater complexity. As she explores her religious identity, Ursula embodies her father's capacity for wonder and mystery and her mother's analytical scepticism. Within a single character Lawrence now focuses the problem of how to integrate the two modes of religious sensibility.

Ursula recoils from the 'swelter of fecundity' (R 264) of the home, and for a while tries to satisfy her craving for 'some spirituality and stateliness' (R 265) in romantic love stories and the world of enchantment. She moves on from this 'intricately woven illusion' (R 268) to create a new illusion out of school and the world of knowledge. More than any other character in the novel, Ursula's quest is represented as a series of disillusionments. She is, of course, the most modern character. Not only has the traditional focus for religious aspiration been undermined, but an array of new possibilities present themselves as alternatives. As a modern person, and particularly as a modern woman, Ursula is faced with wider, but seemingly less satisfying, possibilities than her grandmother or mother. She is more self-aware than her forebears, and the failure of her aspirations is explored the more acutely. Through Ursula, then, Lawrence is exploring the perplexities inherent in the modern quest, perplexities acutely endemic to the essentially religious sensibilities he bestows on his characters.

Ursula continues her father's separation between the Sunday world and the weekday world, but hers is a more deliberate and conscious severance. Like the Cathedral and the Church, Sunday represents the suspension of time and every-day reality. It inaugurates an extraordinary, eternal, ultimate vision which Ursula wants to preserve against what is mundane and merely human. 'To her, Jesus was beautifully remote, shining in the distance, like a white moon at sunset, a crescent moon beckoning as it follows the sun, out of our ken' (R 275). She resents as vulgar all suggestions of a solidly human Jesus, of Christ as an 'actual man, talking with teeth and lips' (R 274). It seems impudent to her to 'drag Jesus into this everyday life' - but mainly because such 'democratic' Christianity seems to her to

deny the 'extra-human', the 'mystical passion' (R 275) which is the very thing she is seeking in religion. Ursula and her siblings resent all attempts to demystify religion, to render it practical and relevant to everyday life: 'The Brangwens shrank from applying their religion to their own immediate actions. They wanted the sense of the eternal and immortal, not a list of rules for everyday conduct' (R 274). She is also disappointed when the rich hyperbole of the Bible is analysed and explained and laid bare. The process of fixing its meaning, the attempt to translate it into something that can be understood literally, like the attempt to humanize Jesus, seems to Ursula a threat to the 'Absolute World'; an attempt to reduce it to the relative weekday world, and to strip it of its mystery and numinous power. What Ursula is resisting, of course, is precisely what Lawrence himself was resisting in Reid's sermons and Eastwood Congregationalism.

Ursula's critique of Christianity is very similar to Lawrence's own comments about Christianity in the essays. Her ideas are sometimes barely embodied manifestations of Lawrence's own; the discursive style and occasionally strident tone in which they are expressed betray his lack of critical distance and artistic objectivity. When Lawrence's focus is on the tale rather than on the message, however, he succeeds in using his ideas to imaginatively realize the internal struggles of a complex, aspiring, modern young woman. The critique then finds its significance in the context of a vividly conceived and particularized created world.

In the light of the ethereal, visionary tenor of Ursula's Christianity, for instance, Lawrence's actual description of Sunday is remarkably earthy and embodied, and filled with the 'babies and muddled domesticity' (R 275) which Ursula seems so keen to transcend:

The whole world was for twenty-four hours revoked, put back. Only the Sunday world existed.

She loved the very confusion of the household. It was lucky if the children slept till seven o'clock. Usually, soon after six, a chirp was heard, a voice, an excited chirrup began, announcing the creation of a new day, there was a thudding of quick little feet, and the children were up and about, scampering in their shirts, with pink legs and glistening, flossy hair all clean from the Saturday's night bathing, their souls excited by their bodies' cleanliness. (R 271)

The description goes on to capture the pandemonium of trying to get a household of excited children ready in their Sunday best for church. It is one of a number of scenes in The Rainbow - and indeed in Lawrence's fiction as a whole - which must surely establish him as one of the most successful writers in the language at portraying infants, at evoking without sentimentality, and realizing - in the fullest sense of that word - children. The very activity and confusion of the little scampering bodies on the Sunday morning serve as something of a foil to the remotely aesthetic world of Ursula's imagination. And yet the very excitement, the anticipation, the children's intuitive sense of occasion, beautifully exemplify the special nature of the day, its set-apartness, its sacredness. Sunday announces 'the creation of a new day'; it is the week's Eden. As Sunday punctuates each week with a new beginning and a suspension of ordinary life, so the larger cycle of the church year provides the rhythm by which the family lives:

So the children lived the year of Christianity, the epic of the soul of mankind. Year by year the inner, unknown drama went on in them, their hearts were born and came to fullness, suffered on the cross, gave up the ghost, and rose again to unnumbered days, untired, having at least this rhythm of eternity in a ragged, inconsequential life. (R 280)

The church's feast days and holy days define seasons of ecstasy or shadowy sorrowfulness. It is a cycle intimately woven into the natural rhythm of the seasons in what at times is a significant counterpointing. As expectation gathers towards Christmas, the church is adorned

with cold fingers binding holly and fir and yew about the pillars, till a new spirit was in the church, the stone broke out into dark, rich leaf, the arches put forth their buds, and cold flowers rose to blossom in the dim, mystic atmosphere. Ursula must weave mistletoe over the door, and over the screen, and hang a silver dove from a sprig of yew, till dusk come down, and the church was like a grove. (R 279)

Thus church is transformed into sacred grove, the more ancient pagan ritual is entwined with - even supersedes - the Christian: 'a new spirit was in the church'. The focus - both pagan and Christian - is the joy and excitement of expectation. The Brangwens' passionate craving is for the ecstasy, the 'fiery heart of joy' (R 280), the transport, 'the thrill of new being that shook the earth', and they are disappointed when Christmas joy wears down into a mere domestic feast 'of sweetmeats and toys'.

There is disappointment, too, with the overshadowing of the resurrection by the cross and death and tombs. But here Lawrence leaves the Brangwens altogether and launches into an undisguised and unrestrained expression of his own dissatisfaction with Christianity, especially its apparently morbid brooding over the wounded, suffering Christ at the expense of celebrating the joy and hope and wonder of the resurrection: 'Alas, that a risen Christ has no place with us! Alas, that the memory of the passion of Sorrow and Death and the Grave holds triumph over the pale fact of Resurrection!' (R 281). This is the rhetorical Laurentian voice of the more strident essays; in the novel it is inappropriate and unbalanced. It was quite within Lawrence's capacities to have included this critique - and its importance to him is obvious - within the consciousness of one of the characters.

Presumably these thoughts are meant to coincide with Ursula's. Certainly, they mark the transition to her rejection of Christianity as 'a tale, a myth, an illusion, which, however much one might assert it

to be true as historical fact, one knew as not true - at least, for this present-day life of ours' (R 283). Ursula's desire to keep apart her Sunday and weekday worlds changes into a struggle to reconcile them. With maturity and self-responsibility comes the foregrounding of the 'weekday world of people and trains and duties and reports', and Ursula's realization 'that that which one cannot experience in daily life is not true for oneself'. So 'the weekday world had triumphed over the Sunday world' (R 284). She cannot accept the Gospel ethic of self-sacrifice and non-retaliation; unlike her father, Ursula is unable to enjoy the wonder and mystery of religion while ignoring its ethical injunctions: she is too conscious and self-critical not to feel that this puts her in a false position. Although she longs for the 'Sons of God' (R 276) and 'wanted Jesus to love her deliciously' (R 287), she realizes that her religion is self-indulgence, 'a betrayal, a transference of meaning, from the vision world, to the matter-of-fact world' (R 286). She thus rejects her own abuse of Christianity as a kind of sentimental, soft sensationalism - and yet she finds it impossible to discover what she considers to be an appropriate response, a way she can with integrity unite her weekday, sensual longings and her visionary, spiritual Christ.

It is during this religious confusion and rejection that Anton Skrebensky, son of an old Polish baron friend of her grandmother's, visits the home. Ursula is fascinated by the 'sense of the vast world, a sense of distances and large masses of humanity' he gives her. 'It drew her as a scent draws a bee from afar. But also it hurt her' (R 293). It draws her because Ursula epitomizes the ancient Brangwen women's longing for 'the beyond', for exploration and achievement in the spoken world of men. It also hurts her because, as Ursula discovers more fully later, the 'masses of humanity' obscure, even

isolate, the individual. Anton is a soldier and a believer in democracy, humanity and the 'common good' (R 329). The 'whole' represented in Will's cathedrals is replaced, for Anton, by society: 'One had to fill one's place in the Whole, the great scheme of man's elaborate civilization, that was all. The Whole mattered - but the unit, the person, had no importance, except as he represented the Whole' (R 328). Ursula is scornful of the small-mindedness, the materialism, the lack of subtlety of his philosophy and here again, the voice of a Lawrence appalled at the disaster of the Great War is but barely embedded within the tale.

Soon after they meet, Skrebensky buys Ursula a copy of Wuthering Heights at a market bookstall they pass. It is an appropriate gift in that the polarity upon which it is structured prefigures that between - and within - Anton and Ursula. For Skrebensky is not only the upholder of the ordered, cultured values of society and civilization like Linton, he is also - and especially after his return from Africa - the dark, immoral, antisocial Heathcliff. And within Ursula, too, the reality of Thrushcross Grange struggles with that of Wuthering Heights. To a much greater extent than in the previous generation, Ursula and Skrebensky reflect the modern experience of a fragmented existence. Ursula's more complex and sophisticated self-awareness makes it harder for her to reconcile the opposing factions within herself. The more explicit and more uneasy relationship between the individual and society is also explored in the context of Lawrence's evocation of the modern experience in this third cycle, and the relationship between the lovers is portrayed as more purely destructive and isolating than in either of the earlier relationships.

Even at the outset of their romance, the relationship between Ursula and Anton is portrayed as a dangerous game of challenge and self-assertion rather than a quest for communion and fulfilment. But at the height of their battle of egos is the awareness of loss: 'Wherein was something finite and sad, for the human soul at its maximum wants a sense of the infinite' (R 303). The struggle of each to triumph is described most powerfully in the scene beyond the dance which echoes the moonlight scene of Anna and Will but it carries more disturbing overtones of a more deadly fight. The atmosphere and meanings accumulate as the social world of the dance merges into the peripheral, elemental world of darkness. In these passages, Lawrence's ability to convey such diversity of texture in evolving states of awareness is evident:

There was a wonderful rocking of the darkness, slowly, a great, slow swinging of the whole night, with the music playing lightly on the surface, making the strange ecstatic, rippling on the surface of the dance, but underneath only one great flood heaving slowly backwards to the verge of oblivion, slowly forward to the other verge, the heart sweeping along each time, and tightening with anguish as the limit was reached, and the movement, at crises, turned and swept back. (R 318)

The rhythmic movement of the dance lulls the partners into a trance in which a sharpened awareness of the various levels of communication is experienced, and a sense of impending conflict is aroused. Once again, darkness and light are the key motifs in what is now a battle, not an interplay. Ursula identifies herself with the moon. She feels 'a fierce, white, cold passion in her heart' (R 320) and, to an even greater extent than in earlier moon scenes, the woman's identification with the moon signals her transcendent self-sufficiency and chilling intactness. 'She was cold and hard and compact of brilliance as the moon itself, and beyond him as the moonlight was

beyond him, never to be grasped or known.' Yet the man, in his darkness and dependence, tries to possess and contain. The imagery is powerful and violent:

And still he had not got her, she was hard and bright as ever, intact. But he must weave himself round her, enclose her, enclose her in a net of shadow, of darkness, so she would be like a bright creature gleaming in a net of shadows, caught. Then he would have her, he would enjoy her. How he would enjoy her, when she was caught. (R 320)

Once again in The Rainbow, woman is the victor; the man's attempts to dominate and obliterate are shown as futile and self-destructive. 'She was bright as a piece of moonlight, as bright as a steel blade, he seemed to be clasping a blade that hurt him. Yet he would clasp her, if it killed him' (R 320-321). The white intactness is not only inviolable, it pierces and wounds what would invade or consume it.

The woman is also described - like Lot's wife - as a pillar of salt. To the image of the sharp steel blade is added the destructiveness of burning corrosion like 'some consuming, scathing poison' (R 321). Skrebensky is indeed destroyed in this encounter, his 'intrinsic self' is broken, his heart left hollow (R 323). But Ursula is hurt too: 'there was a wound of sorrow, she had hurt herself, as if she had bruised herself, in annihilating him' (R 324).

It is somewhat ironic that the biblical story of the flood and God's rainbow covenant to Noah is recounted - for the first and only time in the novel - just after Ursula's 'annihilation' of Skrebensky. They go to church together the next morning. The sermon's 'voice' is that of law and order (R 326), but Ursula ignores 'the service and the singing' and turns instead to the back of Genesis, her favourite book in the Bible, where she rereads the story of the Flood and God's promise. Her mood is critical, mocking, reductive. She is bored by

the multiplying and replenishing of the earth which God orders, indignant at the destroying of 'flesh' in particular, and scornful of the self-importance of Noah and his God and their Flood. Yet the story, by its very positioning in the novel, judges her too. Whereas its flood is followed by a promise and the hope of new life in abundance, her destructive passion leaves Skrebensky broken and hollow (R 323), and herself frozen in disillusion, in 'hard disbelief' (R 332). Skrebensky is called off to war and their relationship is suspended.

In Ursula's next phase - the lesbian relationship with her teacher, Winifred Inger - the criticism of religion becomes more intellectual and more consciously rebellious. Winifred Inger is a liberated woman, intellectually as well as sexually. 'She wanted to bring Ursula to her own position of thought. They took religion and rid it of its dramas, its falsehoods. Winifred humanized it all' (R 341). Ursula comes to see religion as a man-made clothing for human aspiration. Despite this rationalistic approach, Ursula's essential criticism of Christianity is still embodied in image and symbol. She dreams of Moloch, the pagan god before whom human sacrifices were burned; she claims the proud and powerful lion and eagle for her god and repudiates the weak, passive Lamb and Dove. Her choice is to be one of the 'raging, destructive lovers' (R 342), triumphant, courageous and increasingly differentiated into her own individuality.

The imagery of differentiation and detachment runs - as it does with Skrebensky - precisely counter to the other main current of the relationship: the marshy, cloying, merging of the sensual physical bond. Winifred, like Anton, represents both the dry, light, intellectual world of ideas and the further life, and also the dark, wet - and here, corrupt - world of physical desire that clings and

sucks and pulls like the soil on the Marsh Farm. As Ursula comes to find the relationship with Winifred repulsive - 'she wanted some fine intensity, instead of this heavy cleaving of moist clay' (R 344) - she contrives the marriage between her teacher and her Uncle Tom. It is a sort of unholy alliance in which each is characterized by disintegrated, brittle mechanism and also by a foetid, marshy corruption - which is reminiscent of Reid's language and imagery in 'The Debasement of the Imagination'.

Ursula moves on to establish herself as a 'useful member' in the 'great task which humanity is trying to fulfil' (R 358), and becomes a school-teacher at Brinsley Street School. Once again, Ursula's utopia is crushed and, in a brilliant description of the classroom and its power dynamics, Lawrence charts the demise of Ursula's image of herself as the gentle awakener dispensing sweetness and light, to her breaking-in as an instrument of the sordid brutality she detests.

Ursula's next great dream is of college. She enters it imagining it as a temple of knowledge, an otherworldly, mysterious place of reverence which contains the promise of fulfilment. Once again she is cruelly disillusioned by the gradual realization that her imagined world is a sham, a mere slave of the machine principle, and it is here, at the supposed apothēsis of human achievement and learning, that Ursula is most deeply disillusioned by the inadequacy. The physics lecturer's reductionist attitude, the tendency to deny any 'special mystery to life', (R 440) and to reduce everything to impersonal forces and human understanding is felt as a violent limitation of life's possibilities and ultimate meaning.

But the critique of 'modernity' here is less convincing than in the previous two episodes where Ursula's disillusion engages our imaginative sympathy because it is rooted in a substantial, imaginative

evocation of her situation. Certainly in the 'Shame' chapter, Lawrence verges on the simplistically and stridently dismissive, but the episode is redeemed by the powerful impression of the corruption established through the marsh/water imagery. In the criticisms of college, however, there is too much flat statement and too little imaginative realization of the texture, of the subtly particularized feeling and shape of the college's inadequacy.

For all her scepticism, Ursula still craves 'mystery', and it is because she glimpses 'something working entirely apart from the purpose of the human world' (R 436) that she decides to concentrate her studies on Botany. Apart from this, her college experience is bitterly disappointing:

She had the ash of disillusion gritting under her teeth. Would the next move turn out the same? Always the shining doorway ahead; and then, upon approach, always the shining doorway was a gate into another ugly yard, dirty and active and dead. Always the crest of the hill gleaming ahead under heaven: and then, from the top of the hill only another sordid valley full of amorphous, squalid activity. (R 436)

It is in this context that we are to see the famous image of the brightly lit circle under the arc-lamp surrounded by darkness - the often quoted Laurentian metaphor for the limitations of consciousness, and the unknown possibilities beyond it. Lawrence's occasional failure to establish in his characters a sufficient distance from himself sometimes leads to confusion over the significance of a particular image or reflection. Is it Lawrence's? Is it Ursula's, and if so, is Lawrence endorsing it or, in the light of later events, pointing to its limitations? More than any of the other characters, Ursula's quest is marked by her violent oscillations between extremes, in a pattern of action and re-action; it is presented as an integral part of the modern dilemma. The meditation on the 'inner circle of light' (R 437-438)

comes at one of the many extremes of the pendulum, just as she is about to swing to the opposite pole. It describes her disillusion with a reality that admits only human, rational, cerebral consciousness. But her subsequent plunge into the anti-social, 'fecund darkness' with Skrebensky proves, ultimately, to be equally unsatisfying. It seems to suggest that the arc-lamp metaphor expresses Ursula's perspective during a particular phase and is by no means wholly endorsed by Lawrence.

Interestingly, it is in a French cathedral that Ursula realizes it is not Anton she wants:

The old streets, the cathedral, the age and the monumental peace of the town took her away from him. She turned to it as it to something she had forgotten, and wanted. This was now the reality; this great stone cathedral slumbering there in its mass, which knew no transience nor heard any denial. It was majestic in its stability, its splendid absoluteness. (R 456)

The vast formal expression of the highest human aspiration still soothes and inspires with its promise of grandeur and significance and permanence. It is the place where, as a girl, on one of her first outings with Skrebensky, she felt compelled to look into after the reckless carousel ride:

She had come to plunge in the utter gloom and peace for a moment, bringing all her yearning, that had returned on her uncontrolled after the reckless riding over the face of the crowd, in the fair. After pride, she wanted comfort, solace, for pride and scorn seemed to hurt her most of all. (R 296)

Rouen Cathedral seems to rekindle Ursula's yearning for something beyond what Skrebensky can give her. The old battle between them intensifies, and Skrebensky is again destroyed in a moonlight annihilation; he leaves for India after a hasty marriage - unbeknown to Ursula - to his Colonel's daughter. Ursula remains behind, 'inert, without strength or interest' (R 484). When she thinks she is

pregnant, she feels remorseful for her arrogance in 'wanting ... that illusory, conceited fulfilment which she imagined she could not have with Skrebensky' (R 484-485). She determines to 'fill her place simply' in society as wife and mother and put away her fantastic desires. Yet even before she receives Skrebensky's curt cablegram: 'I am married', her encounter with the horses and her subsequent illness force her through a kind of death, when she is stripped of everything but what Lawrence describes as her most essential identity, the bedrock and core of her being. She is likened to a stone 'unconscious, unchanging, unchangeable', lying at the bottom of a stream while everything else 'rolled by in transience' (R 490). Her almost mystic divestment results in a new birth, imaged as a 'naked, clear kernel ... striving to take new root, to create a new dawn, like 'the most fragile flower that opens in the end of winter' (R 493).

Although Ursula's death and new birth are convincing by nature of its very struggle and tentativeness, the final weight of optimism in the gathered rainbow is, as in the two previous resolutions, too heavy to be credibly sustaining. Certainly, in Ursula's refusal to settle with the inadequate solution of her forebears - she will not drown, trapped in the blind inner world of sensation like Tom Brangwen, nor is she content to separate fiercely her inner and outer existences like her father - there is the hope of a continued quest for an as yet unrealizable integration and wholeness, a renewed search to find real expression and a more adequate form. Presented as an accomplished fact, however - even in the world of imagination or vision - the tone seems forced, the conclusion too hasty, too vast and too final.

Just a few months after The Rainbow was completed, Lawrence wrote to Bertrand Russell: 'I have been wrong, much too Christian, in my philosophy. These early Greeks have clarified my soul. I must drop

all about God.'<sup>28</sup> Lawrence was talking primarily here about his 'Study', but we have seen how much this helped to shape his aims in The Rainbow: the novel was an attempt to embody and fulfil the 'Study's' challenge to create a great utterance based on reconciliation. We have also seen that, despite the extent of the novel's remarkable achievement, complete reconciliation is never attained by any of the characters - at the most, it is promised in the rainbow at the end. By Lawrence's own standards, this indicates a limitation in the achievement; according to his comments in the 'Study', The Rainbow would fail to be an ultimately satisfying work of art. If the novel is flawed, however, it is not so much because of its failure to achieve the sort of absolute reconciliation that Lawrence seemed to be aiming for in the 'Study', but because of its attempts to do so. It is when Lawrence is striving to convince us of an absolute achievement that the language grows strained and strident. It is in his exploration of the quest for reconciliation, in the originality and depth with which he describes it as a tentative, elusive and painful process, that the success of The Rainbow lies.

Lawrence's hopes of finding an expression of the 'Whole' within Christian symbolism also proved elusive. The very idea of such a Whole is jettisoned by its critique within the novel; the 'ultimates' of the Christian language are exposed as exaggerated rhetoric or, at the most, are bestowed with only a transient validity by the subsequent narrative. Already within the novel, the idea of the relativity of flux is more persuasive than the achieved stasis of the 'Absolute'. It was this idea of the flux, of course, that Lawrence found so germane in the philosophy of Heraclitus which he discovered shortly after finishing The Rainbow, and it was this discovery of the early Greeks that seems to represent a watershed in Lawrence's relationship with his Christian religious heritage.

## NOTES: CHAPTER SIX

1. D.H. Lawrence, 'Study of Thomas Hardy', in Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays, edited by Bruce Steele (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 3-133 (p. 80). (Hereafter cited as 'Study' or STH.)
2. Letter to Ottoline Morrell, (3 February 1915), in Letters, ii, pp. 274-275 (p. 275).
3. Letter to Arthur McLeod, (26 October 1913), in Letters, ii, pp. 89-91 (p. 90).
4. Letter to Gordon Campbell, (20 December 1914), in Letters, ii, pp. 246-250 (p. 250).
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., p. 249.
7. Hough, p. 54.
8. Letter to Edward Garnett, 29 January 1914, in Letters, ii, pp. 142-143 (p. 142).
9. Letter to Arthur McLeod, [23 April 1913], in Letters, i, pp. 543-545 (p. 544).
10. Letter to Arthur McLeod, 9 February 1914, in Letters, ii, pp. 146-147 (p. 146).
11. Letter to Edward Garnett, 22 April 1914, in Letters, ii, pp. 164-166 (p. 165).
12. Letter to Edward Garnett, 5 June 1914, in Letters, ii, pp. 182-184 (pp. 182-183).
13. Letter to Gordon Campbell, 21 September 1914, in Letters, ii, pp. 217-219 (p. 218).
14. Letter to Edward Garnett, 5 June 1914, in Letters, ii, pp. 182-184 (p. 183).
15. Letter to Bertrand Russell, 2 March 1915, in Letters, ii, p. 300.
16. Letter to Gordon Campbell, [3? March 1915], in Letters, ii, pp. 300-303 (p. 302).
17. Mark Kinkead-Weekes, 'The Marble and the Statue', in Imagined Worlds, edited by Maynard Mack and Ian Gregor (1968), p. 385.
18. see p. 8 of the present study.
19. Letter to Ernest Collings, 17 January 1913, in Letters, i, pp. 502-504 (p. 503).
20. This is Mark Kinkead-Weekes' apposite phrase. See Mark Kinkead-Weekes, 'The Marriage of Opposites', in D.H. Lawrence: Centenary Essays, edited by Mara Kalnins (Bristol, 1986).

21. Ibid., p. 24.
22. Letter to Gordon Campbell, [20 December 1914], in Letters, ii, pp. 246-250 (p. 249).
23. Ibid.
24. Letter to Ottoline Morrell, [1 March 1915], in Letters, ii, pp. 296-299 (p. 297).
25. S.L. Goldberg, 'The Rainbow : Fiddle-bow and Sand', in D.H. Lawrence: The Rainbow and Woman in Love, edited by Colin Clarke (1969), pp. 117-134 (pp. 131-133).
26. D.H. Lawrence, 'The Two Principles', in Phoenix II, pp. 227-237 (p. 231).
27. See F.R. Leavis, D.H. Lawrence: Novelist (1955), p. 147.
28. Letter to Bertrand Russell, [14? July 1915], in Letters, ii, pp. 364-365 (p. 364).

## CONCLUSION

The Rainbow marks Lawrence's decisive break with Congregationalism. After this novel the influence of that early form of religious experience is of little critical account as he moved beyond, not just the reaction against it, but also what we have witnessed in The Rainbow - his attempts to reformulate it in more adequate, but still recognizable, terms. After The Rainbow, and until nearer the end of his life, Lawrence put Eastwood behind him as he extended his horizons and widened his frames of reference.

'Dies Irae', a title Lawrence considered for Women in Love, indicates this shift in mood and direction. The dark, apocalyptic element in the fifth novel was a response to - even a judgement on - what Lawrence saw as the bankruptcy of the Christian-idealist-democratic principle. The banning of The Rainbow in September 1915 had upset him deeply and led him to conclude that England was beyond redemption and that Christianity was beyond reinterpretation. The quest for reconciliation gives way, in Women in Love, to its opposite. Lawrence begins to explore the reductive process, the 'river of dissolution' and to consider alternative ways for a civilization to die - the frozen abstraction of the Northern way, or the mindless sensuality represented in the African statuette.

To be sure, the prophetic voice and the redemptive themes remain central to Lawrence's writings. Towards the end of his short life, as he is re-examining and, as John Worthen argues<sup>1</sup>, re-creating his entire Eastwood experience, a preoccupation with Christianity comes to the fore as never before. For instance, in The Man Who Died, A Propos Lady Chatterley's Lover, Apocalypse and many of the late essays and poems, Lawrence appears to be re-evaluating - sometimes sympathetically, but more often with hostility - his Christian inheritance. The reaction

against it is inextricably woven into the explicit rejection of his mother's influence, and it is clearer in the late essays and poems than anywhere else how much Lawrence associated the negative values of his mother's mode with a materialistic, cerebral, controlling Christianity.

I have suggested that the terms of the Eliot/Leavis debate continue to be relevant because they do in fact indicate the basic conflict inherent in Lawrence's Eastwood Congregational heritage. On the one hand, there was undoubtedly a vigorous social and moral tradition where thinking was valued and culture promoted. Within this tradition there was also - at least in theory - room for religious mystery and wonder, although Reid's sermons and Lawrence's writings seem to suggest that this dimension was minimized by the Congregationalists of Eastwood and never fully integrated into their Christian experience.

That this tension perplexed and dissatisfied Lawrence is evident in his letters to Robert Reid. And I have argued in this study that it did not cease to concern Lawrence after his break with the Chapel when he left Eastwood. Indeed, each of his first four novels may be interpreted as carrying his response to and his exploration of the elements of this conflict. So, in The White Peacock the pervasive fear of the consequences of man's loss of control over nature and his own nature - which is such a repeated theme in Reid's sermons - is counterbalanced by the sense of loss of innocence and freedom and vitality, and the glimpse of an ancient mystery intimated in the snowdrops. In The Trespasser, it is not the loss of control, but its opposite, that brings death. In Lawrence's second novel, written as he was experiencing his most decisive break with Eastwood, the reaction against the Christian-idealist value-system which prevailed in the

Chapel is most extreme. This revolt is tempered as it becomes more complex in Sons and Lovers, where Lawrence explores more directly the constituents of his shaping. Although the Chapel is rarely presented directly in Lawrence's most autobiographical novel, its value-system is nevertheless a vital force. Because of the way it is shown to have shaped Mrs Morel and Miriam, the two most influential women in Paul's life, its claims upon him are powerful, albeit largely indirect. As in The Trespasser, this shaping is shown to be negative, and Paul's rejection of its domination, I have argued, reflects - and perhaps even enables - a significant liberation in Lawrence's own experience from the dualism embedded in his religious inheritance. The Rainbow is a direct assault on this dualism, and although the novel's attempt at reconciliation falls short of the absolute achievement that Lawrence seemed to have been attempting, it is a remarkable exploration of the substance and quality and texture of both sides of the polarity that so characterizes Lawrence's writing.

That his Congregational inheritance deeply shaped Lawrence, the novelist, is beyond doubt. With the new evidence provided by the newspaper reports of Reid's sermons, we now have a much more substantial and authoritative understanding of the nature of this shaping. The dominant note of these sermons - which coincided with the value-system of Lawrence's mother - was moral, practical, rational religion; against this, the minor key of a more numinous religious experience was all but eclipsed. In this study we have traced the way in which his religious heritage is variously reflected in each of Lawrence's first four novels. Certainly it is a reflection of influences much broader and more complex than Eastwood Congregationalism, but it is this particular strand of the shaping of the novelist by the chapel religion of his early years that I have explored and elucidated here.

## NOTE: CONCLUSION

1. John Worthen, 'Lawrence and Eastwood', in Centenary Essays, ed. Kalnins, pp. 1-20.

APPENDIX: THE NEWSPAPER REPORTS OF REVD ROBERT REID'S SERMONS

Daily Express, 30 September 1898, p. 6

## EASTWOOD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

### ORDINATION CEREMONY

At the Congregational Church, Eastwood, yesterday, was consummated the ordination of the minister, Mr. Robert Reid. At the ceremony in the afternoon the Rev. R. Baldwin Brindley, of Castlegate Congregational Church, Nottingham, was the presiding minister, and there was a large gathering, among those present being, in addition to Mr. Robert Reid, the Rev. F.L. Shillito (Blackburn), the Rev. Wm. Crosbie, M.A., L.L.B. (Nottingham), the Rev. J.D. Jones, M.A., B.D. (Bournemouth), the Rev. E.D. Webb (Eastwood), the Rev. J.G. Tolley (Mansfield), the Rev. F. Knowles (Belper), the Rev. Barker Lamb (Eastwood), the Rev. F. Hart (Kimberley), and Mr. Charles Askew (secretary of the church).

The Rev. Shillito read the Scripture lesson from Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, following with a prayer, after which the Rev. R. Baldwin Brindley gave an address, remarking that the service in which they were taking part was one of the most interesting, but at the same time of the most solemn in their church life, and it was one of importance, not only to Mr. Reid, but to the whole sisterhood of churches. They were not simply gathered together as the members of a Christian church, for there were neighbouring pastors present. Referring to Mr. Reid's qualifications, he had received a communication from the Rev. J.A. Mitchell, Principal of the Congregational Institute, Nottingham, stating that Mr. Reid had completed his course of training at that Institution to the entire satisfaction of the tutors, and speaking with

the utmost moderation, he was to be described as a most distinguished student. Continuing, the speaker said that day for Mr. Reid was one of the great days of his whole life. He was sorry there were those who did much to belittle ordination services; some would do away with it altogether. The day of all his (the speaker's) life was the day when he was set apart to holy life by the prayers and exhortations of holy men who were now dead.

Mr. Charles Askew, the secretary of the church, then made a statement to the meeting. He explained that Mr. Loosemore preached his farewell sermon as pastor of that church on the 16th of August, 1896. It then became necessary to obtain supplies, and various ministers occupied the pulpit with a view to the pastorate, but none received full acceptance with the church. At an interview in Nottingham with one of their good friends, Mr. Crosbie, he suggested they should invite Mr. Reid. They did so. He occupied the pulpit for the first time on January 10th, 1897, and preached with such acceptance that a strong desire was expressed that a second invitation be given him. He came the second time on January 24th, and at a church meeting held on June 1st a desire was felt that Mr. Reid be invited to accept the pastorate; but a difficulty was in the way; Mr. Reid's college course did not terminate until the end of June, 1898. The church, however, was willing to wait if he accepted the invitation. On the 1st of June at a church meeting, when 31 members were present, it was decided that an invitation should be sent to Mr. Reid to accept the pastorate, and upon the vote being taken there was not a single dissentient. The invitation was sent on the 2nd June, and the reply accepting was received on the 17th. Mr. Reid felt that the interests of the church would suffer through the long interregnum, but they were pleased to say the various organisations had been well maintained. Mr. Reid preached

his first sermon as pastor on July 3rd, 1898. They felt they had been providentially guided in their choice, and earnestly prayed that God would abundantly bless his work.

Mr. Robert Reid, in a feeling and eloquent speech, said it was his duty and privilege to submit to them some account of the Divine influences which had so operated upon his life as to bring him to that most solemn and most sacred hour; for he could make no statement of his faith intelligible and real to them without reference to those spiritual experiences of the past which had created and determined his religious convictions of the present. In this declaration of faith, therefore, he should seek to briefly state: (1) the experiences which led him to believe he was Divinely called to the work of the ministry; (2) why he elected to exercise that ministry in the Congregational communion; and (3) the main doctrines which he believed and proposed to teach. He was brought up in the somewhat stern and severe discipline of a Scottish peasant home, and received his earliest religious impressions from his mother, who taught him to pray, to fear God, and to keep his commandments. As a daily exercise he had to read a chapter of the Bible and commit to memory a portion of the shorter form of the Westminster Catechism, and by that means his mind was early made familiar with, although it could not fully comprehend, the great truths of the Gospel. From his boyhood he had a deep desire to become a minister of Christ, but there were difficulties in the way of such a course which seemed impossible to be overcome, and at an early age he entered upon a business career, and became so engrossed with its interests and activities as to practically exclude all thought of a ministerial calling. A memorable religious experience through which he passed turned his heart and mind again with greater intensity to Divine things. He became actively engaged in Christian work, and found an increasing delight in such service. About the time of which he spoke

he was brought under the ministry of his dear friend, Mr. Shillito, to whom he owed more than he could here express. Through his influence he was led to take a more active and public part in the work of the church, especially in the direction of preaching. In that exercise he had the inward consciousness and the outward evidences of the Divine presence and blessing; and he felt that what before had been personal desire to devote himself to the public service of Christ now became the urgent and imperative call of God. After long and prayerful consideration he decided to offer himself as a candidate for the ministry, and made successful application for admission to the Congregational Institute. During his course of study there he was privileged to come under the inspiring influence of Dr. Paton, and to him, together with his other tutors, Mr. Bumby, Mr. Jones, and Mr. Mitchell, he owed whatever of enthusiasm he had both for study and for preaching. It was his privilege also while in Nottingham to be very closely associated with his friend and pastor Mr. Crosbie, and to his rich spiritual teaching and influence, to his sympathetic and fatherly interest he gratefully acknowledged his lasting indebtedness. Thirteen months prior to the termination of his college course he received a cordial and unanimous invitation to become the pastor of this church. And because he had felt the call of God in his own spirit; because he had been called by the voice of this Christian church; and because tokens of Divine blessing had rested upon his labours, he therefore believed that he was called of God to the work of the ministry. He desired to exercise his ministry in the Congregational communion, because of his faith in the Holy Catholic Church of Christ. In the churches of their order he recognised a faithful adherence to the doctrine and practice of the early apostolic Church; and he believed in the true spiritual unity of all who were united to Christ by a

living faith, an underlying unity which no difference of church polity or administration could either create or destroy. It was this inward oneness of faith and of fellowship in the midst of outward diversity which, as he conceived it, constituted the catholicity of the Church of Christ, and not any uniformity of creed or of ecclesiastical organisation. He believed in Jesus Christ as the Supreme Head of the Church, a supremacy which could be usurped by no ecclesiastical office or order of men. Each church, he believed, should be responsible for the management and administration of its own affairs, and each individual member responsible for maintaining the efficiency and Christian character of the Church. This was in perfect accordance with the teaching of the New Testament, wherein the Church was exhibited as a self-governing body, subject to no external interference or control. Its power was vested in its members, not in its ministers; in the whole body of believers and not in any specially exalted or official section. If an Apostle had to be elected, as in the case of Matthias, it was done by the brethren; if a new order of officers had to be established, as in the case of the deacons, they were chosen by the whole multitude of believers; if moral discipline had to be exercised it was exercised by the Church: the choice of representatives was an act of "the Apostles and the Elders with the whole Church, and therefore participation in all that pertained to the government and well-being of a society so constituted was - and continues to be- the solemn obligation rather than the privilege of memberships (sic.). But while each Christian society had thus the power and the responsibility of administering its own affairs, and was so far independent of outward control, it did not necessarily follow that such independence means isolation; because it is Congregational the Church does not cease to be Catholic, and he believed that the spiritual vigour of separate and

local Christian societies was enriched by union and fellowship, by full and free intercourse with other Christian churches. The Church was the body of Christ, and as individual believers were members one of another, each needful to the upbuilding and perfecting of the other in Christian life and character, so also each separate society of Christians was an essential part of the true Catholic Church, sharing its large and goodly fellowship in Christ, preserving its unity of spirit, promoting its purpose of love and increasing its divine power by growing up "in all things into Him, which is the head, even Christ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love." And the constitution of the Church determined the character of her ministry. She exists as an organised spiritual society, whose life and energy were immediately derived from Christ. To be in Christ was the primary and sole condition of membership. The entrance to the Divine Kingdom was by the way of a new birth, a regeneration, and "if any man be in Christ he is a new creature," and "through him - through Christ - we all have our access by one Spirit unto the Father." The minister is therefore no intermediary between man and God, for this would deny the sufficiency of Christ, nor did there remain any sacrificial function for him to perform seeing that Christ hath been manifested to put away sin once for all by the sacrifice of Himself. The office of the ministry as he apprehended it in the New Testament was to promote the edification of the Church, the building up of the body of Christ, and the Christian gifts and graces of those thus set apart to the Ministry of the Word were such as are open to all who are living in vital union with Christ. Separation from ordinary pursuits involved no delegation of supernatural powers other

than those which come through spiritual obedience, meditation, and prayer. It was his desire as a true Churchman, recognising the spiritual unity of all believers in Christ Jesus, to exercise his ministry in that communion which in its ecclesiastical polity and organisation, as in its conception and ideal of the Christian Church and ministry, conformed most closely to the Apostolic standard. He then briefly indicated the doctrines which he held and hoped to teach. He believed in one God, Creator of all things, Father of their spirits. He believed in His sovereign power, His infinite wisdom, His perfect holiness, and His redeeming love. Faith in His almighty power and wisdom worked in him the assurance that He was ordering and governing all things according to an eternal, righteous, and gracious purpose, which could not fail of its ultimate consummation. To an absolutely Holy God all evil must be utterly hateful, and must therefore eventually be destroyed. He believed in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments wherein God revealed His own nature and purpose, His fatherly disposition towards men. His condemnation of sin, and His will for their salvation. He believed them to contain for them all information that was essential to their spiritual well-being, and that in matters of faith and practice they constituted their highest authority. He believed in Jesus Christ, His Divine nature, His sinless life, His sacrificial death. He believed His life to be the manifestation of that life which God sought in them; that through the merits of His death they obtained forgiveness of their sins; and that by the indwelling of His Spirit they were built up in godliness of character. He believed in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit as the Divine agent in the work of convincing men of sin, creating in them true faith, illuminating their minds, and bringing them to a full knowledge of saving and sanctifying truth. He believed in two

Sacraments, those of baptism and the Lord's Supper. In the Sacrament of baptism, when administered to infants, they recognised the rightful claim of God upon every child, and by this openly acknowledging that claim confessed by the same act their obligation and responsibility as a Christian Church to foster and nourish the spiritual interests of the life so solemnly committed to their trust. In the case of adults baptism was the outward symbol and pledge of an inward state of devotion and loyalty to Christ. The Lord's Supper he believed to be a sacrament wherein the sacrificial death of Christ was symbolised by the elements of bread and wine. Those elements possessed no virtue in themselves, but they made more vivid to their minds the act of redemption which they represented. "It is the spirit that quickeneth," and he believed that in this sacrament Jesus Christ was specially and spiritually present, bringing to the prepared heart new infusions of grace, confirmation of faith, and renewal of spiritual vigour. He believed that in the conduct of life every soul was responsible to God, every one of them in the last issue would have to appear before the judgement seat of Christ and render an account of the deeds done in the body. He believed that all men have transgressed the law of God, and that, therefore, all need the forgiveness which could only be obtained through a willing and living personal trust in the atoning death of Jesus Christ. This pardoning grace of God bestowed upon them through Christ their Lord lay at the root of all Christian character. It opened the way for the return of God to the soul, and supplied new impulse and motive, new power and passion to the life. The emphasis of the Apostolic ministry rested upon this cardinal truth; how "that God has (sic.) in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses," that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not

perish, but have eternal life," that "the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all Sin," that "Christ hath once suffered for sins the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God"; and under God that would be the nerve and soul of all his preaching - the very core and crown of his message. Because he believed in the love of God as revealed to them in Jesus Christ; because he had experienced in his own heart the joy of forgiveness, the cleansing and renewing power of the Spirit of God; because he had found in Christ the peace which his soul desired and the grace sufficient for all his needs, it would be his joy with humble and ever conscious dependence upon God to proclaim to them that forgiving and redeeming love, that abundant and soul-reviving grace which had ever been the comfort and stay of all the people of God, and His power unto salvation to all them that believed.

The ordination prayer having been impressively offered by the Rev. Wm. Crosbie, (sic.)

The Rev. J.D. Jones charged the minister in beautifully chosen words delivered in a style perfectly delightful to the hearers. He hoped that Mr. Reid would be a good and faithful minister, and his idea of a good minister in all his completeness he proceeded to explain. No one but a good man could become a good minister. Some around them laid stress on eloquent preaching, but in order to succeed they must be good men. They could cultivate intellect, but it was more important that they should seek to grow in grace. It was the man behind the speech that wielded the power. A pure and Godly life would give to their words tenfold power. The supreme necessity for success in the ministry was goodness. He urged Mr. Reid to cultivate power of speech and intellect, but more especially to hold communion with his Master. Times of sickness and grief were rare opportunities for a Christian minister, but a good minister would not only visit the sick, but the whole of his flock. He impressed upon the young minister the necessity

of keeping constantly in touch with the people. The good preacher "was not the one who filled his church by his eloquence, and could talk on up-to-date matters and sensational events, but the one who could impress them with his earnestness. Misery and woe abounded everywhere, and it was their duty to endeavour to alleviate it. He would say nothing as to the efforts of philanthropists towards the amelioration of poverty, but he contended that were poverty completely banished sorrow would not cease. The disease was not simply poverty, but sin. A superficial gospel would not be of avail, but the minister should show how Christ was anxious to relieve them of their sufferings, and his words would be as welcome as rain on the parched ground in summer. Not only must they have a Gospel to preach, but they must preach it up to their own experience in order to succeed. He thought that to that maxim was to be attributed the success of the apostolic preaching. The Apostles never went further than their experience took them. They must not under any consideration be tempted to go further than their knowledge took them, and they should preach their own words. Let the minister tell the people what Christ had done for him and what he had seen and experienced. They must know the power of Christ in their own heart before they could preach Him. If Christ had been his power and joy the minister must tell them so. They must be students of the Book, men of prayer, and men who delighted in the fellowship of God, and, above all, were obedient. The power that must constrain them to this life must be love of Christ. A passion for the love of Christ would not only carry them through difficulties, but would tend to make them enthusiastic in the work. His fervent wish and prayer was that God would bless Mr. Reid and his work.

In the evening a public meeting was held under the presidency of Mr. J.B. Alliott, chairman of the Notts. Congregational Union, and

there was a large attendance, most of those who had been present at the gathering, with the addition of the Rev. J.A. Mitchell, B.A., principal of the Congregational Institute, supporting the Chairman.

The Rev. William Crosbie, who had to leave early, addressed the meeting at the outset. He said Mr. Reid was a dear and intimate friend of his, having been a member of his church during his college course, and he claimed to have something to do with what had led up to the happy consummation of that day. Mr. Reid, he remarked, was a man of marked ability and an eminently good man. He would be a blessing to that church. He had heard Mr. Reid preach many times, and had always been struck with his intellectual grasp and sustained power. He would be a friend equally of all classes, he being broad-minded and catholic. He congratulated them on their settlement on Mr. Reid, and he congratulated the minister on the appointment. If they did their part he was quite sure Mr. Reid would do his.

The Chairman mentioned that he had received many messages regretting inability to be present, and he read very feeling and eugolistic communications with reference to Mr. Reid from Professor F.E. Burnby, Dr. T. Witton Davies, of the Congregational Institute, and the Rev. Cecil Nicholson, of Little Lever, Bolton.

Mr. Alllott later remarked that they rejoiced in the belief that they had found a man that would lead them rightly and wisely. He hoped that Mr. and Mrs. Reid would find happiness there. Records showed that the members of that church did their fair share of the work, and he hoped they would continue to be fellow workers with their minister. He hoped the future period would be to them one of prosperity, not only in outward things - that was as to numbers and monetary matters, but in a Christian sense.

The Rev. J.A. Mitchell, B.A., said the life of the Church would be in danger if persons of doubtful character be connected with it, and if

the pastor be not qualified, and also if the management be confined to a limited number of persons. He believed that in choosing Mr. Reid they had chosen wisely and well, for he had been well tried by their friends. He believed in the sincerity and depth of Mr. Reid's character, and admired his ability. The connection now formed would, he trusted, be long continued, for he did not believe in a short pastorage. The speaker dwelt at length on the duties of a congregation towards their minister, on the heads of sympathy, attention, work, and prayer.

The Rev. F.L. Shillito, speaking of the vicissitudes through which Mr. Reid had passed, said that did they know as well as he did what their minister had gone through they would respect him all the more. It had only been by intense effort and intense sacrifice that he had attained his present positions. The speaker went on to deal with the work of Mr. Reid when he was in Blackburn; showing with what eminent success he had worked in the Sunday school, and what popularity he had acquired. Had he had time and opportunity he would have taken degrees in any university in the land. He could say that Mr. Reid had a blameless character, and that was a great deal, and he had a great passion for usefulness. He had organising faculty and gracious tact. They would not, he thought, ever regret having called Mr. Reid to their ministry. In the name of the church from which he came he wished them God-speed.

The Rev. R.B. Brindley did not think he ever rose to address a meeting so impressed with the fact that words from him would be a superfluity, after what had been said about Mr. Reid that day. In the course of his remarks he impressed upon them the necessity of members of the congregation helping a minister by occasionally speaking words of thanks for any benefits they might have derived from his preaching.

The meeting terminated with the usual votes of thanks.

Eastwood and Kimberley Advertiser, 10 May 1905, p. 3

THE LATE MR. EDWARD LINDLEY

Impressive Memorial Service at Eastwood

The Sunday morning service at the Eastwood Congregational Church took the form of a memorial service to the late Mr. Ed. Lindley, J.P., C.C., of The Orange, a prominent member of the church, whose death we recorded in our last issue. The Eastwood and Watnall Ambulance Corps and Band, numbering 120 strong, under Second Officer Goodson and Sergt.-Major Holmes, and the Eastwood Cadet Corps and Band, and Boys Life Brigade and bugle band under Captain Chambers and Sergt.-Inst. Maya, Gregory, and Hewitt were in attendance. The church was packed and many had to be accommodated with seats down the aisles. The service was of a most impressive character throughout, the hymns, and anthem, entitled "The Homeland" nicely rendered by the choir, harmonising with the solemnity of the occasion. The Rev. R. Reid preached a powerful and most fitting discourse from the text "As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise." (Proverbs xxvii., 21). "The text", said the rev. Gentleman, "is one of those terms and pithy maxims concerning the practical conduct of life in which the book of Proverbs abounds, and, as is sometimes the case with sayings in which much matter has been compressed into few words. The meaning is not altogether free from obscurity and vagueness. The main point, however, is clear, namely, that a man's praise acts as a test of character. 'As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold' - separating the dross from the pure metal - 'so is a man to his praise.' He is tried by it as gold is

tried by fire. The sense of the aphorism as it stands in our authorised version would seem to be that a man ought to subject to the most severe and scorching test all the praise that he receives, casting it, as it were, into the crucible of his own conscience, there to be purified from all alloy, rejecting the mere slag of insipid flattery, retaining only the refined and genuine metal of honest approbation. And in that meaning of the words the precept is full of wisdom. Most of us are prone to persuade ourselves that all praise is genuine and deserved; that even the voice of the flatterer is the voice of truth. Our general tendency is not to challenge too sharply or to scrutinise very searchingly the laudatory things that may be said concerning us. We are somewhat predisposed to accept them without question. We tend to allow them to make their impression upon us without submitting them to any fiery test .... That is the general and universal tendency which is here recognised. And, on this reading of the text, the principle expressed is that the way in which a man receives praise is a test of character. But the rendering of the revised version clarifies and enlarges the meaning of the passage "The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold, and a man is tried by his praise." That is a suggestive and penetrating thought. A man is tried, tested, put to the proof - by his praise. The idea of praise as providing the conditions of moral trial to (sic.) unfamiliar. We are much more accustomed to think of adversity as the great and sure touchstone of character - the all-revealing element which discloses the true worth or weakness of men. We draw our comparisons from the giant oak that stands inviolate and secure in its massive strength, defying every blast of the destroying tempest, and regard it as an apt symbol of the strong man who can bear the assaults and shocks of misfortune with calm and courageous confidence. Or we call to mind the image of a ship that

bravely weathers the wildest storm and reaches the harbour in safety, as a fitting type of the heroic man who breasts the blows of hostile circumstance and, being tried and tested by adversity, emerges victorious and scatheless from the strain and conflict. Such comparisons are just and true in relation to certain phases of life. Trouble is always a means of trial. Harsh and unpropitious conditions furnish a test of manhood. But we have need to remember, also, that while force and stability of character are tested by frowning circumstance and the rude gales of adversity, they are tried yet more searchingly by the seductive smiles of fortune and the radiant sunshine of success.

Many a ship goes down at sea

When heaven is all tranquility.

The influence of the world's smiles is more potent to divert a man from the pursuit of right than the rough blast of the world's scorn. 'The fining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, and a man is tried by his praise.' Need I explain my choice of test? Need I say that these words were suggested to my mind by the spontaneous and unstinted praise which was the happy portion of our dear departed friend? He was abundantly tried by the test which our text enshrines, and we may follow the various applications of the test to his character, not by way of judgment - for that is not ours to pronounce - but by way rather of illustration of the principle here expressed. Now there are three ways in which a man is tried by his praise. He is tried (1) by the praise he gives; (2) by the praise he receives; and (3) by the things for which he is praised. (1) The praise which he bestows is an expression of character. Find out the things that call forth a man's approbation, and you discover the key to his life. What he warmly approves, he loves; what he loves he seeks to pursue. The will follows

the heart. The objects or principles on which he bestows commendation are an index to his character - he is revealed by his praise. If you would estimate the quality of a man's life, observe the causes that command his sympathy; study the movements that win his support; mark the conduct on which his approbation rests. A man's worth is not truly measured by his achievements in the world, but by the quality of his moral sympathy. The last and deepest word is not 'How much did he accomplish?' but 'In what spirit did he strive?' What were the things that won his approval and support? He is tried by his praise - he is tested by his sympathies. That is a principle which we may confidently apply to the life of our friend whose memory we honour to-day. He was revealed in his public sympathies and activities as one who gave his warm-hearted approbation and generous support to every movement that tended to the furtherance of the common good. We cannot forget the ungrudging<sup>g</sup> devotion with which, in the days of his strength, he gave himself to the public service; never failing to respond to the many demands that were made upon his time and thought, his means, and energy. And by public service I do not mean merely the more official duties and responsibilities attached to the representative position which he occupied in local and public governing bodies, for his interest extended to every movement that had any bearing on the general welfare of the community. His sympathy and practical help were freely given to every enterprise affecting the educational, moral, or social interests of the people; and there is hardly any good cause in our midst which will not be the poorer for his loss. He gave a liberal interpretation to the duties of citizenship which he fulfilled with exemplary fidelity; because behind all his public activity there was an intimate and genuine concern for the public good. But his sympathies were not confined within any parochial boundaries. He had a

broad outlook and a wide-range of interest. I have been surprised sometimes in private conversation to find how keenly he sympathised with certain movements, towards which one might reasonably have imagined that a man immersed in a multitude of affairs would be almost indifferent. But they were all included in his interest, and given a place in his thought. His tenderness of heart was revealed in the indignation that flashed from his eye as he spoke of some distant case, of which he had read, of cruelty to little children, or to animals, or of oppression of the weak and helpless, for he was essentially kind and chivalrous in disposition. And his censure, no less than his praise, his antipathies, no less than his sympathies, proclaimed him to be a lover of good, a friend and helper of men. (2) But if the objects on which a man bestows his praise reveal character, the praise that he receives constitutes an ordeal of character. My brethren, do we sufficiently realise how hard it is for a man to walk steadily and calmly in the midst of great success? For one to preserve his balance of mind and bear himself simply and unaffectedly under the smiles of prosperity and the praise of men is a comparatively rare achievement. Even a strong man, whose back would be stiffened by the buffeting of adversity, may be spoiled and weakened by the blandishments of worldly success. If you would test the worth and force of his character to the last degree, give him applause, preferment and honour. Let him move, not in a sphere of persecution, but in an atmosphere of praise, and you will see the moral fibre of the man disclosed. If there be vanity in his soul, it will be nourished into rank and offensive growth; if there be the modesty of genuine worth, it will shine with the brighter lustre. A man is tried by his praise as gold is tested by fire. How does it fare with our friend when we apply this touchstone to his character? He passed through the ordeal of praise. He won worldly

success, preferment, social position, public honour, and the approbation of men. Did it destroy his native simplicity of temper? Did it minister to pride and self-complaining? One of the admirable and outstanding features of his character was that he remained so manifestly unspoiled by success. He never felt the necessity of magnifying his position yet because he remained simple, unaffected, unassuming, a man with men, he received the greater honour and respect. He was, as a good man always is, humble, modest, moderate in his own esteem. Tried in the furnace of praise he came forth as gold refined.

(3) I pass, in the last place, to speak of the things for which he was praised. A cheap and transient popularity may be won by ignoble methods. Say only what will please men; act always so as to conciliate and flatter them, and you will receive a certain shallow and temporary approbation. That is the kind of favour against which the solemn warning of our Lord was directed when he said 'Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.' Woe unto you, preachers of righteousness, if you secure universal favour by the sacrifice of truth, by speaking only smooth things instead of right things. But the praise which our friend won for himself was not of that worse than worthless type. He endeared himself to men and gained their goodwill, not by the studied wiles of art, or the sacrifice of sincerity, but by his frankness and courtesy, by his unfailing kindness and transparent honesty of purpose. Men knew that they could trust him completely, and whether what he had to say or do pleased them or not, they knew that he was actuated by the purest and kindest of motives. I ventured to say on Thursday, and I repeat it now in the hearing of many who were subordinate to his authority, that although the high position he held as manager of the firm of Messrs. Barber, Walker and Co. for nearly 14 years, was one of great

responsibility and difficulty, yet, so well has he discharged his obligations, so nobly has he fulfilled his trust, that now when the burden of responsibility is laid down, his employers feel that they have lost an altogether faithful and valued servant, and every man in their employ feels that he has lost a friend. It is rare and high achievement for one in such a position to so endear himself to the men under his control as to fill them with a sense of personal loss on his removal. I recently asked one who has known him all his life what he considered to be the most remarkable thing about Mr. Lindley. He paused a moment, and replied 'The most remarkable thing about Mr. Lindley is that everybody speaks well of him.' The men spoke well of him, and thought well of him, not because he was ready to forsake a principle in order to win popularity - for that was far from him - but because he was so scrupulously fair, so uniformly considerate, so essentially kind. Integrity and kindness were predominant elements in his winsome personality. Lying on his death bed, in those solemn hours when the mind travels back through the vanished years, he was able to say as he examined his motives and works 'I have always striven to be kind to everybody.' My brothers, it is a fine thing, a precious possession, to have such a reflection as that when our earthly career is closing. There is no goodness without kindness. There is no religion without kindness. The law of kindness is the law of Christ. Our brother had that law in his heart. It was the secret of his genial disposition, his sunny and cheery temper. He made no parade or display of the deepest things and most solemn thoughts of life. He shrank from all that savoured of ostentation, and most of all from anything that savoured of idle and empty religious profession. He knew that the life speaks more convincingly than the lips. And as we honour his memory, and think of the blank that he has left, and the sense of loss which

pervades the community, we feel that he has not lived in vain. He strove to fulfil his life as a trust given for high uses. We would not praise him beyond measure, or say of him aught except what is true, but as he had the praise of men here, so now our faith is that he enjoys the praise which constitutes the final test, and which alone matters at the last - the praise and favour, the approval and mercy of Almighty God."

At the conclusion of the service the buglers of the Life Brigade sounded the Last Post, and the Ambulance Band played the Dead March in Saul, following which the buglers sounded the Revielle. After service the Corps and Brigade paraded to the Market-place where they were drawn up in review order whilst the Ambulance Band played "Vital Spark".

Sympathetic reference was made to the late Mr. Lindley on Sunday morning by the Rector at the Parish Church and a muffled peal rang on the bells. Special reference was also made at a number of dissenting churches in the locality.

At St. Mary's Church, Greasley, the following ringers, as a token of respect for the late Mr. Ed. Lindley, rang a muffed peal of 1,320 changes in 50 minutes:- F.J. Guy (treble), (2) Geo. Radford, (3) Arthur Radford, (4) Jno. Radford, (5) Walter Clarke (conductor).

Eastwood and Kimberley Advertiser, 23 November 1906, p. 2

[The Debasement of the Imagination]

Congregational Church. - On Sunday evening the Rev. R. Reid preached a powerful sermon on "the debasement of the imagination," taking as his text Ezekiel viii., 12. He said "men may make of their imagination a sty on which all foul things run riot or they may make it a sanctuary in which no unclean thing can find a home; a holy chamber into which they can retreat and dwell amid the lofty and the pure, the lovely and the good. Your soul must have an atmosphere, a moral climate, and imagination provides the climate of the soul. You may live if you choose in the mountain air or in the malarial bog; in the sunshine, or in the slime, and to live with a debased imagination is like living in the midst of a pestilential swamp with its fever-laden vapours constantly breathing forth death. To which do your thoughts instinctively turn when you are unoccupied with common pursuits. It is then that imagination becomes active when we are released from the restraints of business and society, and are free to brood and dream and our mind is at liberty to dwell upon the things that lie concealed in the recesses of memory. Those hours of reverie that reveal the moral quality of our life. The chamber of imagery is our chamber of judgement. You can tell something of the artistic taste and refinement of people by the [in which all foul things run riot or they may themselves in the their homes; (sic.)] but how much more perfect and complete their revelation of character were a light to be flashed upon every man's chamber of imagery and the pictures he has painted on its walls made to stand out in bold and clear outline visible to all. Close the door of your mind against the indelicate and the impure. If

you avoid the dirty puddles on the highway out of respect for your shoes will you have less regard for the sanctuary of your imagination. If you are careful as to the food you eat out of respect for the health of the body will you have less concern for the health of your mind and soul. Why should you jealously guard the outer porch of the temple and desecrate the holy places within. Every great movement of progress in the world once existed only in the imagination of some one man whose mind had been illumined by the inspiration of the Almighty. What was dismissed often times with a contemptuous shrug of the shoulders as being only a devout imagination has in process of time materialised into actual and concrete fact. The function of imagination is to improve on the actual. Imagination looks beyond the actual to the ideal; sees something nobler waiting to be achieved; impels men to reach forth to the unobtained and the unaccomplished. My idea of the practical includes things that are out of sight. It includes the forces that shape character and determine destiny. And the 'practical' person who takes no account of the power of imagination in life is omitting one of its most active and potent factors."

Eastwood and Kimberley Advertiser, 8 February 1907, p. 3

#### THE NEW THEOLOGY AND THE ATONEMENT.

This was the subject of an impressive sermon preached in Eastwood Congregational Church last Sunday morning by the pastor (Rev. R. Reid). Taking for his text the words "The Son of Man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many". The preacher introduced his subject by an allusion to the theological discussion now proceeding in the pages of the public press. The significance of such a discussion he confessed, might easily be over-estimated, but it was at least an indication that the great and profound questions of the spiritual life had still a constraining interest for the minds of men. We may, he said, totally dissent from many of the views that are being expressed; we may, and I trust we do, deplore the spirit manifested by many who have engaged in the discussion; but at any rate we may learn that it is not now as it was in Bishop Butler's time, who, in the preface to his "Analogy" published in 1736, he wrote; - "It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted that Christianity is not so much as a subject of enquiry." Surely it is better that the traditional Christian faith should be the subject of serious discussion, hostile criticism, or even violent attack, than that it should simply be ignored - left entirely out of account by the multitude as something of no real practical importance in the scheme of life. Coming more immediately to his subject, the preacher remarked that in this discussion we were hearing much of how various minds interpreted the person of Christ. Did it not suggest itself as a reasonable course that we should enquire, as far as possible, how He regarded Himself, and especially how He regarded His

own death? It had been said of the typical theologian that he seemed absolutely incapable of looking at the death of Christ from the purely human point of view, such point of view being that He died as any of the noble army of martyrs have died - a victim to the fury of a frenzied mob. In this view He died as General Gordon died at Khartoum, or as James Chalmers died in New Guinea. But was that how Christ Himself regarded His death? The theologian's point of view was not our first concern. The supreme question is What was Christ's point of view? Before we know what value to attach to what others have taught concerning Him we must know what He taught concerning Himself. The preacher proceeded to show from the Gospel narratives how large a place the thought of His own death occupied in the mind of Christ, and what He definitely taught concerning its moral and spiritual issues for mankind. No interpretation could be put upon His words, that would leave them with the ordinary value of speech, if it emptied them of the idea of the Atonement. It was in the light of Christ's own life and words and work that we came to understand, however imperfectly, such words as these "Christ died for the ungodly". He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. "He is the propitiation for the whole world."

Eastwood and Kimberley Advertiser, 21 June 1907, p. 2

"COURAGE."

ONE OF THE CARDINAL VIRTUES

SERMON BY REV. R. REID

The second of what promises to be a very interesting and useful course of sermons on the "Seven Cardinal Virtues" was preached in the Eastwood Congregational Church on Sunday evening by the Pastor (Rev. R. Reid) to a large congregation. The series had been previously introduced by a discourse on "Wisdom," and the subject of Sunday's sermon was "Courage," which the rev. gentleman dealt with in a most intelligent, forceful manner, a number of apt illustrations being introduced with excellent effect, and the congregation listened with rapt attention during the whole of the discourse.

Courage, said the rev. gentleman, is a virtue that has always commanded, as it still commands, the sympathy and admiration of men. It is one of the elemental virtues of the race, and one of the first to be discerned and approved. Before wisdom was esteemed, the merit of courage was recognised. In a rude and barbarous age physical courage would naturally be regarded as the supreme virtue. The brave man would be the man held in highest honour. Long before there was an aristocracy of birth or wealth, talent or genius, there was the aristocracy of the stout heart and the strong arm. The savage, dressed only in paint and feathers, with no mind to speak of, had his ideal of courage, and the badge of distinction in his tribe was superiority to fear. And among civilised peoples the same instinctive appreciation of

physical courage persists. No people, perhaps, admire it more than the hardy island race to which we are proud to belong. Our popular heroes are men who, if they knew fear, knew also how to conquer it in the pursuit of what they believed to be their duty. And it is that association of even the lower kind of courage with the faithful performance of duty which redeems it from mere brute ferocity or animal instinct. In primitive times courage was almost exclusively the distinguishing virtue of the warrior. The heroes of antiquity are men who win their fame on the field of battle. Their bravery was commemorated in song and story; imagination shed glamour of romance upon their reputed exploits, and exalted the idea of physical courage as the quality most to be admired and emulated. And there is always an element in that defiance of personal danger which appeals to men. The man who imperils his life in a popular cause never fails to win admiration for his courage. But, while the early idea of what constitutes courage still lingers on, we have come to recognise that the everyday life offers a wide field for the exercise of genuine valour. In every sphere of activity there is ample scope for its energy. Its greatest triumphs are won, not in martial strife, but in the pursuits of peace. The men who man our lifeboats, in their mission of mercy, brave the dangers of the uncontrollable tempest; the men who fight the devouring flames, and hazard their own life to save the lives of others, have a spirit of courage as fine as any that ever spiked a gun. In the quiet, ordinary walks of life there are men and women daily performing a post as courageous as any for which the cross of honour for distinguished valour has been bestowed. And in public life, the man who persists in what he feels to be right, who adheres to his conviction in spite of the clamour of the crowd, and the loss of popularity which his action may involve; the man who has the courage

to say what he believes to be true rather than what he knows will be popular; who never trims his sails merely to catch the favouring breeze of public opinion, but bravely speaks out and lives out the truth that is in him, is a type of the brave soul who is the salt of any community. The coward, in every walk of life, is he who thinks only of his own gain, or comfort, or reputation, and on that mean altar is prepared to sacrifice every principle and every interest, however dear and sacred, that can only be preserved at the cost of toil and hazard and sacrifice. The pagan courage was largely the courage that could face death without the emotion of fear; the courage required in these modern days is the courage to face life, with all the responsibilities it brings, without shrinking from what we know to be the path of right. True courage is not the mere absence of fear; it is not thoughtless, reckless daring, but the disposition which conquers the spirit of fear, and which, alive to the presence of danger and difficulty, goes straight forward in steadfast adherence to duty and truth. The courage of Christian life is pre-eminently courage to adhere consistently to Christian principle and to Christian practice - the courage of deep, unwavering conviction, which is another name for faith.

Eastwood and Kimberley Advertiser, 5 July 1907, p. 2

## THE VIRTUE OF TEMPERANCE

### THE THIRD OF A SERIES OF SERMONS BY REV. R. REID

A large congregation assembled at the Congregational Church on Sunday evening, when the Rev. R. Reid, the minister, continued the series of sermons which he is delivering on the "Seven Cardinal Virtues." That the sermon, which occupied fully half-an-hour, was not too long was evinced (sic.) the impressive attention shown by the assembled people throughout the discourse which evidently aroused the interest of those present. A marked feature of the service was its brevity, lasting as it did but a few minutes over the hour. During the summer, with its bright evenings, this shortening of the services will certainly add to their popularity. There would probably be fewer empty pews in many churches if one hour services were the custom.

Choosing as his text the words "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city," the preacher remarked that "Temperance is a word to which modern usage has assigned a restricted range of application. In popular speech it is almost exclusively employed to signify total abstinence from intoxicating liquors; but while it has now come to have this limited and specialised meaning it was originally a term of much wider and more general significance. Instead of standing simply for the control of one appetite, it was used to express the habitual restraints of all human passion. Temperance, therefore, is not a mere sectional virtue; it has to do with the whole of life. 'Moderation' is one of the words commonly used as interchangeable with temperance but moderation is not always the true guide of life. Many people are moderate - without being anything else.

The only extreme which they ever allow themselves is the extreme of moderation. And to be moderately truthful, or moderately honest is not a mark of high moral distinction. The avoidance of extremes is a common and familiar counsel, but it is not always the counsel of courage or wisdom. The men who have done most for humanity have not been men who were afraid of being called extremists. Martin Luther once said to Erasmus (who, with all his brilliant intellectual gifts, was of a timorous and wavering disposition): 'You desire to walk upon eggs without crushing them, and among glasses without breaking them'; to which the temporising Erasmus replied, 'I will not be unfaithful to the cause of Christ, at least so far as the age will permit me.' The reply illustrates that excess of weak and timid moderation which always drifts in the direction of base compromise, and invariably ends in the surrender of principle. In exalting the virtue of temperance therefore we need to exercise care lest we confuse it with the cold, selfish spirit of calculating prudence which never runs against an accepted opinion, or exposes itself to reproach by departing from traditional and customary grooves; but judiciously steers a middle course for the sake of ease and comfort. The truly temperate life is the well-proportioned and well-disciplined life; the life in which wild and wayward impulse is checked and restrained by reason and conscience. The word which best expresses the root idea of temperance is self-control. And that is a word which carries with it the notion of discipline; so that our subject is really the virtue of discipline. No need is more imperious for this nature of ours, with all varied appetites and desires, all its manifold powers and passions, than the need of strong and wise government. The first and greatest conquest for every man is the subjugation of all the turbulent (sic.) elements in that inner world of his own personality over which he is meant to

exercise authority. Now, the chief aim of all good government is to promote the best interests of the governed. The first and highest function of all wise rule is, not to impose needless and irritating restrictions, but to provide the conditions under which the sum of individual energy and capacity may be exercised and developed to the advantage of the entire commonwealth. And in the kingdom of the spirit the same lofty principle should animate our rule. All the several activities of our nature must be so controlled by the will as to make each minister to the others, and each to promote his balance and effectiveness and integrity of the whole. Self-restraint is always a method of self-cultivation. Self-control is essential to the highest self-expression. Professor Huxley's definition of genius - that subtle quality of brilliance which seems to defy all analysis, and is obedient to no discovered law - was : 'a mind under a perfect control, a servant always at heel, ready at any call to do its duty.' And whether that be an adequate definition of genius or not, it is a true definition of the disciplined life in which the will, informed by the cultivated conscience, commands the cohesion and obedience of every subject in the inner kingdom of man's complex being. Nothing can be more destructive in Nature than power escaped from control. Flood and fire and tempest are terrifying in their riotous force; yet, when subdued to the control of man and restrained within reasonable limits, water, fire and wind are beneficial and not destructive agencies. It is not otherwise with the faculties and passions of his own nature. Escaped from the control of reason and the moral sense, they are wasteful and destructive. Only as they <sup>come</sup> under the firm command of the will and the intelligent guidance of wisdom do they become ministers of beneficence. The due restraint of passion is the true cultivation of power. Self control never means the cramping of power, but the perfecting of faculty - it means power rendered efficient."

Eastwood and Kimberley Advertiser, 12 July 1907, p. 2

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, EASTWOOD

PASTOR'S ANNIVERSARY

Special services in celebration of the ninth anniversary of the Pastor's settlement at this church were held on Sunday, and were very well attended. The Pastor (Rev. R. Reid) occupied the pulpit and in the morning preached a forceful sermon from Ezekiel i., 19. Mr. Albert Brown, of Basford, contributed a solo, and also sang at the evening service "There is a greenhill" and "Nearer my God, to Thee" both of which were effectively interpreted. At the latter service the choir supplied the anthem "Praise the Lord."

In the afternoon there was a musical service, over which the Pastor presided. The programme comprised two selections by the Eastwood and Greasley Orchestral Band, rendered in first-class style; a cornet solo, "The Holy City," by Mr. T. Purdy; and a clarionet and piccolo duet by Messrs. Pinnock and T. Cooper, both with band accompaniments. Miss Marie Brentnall sang "The voice of the Father" and "Farewell," and Mr. Brown was again heard to good effect in the solos "Thou Art passing hence" and "Abide with Me."

THE VIRTUE OF JUSTICE

At the evening service the Pastor continued his course of sermons on the "Seven Cardinal Virtues," taking as his fourth subject "Justice," with which he dealt in a most able and interesting manner. The rev. gentleman took as his text: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good, and what more doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." (Micah vi.,

8.) Characterising the words as the greatest utterance in the Old Testament, the preacher said they define the eternal essentials of all true religion. Short work is made of all the questions that then agitated men's minds as to the kind of religious ceremonial which finds acceptance with God. The Divine requirements are simple and moral: Justice, Mercy, Humility. Without these nothing avails. No external devotion, gorgeous ceremonial, or smoke of sacrifice can atone for the lack of righteousness, compassion, and inward piety of life. And it is significant that in the order of the prophet's speech the first requirement of the religious life is "to do justly." To be just is not the whole of the human duty; but it is an obligation that presses upon us at every point and in every relationship of life. There is no sphere in which we can escape from the necessity laid upon us to render unto every man his due. The virtue of justice, therefore, demands for its exercise an intelligent understanding of what we owe to all with whom we have to do. And that is a knowledge which, in large measure, has to be acquired. The thoughtless man can never be truly just. Men certainly have an instinctive sense of what is fair and right; but the force and clearness of that instinct varies in proportion to the moral depth and refinements of their own personal character. To be habitually just necessitates the cultivation of a sensitive and educated conscience. Nothing is easier than for a man to be so keen in exacting his own rights as to ignore the just claims of his neighbour; for the spirit which is ruled by the thought of what is owing to itself rather than of what is due to others always inclines to unfairness. And while one of the first instincts of our nature is to guard against being the victim of injustice, a higher law teaches us to guard more anxiously against being the agent of injustice, and to be prepared to suffer wrong rather than inflict wrong. Speaking of the justice which

the law is organised to dispense, and having indicated how the progress of legislation had constrained men to recognise obligations which formerly they had repudiated, the preacher proceeded to say that what concerns us most is not the legal justice confined to the custody of lawyers, but the practical and social justice which is demanded in everyday life. We may conform to all that the law prescribes and yet fail to do justly. The perfection of justice was expressed in the golden rule, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them" - a rule far from being universally enthroned even among professing Christians as the governing principle of their conduct. The homage of the lips is worthless without the obedience of the life. A precept is honoured only in the measure in which it is practised. The true test of discipleship is never the mere repetition of a creed, but the manifestation of a character. Creed is nothing more than so much useless parchment until it is embodied in practical conduct and personal disposition. To be a good neighbour, scrupulously just and fair to all, working ill to none, is vastly more important than our views on predestination. To do justly is of far more vital concern than to be sound on every point of orthodox doctrine. The great heresy to fear is not intellectual, but moral; not errors of opinion, but sins of conduct, and all injustice is sin. One of the widest spheres in which we have to exercise the virtue of justice is in the common work and business of the world. Nowhere is character more clearly revealed than by the spirit in which a man deals with the daily affairs of life. Whatever the nature of his position or occupation, he cannot help declaring himself for what he is. Is he a merchant? His method of doing business proclaims the man. Is he a workman? His character is reflected in the quality and conscientiousness of his work. Is he an employer of labour? His treatment of the men he

employs is a searching test of his moral worth. Work and trade and business quickly rub off the mere veneer of life, and the man who fails to do justly is soon known for what he is. No matter what he claims to be, if he is unscrupulous and unjust, careful only to get the best side of a bargain for himself, and unmindful of the rights and dues of others, he stands self-exposed and self-condemned. Should he be one who makes some profession of religion, he is the more despised by those who make a virtue of having none to profess. The men who raise the whole tone of our commercial and industrial life are those who are known to be scrupulously and courageously just. And if we would help the coming of the Kingdom of Righteousness, we must make it our aim to be just to all: just to those who are dependent upon us; just to the interests committed to us; just to those whom we employ; just to the work for which we are responsible. Unless our Christian faith finds its expression in these daily fidelities, it is vain. And as we strive ourselves to be just, we shall seek also to secure justice for others. The desire of every true lover of justice is to remove the disadvantages under which men labour, and all artificial barriers that hinder them from reaching the fullest and most complete life of which they are capable. "Justice," says George Eliot, "is like the Kingdom of God, - it is not without us as a fact, it is within us as a great yearning." And if that yearning which fills the hearts of men is to pass from eager longing to full fruition, it can only be as those to whom the light of life has come. "Do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with their God."

Eastwood and Kimberley Advertiser, 26 July 1907, p. 2

## THE VIRTUE OF FAITH

SERMON BY THE REV. R. REID

The Rev. R. Reid (pastor of the Eastwood Congregational Church), continuing his discourse on the "Seven Cardinal Virtues," took as his fifth subject on Sunday evening "Faith." The rev. gentleman selected as his text "New faith is the assurance of things hoped for; the proving of things not seen," (Hebrews xi., 1) and delivered a powerful discourse to a large and intensely interested congregation.

## THE NATURE OF FAITH

Faith, said the preacher, is one of the most familiar words in our religious vocabulary and one would, therefore, imagine that of all the terms of religious speech it is the least in danger of being misunderstood. Yet it is a word whose meaning has frequently been perverted. The idea attached to it by one person is not always the idea which it expresses for another. The same word is employed: a different meaning is meant. Speak of faith to some minds; and they immediately think of blind, unreasoning acceptance of some unprovable assertion or dogma. There is a notion, widely prevalent both in religious circles and outside of them, that the very essence of faith is to believe what the reason, if left to itself, would reject. There are those who even go so far as to affirm that the more improbable the thing they are asked to believe, the greater the merit of their faith in accepting in (sic.) without question. And it is from such undiscerning acceptance of extravagantly improbable propositions that superstition, wild fanaticism and cruel persecutions have so often

sprung. Men have not stayed to examine the real nature of their religious belief, but have accepted it mechanically at the dictation of an external authority or at the bidding of unreasoning impulse, with the result that true faith has been confused with mere credulity. Superstition is belief based on ignorance. Faith is rational conviction; it is belief founded on intelligent perception of truth. Children sometimes play at a game in which they say: "Shut your eyes and open your mouth, and see what the King will send you." and that resembles what some good people regard as faith. Their idea is that for the exercise of faith the eyes of the understanding must be closed. But a belief held without sense or reason is not what the New Testament writers mean by faith. Instead of commanding us to close our eyes, it is the function of faith to open them to the perception of spiritual realities. Instead of laying upon man the injunction: "Thou shalt not exercise thy reason," faith makes its appeal to our highest powers of thought and discernment. It has relation not so much to things that cannot be known as to things that cannot be seen. And upon those invisible realities the spiritual faculty of reason exercises itself under the quickening inspiration of faith. Faith, therefore, is an energetic principle of action which operates throughout the whole range of life. It is not an exclusively religious virtue. It is constantly being exercised in the practical and everyday affairs of the world. Faith of some kind lies behind all the activities of men. Every man is offering his life on the altar of some belief. Those who have left their mark most deeply on the world's life have been men animated by the profoundest convictions. Nothing of enduring work is ever accomplished without the force of energetic and strong conviction. The measure of man's achievement is largely proportionate to the loftiness and energy of his faith.

## WHAT FAITH DOES

The value of faith is tested by what it does. It is never a thing that ends in itself. I may give my intellectual assent to every article of a religious creed, and yet be without actual, living, working faith. The chapter from which our text is taken gives many striking illustrations of the power of faith as a moral dynamic, an enabling force. It tells of men who by the virtue of faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, out of weakness made strong. Their sublime confidence in the unseen endued them with heroic qualities. The explanation of their courage and power of endurance was their faith in the invisible God, their conviction of the reality of righteousness. They were inspired and upheld by the confident assurance that the truth for which they strove was worth suffering for, worth dying for. That is faith. It is the inspirational force of life. The man who truly exercises Christian faith is he whose eyes are opened to perceive the reality of spiritual facts and laws, and who trustfully commits himself, soul and spirit, to their authority and power. One can understand what the Scriptures mean when they assert that the just man shall live by his faith. He lives by it because it is the ruling principle of his life. He rests upon the reality of the invisible, and is governed by his belief in the unseen. His conduct is not determined by motives drawn from the world of sense, but from the realm of the spirit. He believes in something higher than mere expediency or worldly policy. He believes in God and righteousness, and his life and conduct are governed by that faith. He lives by it. He is justified by it. The first work of Christian faith is to give us moral energy, moral mastery. And we can see how it does that when we come to think of how faith works in other relations. For, in the ordinary sense,

faith is simply the responses of our mind and activity to something in which we believe. And faith, in the deep Christian sense, is the response of our whole life to God, and to all that He has revealed and promised. There may be many things which we do not understand, and there must be many others that we would question and test; but if after all that we have earnestly considered and sifted there remains that which our highest spiritual instinct tells us would be good to be true; then, if we respond to that and have personal confidence in that, we are exercising the faith that uplifts and saves.

Eastwood and Kimberley Advertiser, 9 August 1907, p. 2

### THE VIRTUE OF HOPE

The course of sermons on "The Seven Cardinal Sins," (sic.) which have been engaging the attention of the Rev. R. Reid (pastor of the Eastwood Congregational Church) for the past two months, were continued on Sunday evening last, when the sixth of the series, "Hope," was delivered to a good congregation. In like manner to the other virtues that of "Hope" received very able treatment at the hands of the rev. gentleman, and was a discourse full of encouraging sentiment.

Referring to the subject of Faith, with which he had dealt on the previous Sunday evening the preacher said that it was easy to see what immense moral value inheres in the virtue of faith; what a force it becomes in practical life, what triumphs it achieves in every field of human endeavour, and most and highest of all in the realm of character, as it lays hold of the grace that blesses and saves. But when we come to consider the radiant virtue of hope, I am not so sure that we realise with equal clearness how powerful is the influence that it exerts upon our whole character and life or how much depends upon its possession. We know that faith works; but there is a tendency to regard hope as a vague, idle sentiment; an emotional luxury, a beautiful dream. And so someone, with this conception of hope in his mind, has written: "The fruit of dreamy hoping is waking, blank despair." But that is true only of a hope that has no real ground of assurance; a dreamy and dubious hope. Of course, if it is nothing more than the rose-coloured dream of fancy it will be rudely awakened by contact with the actual facts of life. But the characteristic of the Christian hope is that it looks at the ugliest and most

disagreeable facts of life with open eyes, and, in face of all their weary weight of discouragement and depression, preserves a sunny and buoyant confidence. Hope, by its very nature, relates to the future and unseen; but it is not, therefore, a mere creature of the imagination. Definitions are proverbially dangerous; but were I asked to define the nature of hope I should not hesitate to describe it as reasonable expectation of a future good, conjoined with earnest desire for its realisation. Expectation and desire are inseparable and essential elements of hope. One of these may exist apart from the other; but both are necessary to constitute the virtue of true hopefulness. Hope, for this reason, is always associated with the bright and gratifying things of life. Its very nature consists in the confident anticipation of what is both desirable and desired; and it is nourished and sustained by intelligent faith in the possibility of attaining the object on which desire is fixed. A living and rational faith is the foundation of an assured and confident hope .... There is a hopefulness of spirit which is mainly the result of individual temperament. We are not all constituted alike. Some are born with a sanguine disposition. They have a faculty for looking at the best and brightest side of everything. They are almost habitually cheerful and buoyant. Others have a more sombre and melancholy temper. They move about in an atmosphere of habitual depression - a constant torment to themselves and a ceaseless trial to all their friends. Their mind is occupied with dismal forebodings. Everything turns to them its dark side .... The point of view in each case is determined by personal temperament. The man who is endowed with a hopeful disposition sheds the radiance of it upon all the circle in which he moves. Although his sanguine temperament exposes him to dangers from which men of a less ardent disposition are free, yet his breezy optimism will bear him up where others would sink like lead. Mark Tapley was Dickens' type of

the born optimist. He was the man who was invariably cheerful under the most dismal and depressing circumstances, and never realised that he was doing anything admirable or extraordinary. He felt that there was no virtue in being cheerful in the most racking situations, because his native hopefulness and geniality always discovered, even in the worst of them, some redeeming element some ground for hope. But the hope which is born of temperament, beautiful though it assuredly is, comes short of the hope that originates in spiritual beliefs and convictions. And that is what distinguishes the Christian hope. Its possession is not determined by a native peculiarity of disposition. It comes from a mind persuaded of the reality of what God has set before us as supreme objects of faith and desire and expectation. And when once it dawns upon the soul it will fill the whole sky of life with light. If the Christian hope is actually lifting its pure and cheering flame in a man's heart, it will affect the whole tone and temper, the whole attitude and outlook of his life .... We are saved by hope. And it is our salvation because it upholds and draws us, and girds us anew for the toil and the battle. So long as hope remains, nothing is wholly lost. It is the secret of vision, without which the people perish .... One reason why we so often miss the greatest blessings of life is because our desire for them is weak and our expectation faint. The material and visible things which press upon us with such urgency, the passionate pursuit of pleasure that becomes so absorbing, the lower demands of our nature that are so claimant, all tend to lower our expectation of, and lessen our desire for, the greatest and best of all the gifts of life. Yet there is nothing too great to hope for which Eternal Goodness has promised. And the Gospel of Christ comes to us with abundant and overflowing encouragement to hope - hope for ourselves; hope for the world; hope for the triumph of righteousness and truth and brotherhood.

Eastwood and Kimberley Advertiser, 6 December 1907, p. 2

[Religion and Science: Some Guiding Principles]

Congregational Church - On Sunday evening the minister, the Rev. R. Reid, commenced a series of sermons on "Religion and Science," the title of the first sermon being "Some guiding principles." There was a large congregation, and the rev. gentleman gave a most learned, lucid, and convincing address, in which he dealt with the proper position for religious people to take up with regard to science. Investigation into Nature's secrets had destroyed many old ideas, but it was entirely incorrect to imagine that these investigations had destroyed the foundations of religion. It was foolish to adopt an attitude of uncompromising opposition to science. It was equally foolish to swallow all that was said in the name of science. Many scientific theories had been exploded by wider knowledge. When all the scientific world were agreed on any point, then it was useless for those having little knowledge of science to dissent from the views of experts. But although some great scientists had expressed themselves as having no religious faith, there were other equally great scientists who were profoundly religious. The preacher dealt with the results of astronomical, geological, and biological research, and showed that none of the views now held by the leading exponents of these sciences were at all opposed to real religious truth. Certain theological views might be upset by scientific experiments, but religion and theology were not the same. Christianity remained and would remain a great and living force quite strong enough to withstand the shock of all opposing forces. The investigation of Nature's secrets was a duty, and the final result would strengthen rather than weaken true religion.

Eastwood and Kimberley Advertiser, 13 December 1907, p. 2

[Evolution and Traditional Views of Creation]

Congregational Church - On Sunday evening the Rev. R. Reid continued his course of sermons on "Religion and Science," the subject of his discourse being "Evolution and Traditional Views of Creation." In spite of the inclemency of the weather there was a good congregation, who listened with rapt attention to a most powerful and inspiring address, full of fire and eloquence. In his sermon on the previous Sunday night the rev. gentleman had dealt with the general results of scientific research as applied to religion, and the ground covered was so extensive that a listener in order to follow intelligently was obliged to concentrate his utmost attention on the subject, and even then some elementary ideas of science in general was requisite to a thorough grasp of the matter under consideration. But this second discourse was devoted to but one point in the controversy, and the preacher dealt with it so fully that the simplest person could follow with ease. He showed how needlessly upset many religious people were concerning the scientific theory of all forms of life evolving from similar forms. Some people's faith seemed to depend upon mystery and miracle. If the mystery was solved and the miracle explained their faith gave way. The machine was a wonderful invention until they saw the works, and then their awe vanished. They seemed to consider that the works explained everything. It did not apparently occur to them that a wonderful machine needed a creator. As for the theory of evolution proving the Bible to be incorrect, exactly the same thing was said centuries ago when Gallileo propounded the idea that the sun was the centre of our planetary system, and that the earth moved round it.

Not only the Roman Church, but Protestants like Luther denounced the theory as rank heresy, and seemed to think that if it were generally accepted the whole structure of religion would crumble into ruin. Now, every school child in the land was taught this heresy and religion was not a penny the worse. When geologists began to declare that the earth was millions of years old, and proved that there were great civilisations in existence 4,000 years before Christ, many good people imagined that Christianity was at an end. Nowadays every educated person accepted these facts without any injury to their faith. Was it reasonable, therefore, for Christians to become agitated about evolution not agreeing in every detail with the story of creation as set forth in Genesis? The main idea of Genesis was to give man a knowledge of God, not an exact description of the creation. Genesis was the account of man's introduction to God. Science would never undermine religion, because the province of science begins and ends with the explanation of the methods of Nature's workings. It has nothing to do with the cause and purpose of all things. It makes no such claim. That is the province of religion. God has endowed man with an intelligence by means of which he can discover Nature's laws for himself, and He would be stultifying Himself by saving man the trouble of acquiring this knowledge in disclosing to him the facts by means of miraculous revelation.

Eastwood and Kimberley Advertiser, 27 December 1907, p. 2

## EVOLUTION OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE FALL

### RELIGION AND SCIENCE

On Sunday evening, the 15th, the Rev. R. Reid continued his course of sermons on "Religion and Science," at the Congregational Church, Eastwood, the subject for consideration being "Evolution and the doctrine of the fall." There was a large congregation.

The old theological idea, said the minister, was that Adam was a perfect man, but that by giving way to temptation he and all his descendants had fallen to a state far removed from perfection. The scientific theory of evolution, in which all men who had any real acquaintance with the results of scientific research believed, taught that man, like all other forms of life, was progressing upward, and that the farther they went back in history the lower man sank in the scale. The theologian said, "man has fallen." The scientist said "Man has risen." The unthinking man on hearing that science was proving conclusively that man was higher now than at any other period of his history at once threw over religion as an exploded idea. Like so many people, he confused theology and religion. If he had read his Bible he would have found that Adam was not there described as perfect. In fact, the description of Adam and Eve in Genesis gave them a picture of two simple children, and that was exactly what science taught with regard to primitive man. Adam was not a savage, and neither was primitive man.

Young children did not at first know right from wrong. They had to be taught the difference as their intelligence expanded. Science

taught that at some stage in his history man began to discern that there was such a thing as righteousness and morality, and the Bible by the beautiful story of Adam and Eve declared the self same thing. It was strange how theology had confused the minds of men. Theology had taught them that the parables of the New Testament were merely stories told by Christ to impress on the minds of His hearers great moral truths. It never seemed to occur to the old theologians that there were parables also in the Old Testament, and they therefore taught that all the incidents related in the Old Testament must be accepted as literal facts under pain of a charge of heresy, but that there was no need for them to believe that actually there once was a man who journeyed from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves. As a matter of fact the story of Adam and Eve, and other incidents related in the Old Testament, were allegories, just as were the parables of the New Testament. Mr. Reid went on to show how the finest minds and the most saintly men of the day accepted these things with no injury to their faith. Indeed, to men of intellect and education, it was difficult to see how such ideas could injure one's faith. It had been said that to disprove the so-called "fall of man" was to take away the need of Christ. What an ignorant idea! A man had only to open his eyes and look round about him to see the necessity of Christ's life and death.

Eastwood and Kimberley Advertiser, 3 January 1908, p. 2

## SCIENCE AND RELIGION

### THE EVOLUTION OF REVELATION

On Sunday evening last the Rev. R. Reid preached at the Congregational Church, Eastwood, the final sermon of the course he has been delivering on "Science and Religion", the topic for the evening being the "Evolution of Revelation." There was again an unusually large congregation. It is a noteworthy fact that by this course of addresses on what is admittedly a difficult subject to lay before an audience of all sorts and conditions of men, Mr. Reid has proved conclusively that there are large numbers of people who are anxious to hear sermons of intellectual depth dealing with facts which all men of education accept, but which too many ministers fear to teach for fear of arousing doubt and unrest in the minds of their hearers, evidently not realising that in large numbers of cases the doubt exists already, and the only reasonable way of allaying this mental unrest is to face the situation by placing the results of scientific research in their true aspect before their congregations.

On Sunday evening the rev. gentleman showed how a thorough examination of the Scriptures conclusively showed a gradual growth of understanding of God's attributes. It was a common mistake to regard the Bible as literally the words of God. The fact was that it was the record of the revelation of God to mankind. The immense importance of the Bible lay in the fact that it was the history of how God had revealed Himself to man. Step by step from Genesis onward they were able to trace the gradual expansion of the knowledge of God. At first

the light was dim, but it grew brighter and brighter until in the person of Jesus Christ God disclosed Himself in His full glory to humanity. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." What reasonable man could read certain of the Psalms and then declare that they were the words of God? Would Christ have uttered the curses called down upon his enemies by the Psalmists? Some foolish people read those Psalms and then declared that they proved the Bible was of little value. This showed gross ignorance. These imprecatory Psalms throbbed with the passion for righteousness. They were the record of the thoughts of a righteous man who had seen sights such as in modern times have been witnessed in Armenia.

With the knowledge of God at that time in his possession, and with the sight of such like work of wicked men before his eyes, is there any wonder that a good man would thus call down God's wrath on the workers of such iniquity? The record of God's self-revelation in the Old Testament was of immense value, but Christians must go to the New Testament to find the full and complete revelation of the Godhead. In Christ God revealed Himself in all His perfection, but the evolution of revelation did not end in the New Testament. Examine the history of the Church from primitive to modern times, and they found that the appreciation of Christ's teaching was a plant of gradual growth. Little by little men saw more and more what Christ's teaching really meant. Today they understood Christ better than ever before, and as time went on that knowledge would grow from more to more until it covered the earth with a glory as of the sun in his splendour.

Eastwood and Kimberley Advertiser, 31 March 1911, p. 2

## EASTWOOD'S FAREWELL TO THE REV. R. REID

### A MEMORABLE GATHERING.

Sunday marked the closing of the Rev. R. Reid's long and faithful ministry at the Congregational Church, Eastwood, and the services were largely attended.

At the evening service the Rev. R. Reid prefaced his discourse by saying it was impossible for him to regard that as an ordinary service, but he did not propose to preach the orthodox farewell sermon. There were circumstances which would make it hard for him to do so. During his ministry he had spoken from the pulpit with perfect frankness, and had nothing to say in the shape of blame, censure, or criticism of any kind. If he were to speak on the other side he would have to speak of things which so filled him with thankfulness that he would experience great difficulty in going on, and the service would not be, as he hoped it would be, a message of grace. He appreciated the presence that evening of so many friends from other churches. It was his desire in addressing his people for the last time as their minister to leave a suitable and fruitful message for them. The text was taken from the 2nd book of Chronicles, chapter 25, and verse 9, the sermon being based on the words, "The Lord is able to give thee much more than this."

### FAREWELL GATHERING

#### A FAITHFUL MINISTRY FITTINGLY RECOGNISED

Preceded by a social gathering in the Schoolroom on Tuesday, which was largely attended, and at which Mrs. Reid graciously acknowledged the gift of a lovely bouquet from little Miss Muriel Saxton, there was

a public farewell meeting in the Church. The gathering was a remarkable one in many senses, and will forever remain memorable in the history of the Church. Perhaps the most remarkable of all things was the universality of the gathering, and the pervading spirit of loyalty and esteem in which Mr. and Mrs. Reid were held by all sections of the community, and not merely by their own people. The presence in an official capacity of the local ministers of the Anglican and Nonconformist Churches testified to the happy association which had existed between the ministerial brethren, and no more striking testimony of public appreciation for the unostentatious, unreserved, and universal labours of Mr. Reid for the common good of the populace, and no greater tribute of affection and regard for the man could be vouchsafed than the vast and representative gathering which assembled to honour him for all he had done and to wish him God speed in his future sphere of labour.

Mr. Henry Saxton, J.P., presided, and supporting him were other Deacons and chief office bearers of the church, Revs. Clifton Somervell, M.A. (Nottingham), F.W. Cobb, M.A. (Rector of Eastwood), J.K. Elliott (Eastwood Primitive), C.P. Hunt, B.A. (Eastwood Wesleyan), C. Wesley Butler (former pastor of the Church), F. Hart, B.A. (Rector of Kimberley), Geo. Incson (Moorgreen Congregational), Gerard Nicholson (Ilkeston Congregational), S.T. Butler (Long Eaton Congregational), J.W. Race ((Riddings Congregational), Messrs. J.T. Goodwin (Nottingham), Wm. Smith, J.P. (Langley Mill), etc. - Letters of apology for absence were read from Professor H.F. Sanders (Nottingham), Rev. G.A. Bennett (Eastwood), and Mr. A.W. Brentnall (Cocker Home).

Prayer having been offered by the Rev. S.T. Butler,

The Chairman expressed the hope that the key note of joy sounded by the Rev. S.T. Butler in his prayer would predominate that gathering.

They could not say they did not regret the departure of Mr. Reid, for they all regretted it very much, but those matters were decided by a greater force, and he believed Mr. Reid was leaving to answer a call from the Great Head of the Church. Mr. Reid had given them thirteen years of faithful ministry and friendship: he had given himself and all his energies and powers to the place; he had been ready at all times and in all seasons to help the youngest in equal measure with the most prominent member of the Church; he had preached the doctrine of Christ boldly and fearlessly, and his labours had been greatly appreciated and would leave a lasting impression after he had taken his departure. He had made many friends at Eastwood, and in going forth in faith, hope, and love to accept a unanimous call from the Pendleton Church, where he would find full scope for his great abilities, he would make many more friends. At Eastwood they had found him a dear friend, a true pastor, and a faithful servant of our Lord and Master. His wish for Mr. Reid was that in his new Church he would be as happy and successful as he had been in his first charge at Eastwood, and that he would be abundantly blessed in his new sphere of labour.

The Rev. Clifton Somervell addressed the gathering, and afterwards the Rector of Eastwood said he felt it to be no ordinary privilege to stand and hear one's humble testimony to the good work of him whom they were honouring that night. In the short space of three and a half years, he had got to know Mr. Reid quite well enough to thank God for his friendship, and to esteem him highly for his work's sake. They had worked together each year at the annual convention, on the platform of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and in open-air mission work, and he thanked God for those bridges over the valley of denominational differences. The Rector went on to allude to a closer fellowship in which the ministers of the town had gathered month by month for mutual

intercourse, and as a token of good-will, accompanied by the very earnest prayers of the clergy and ministers for his future welfare, he asked Mr. Reid to accept from them a copy of "The Life of Jesus of Nazareth," in book form, and illustrated by water-colour drawings.

The Rev. F. Hart and Mr. J.T. Goodwin having spoken, the Chairman called upon Mr. Gall to make the presentation in the absence of Mr. A.W. Brentnall, who, as an honorary life deacon of the Church, had been appointed to perform the task.

Mr. Jus. Gall said, whilst appreciating the honour conferred upon him by his brother deacons in being asked to make the presentation, he could not help feeling that the gift would have come more fittingly from Mr. Brentnall, but at the same time it was a keen pleasure to him to be called upon to fulfil the duty. It gave him unique pleasure to ask Mr. Reid to accept a purse of 50 guineas, accompanied by an address, which he read as follows:

To the Reverend Robert Reid

On behalf of the members and adherents of the Eastwood Congregational Church we desire to bear testimony to the high esteem and affection in which you have been held amongst us during the whole period of your devoted and fruitful ministry, extending now to nearly thirteen years. The efficiency of your ministrations in the pulpit, the faithfulness with which your pastoral duties have been discharged, the unflinching zeal with which you have supported the several Institutions connected with the Church, and the wider interests beyond its boundary, have commanded the thankful recognition of all your fellow-workers.

We are conscious that your removal will not only be a loss to our church, but to the community at large. Nevertheless, we know that in the great city to which you are going your gifts will have wider scope

for their exercise than Eastwood affords, and will, therefore, be of more value to the cause and kingdom of Christ.

While we deeply regret the necessity of your departure we earnestly commend you to the grace of Him in whose service has been your delight, and pray for your happiness and prosperity in the larger field of ministry to which He has called you.

We desire to associate Mrs. Reid equally with yourself in our expressions of affectionate appreciation. We regard her as an ideal minister's wife. Her gentleness, sympathy, and sweetness of disposition have endeared her to us all.

We are, with affectionate Christian regards,

Deacons.

A.W. Brentnall,

J. Chambers.

J. Gall,

J. Calder,

W. Allcock,

E. Allcock,

C.A. Hall,

J. Clements,

A. Brown,

N.J.R. Butler.

H. Saxton (Treasurer)

C. Askew (Secretary)

Following a speech by Mr. Chas. Askew, Mr. F.D. Chambers handed to Mr. Reid, as a gift to his son, a cheque for £5 subscribed by half a dozen friends who were desirous that he, who had grown up amongst them, should purchase something to mark that occasion and as a token of regard from his Eastwood friends.

The Rev. Chas Wesley Butler went back into ancient history and gave a very pleasing address, and other speeches followed from Mr. Wm. Smith, Rev. O. Nicholson, Rev. G. Incson, Mr. N.J.R. Butler (junior deacon), Rev. J.K. Elliott, and the Rev. J.W. Race.

The Rev. R. Reid said they quite understood what a difficult matter, after the many kind references to himself and his family that evening, and, with his heart already full, to speak in the manner he should like. He had one great fear lest he should fail to acknowledge in a proper sense his appreciation of the great kindness shown to him. He realised that much had been spoken of a generous and indulgent nature, but there had been an accent of sincerity in the speeches, and it was a gratifying thing to think that he had won such esteem from his ministerial brethren. He sought to thank everybody for the gifts and great kindness shown to him and his family that night, and through all the years of his ministry. First he must acknowledge the thoughtfulness and the delightful surprise which the beautiful gift from his brother ministers had given him, and although not needed to remind him of the happy association of his brothers he should cherish the gift beyond measure. Then he must thank those few friends whose delicacy of feeling and forethought had included his son in the proceedings, and as to the extremely handsome gift from the Church and people he was proud of it beyond expression, but felt again it was a generous and indulgent recognition of any service he had rendered during this ministry at Eastwood. He was extremely grateful for the gifts, and the good feeling behind them, and it was a source of great gratification to him to realise that others outside the Church he was leaving had contributed some share towards the tokens of affection. He was humbled and thankful to God that he should be counted worthy of such esteem and affection. He and his wife would always look back to Eastwood and the friendships sealed there with feelings of gratitude, and hope that they would for ever remain unbroken. "And now I am going to leave you," continued Mr. Reid, "and this is the time one wishes to make open and frank confession for one's faults." As he laid aside the

office and looked backward on his own failings and the kind indulgence of his people, he could only say how he had tried to be fair and considerate to everyone, and if he had failed, as he must have done on many occasions, he hoped they would humbly forgive his shortcomings and believe that his motives had been sincere. In everything he had said and done, he had had before him the interests of the Church, and neither in word or deed had he been animated by personal feelings. He had nothing but feelings of affection for the members of his Church and congregation. He called them to witness that he had spoken without fear or favour, and that he should count it unworthy if ever he had courted the favour of any individual by remaining silent when he ought to have spoken. He had tried to be like his Master, but none knew better than he how he had failed. He had tried to serve his people faithfully, and had been with them through seasons of sorrow and many experiences, and in that service a great part of his life was bound to them, but in leaving something behind he thanked God that he was taking away something exceedingly precious to him. A minister's first charge was always dear to him, and in the closing stages of his first pastorate he desired to acknowledge with thankfulness the hearty and kindly co-operation of his deacons and the loyalty and devotion of his people, and for their many evidences that they had not regretted their choice of a minister after many months of waiting. Mr. Reid having delivered a message to the young people of the Church, closed by praying that the Church would be richly blessed by its future minister, and that God would be with the people of the Church, and with the people of Eastwood in the days to come.

During the singing of the closing hymn, "God be with you till we meet again," many in the congregation gave way to feelings of emotion.

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