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**“Jesus and Jane Austen: Tracing a Christian Model, or more than meets the eye, in
Mansfield Park, Persuasion, Emma, and Pride and Prejudice”**

by

Ruth Miriam Mooney, BN, BA

A thesis submitted to the faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of English

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
7 December 2001

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“Jesus and Jane Austen: Tracing a Christian Model, or more than meets the eye, in
Mansfield Park, Persuasion, Emma , and Pride and Prejudice”

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Thesis Supervisor

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Date

Abstract

As recorded in her biographies, Jane Austen was a devout Christian. Her Christian spirit is revealed in her novels: *Mansfield Park*, *Persuasion*, *Emma*, and *Pride and Prejudice*. The heroines illuminate a spirituality based on Christian principles which is arrived at through reasonable thinking and self-knowledge. The characters may be said to imitate Christ. This aspect of Austen's classics contributes to their current popularity in both books and film.

To analyse spirituality in the heroines, eighteenth-century sermons of the Established Church and conduct books of Austen's time are examined. In *Mansfield Park* Fanny Price is seen to have all the traits of the scriptural fruits of the spirit, the spirit of Christ as was sermonized at the time. Anne Elliot in *Persuasion* presents a similar Christ-like image. These heroines demonstrate incredible patience, humility, charity, and loving relationships. They are allegorical figures of the practising Christian. Emma in *Emma* and Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice*, with the help of Knightley and Darcy respectively, follow the Christian journey from flawed individuals to repentance, forgiveness and redemption, to arrive at a place of love, and harmony.

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The Seven Acts of Charity by Frans Francken The Younger c. 1617 (Corsiglia 56).

14
FRANS FRANCKEN THE YOUNGER
 1581 Antwerp – 1642 Antwerp
The Seven Acts of Charity, c. 1617
 Oil on canvas, transferred from
 panel in 1818. 68.5 x 110.5 cm
 Signed bottom left: *D Ffranck in*
et F
 Provenance: Acquired before
 1859
 Inv. no. GE 395
 Selected literature: Somoff
 1901, no. 503; Cat. 1958, p. 111;
 Cat. 1981, p. 78; Babina 1999b,
 p. 11

In the foreground bread is being distributed; to the left on a covered terrace a rich man shares his clothes with the poor; to the right the other terrace shows a scene of visiting the sick. The architectural background is composed of fantastical pseudo-Renaissance buildings (in the foreground and middle ground) and Gothic structures (the cathedral in the far background). Thus the artist creates the effect of stage wings or sets, framing individual scenes that illustrate each of the different acts of Charity. It is interesting that the artist found unusual architectural niches in

which to set nearly all the seven acts: the prisoner being visited to right in the middle ground, with the figure of the prisoner himself visible in the window of a tower; the hospitable householder taking pilgrims into his house in the background, beneath the overhanging architecture to left. Two scenes are exceptions: giving drink to the thirsty (right, middle ground) and burying the dead (in the background), which are placed in the more open space before the cathedral, although they are still enclosed by the architectural forms to right and left.

The closest analogy for this work is a signed and dated painting of 1617, bearing the same title, by Frans Francken the Younger (Kunstmuseum, Basle, inv. no. 1142), and the Hermitage painting should thus probably be put at the same date. N.B.

Introduction

Observing the recent, continued, and renewed interest in Jane Austen's novels both in the reading public and in film (*Mansfield Park*, the most recent novel to be made into a film, opened in theatres in November 1999), one has a strong curiosity to know what attracts people to her works. In this modern period, described as the wasteland, where secularism and life's meaninglessness often overpower any hope in current fiction, there is perhaps an unconscious search for meaning. Could this search be a spiritual one? It may be that reading Jane Austen in our own day is a comfort in troubled waters, since both time periods are ones of insecurity, great change, and complexity.

The purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate that there is more than meets the eye in Jane Austen's works, especially *Mansfield Park* (MP), *Persuasion* (P), *Emma* (E), and *Pride and Prejudice* (P&P). (Hereafter the novels will be referred to in the abbreviated form.) They have a spiritual dimension, where the heroines display lives based on a Christian model, on principles and characteristics that can be attributed to Christ, and a spirituality not mutually exclusive with a rational morality. While there occurred a loosening of conventional Christian belief in the nineteenth century, and growth of a kind of cultural pessimism, we see a religious dimension in Austen's novels, based largely on the charity and humility of the characters. Christianity is implied as the religious dimension, but not to the extent that the heroines, for the perceptive eye, are portrayed in the image of Christ.

Spirituality is defined in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 9th edition, as “1) of or concerning the spirit as opposed to matter; 2) concerned with sacred or religious things; holy; divine; inspired; 3) refined, sensitive, not concerned with the material; 4) of a relationship concerned with the soul or spirit etc., not with external reality.” This thesis will not attempt to work with the miraculous, the virgin birth, and resurrection of Jesus, but with the earthly and the actual Jesus, whose life Christians follow and whose faith takes them beyond this point. In other words we will be dealing with the heroine’s life, acted out from the soul’s beliefs or principles.

Spirituality is glimpsed in the lives of the heroes/heroines when we analyse their moral, practical life—their actions and their behaviour compared to the teachings of the Established Church, the Church of England. Eighteenth-century sermons and conduct books of the time are used for context. The major theme of the sermons is that action or behaviour is dependent on one’s beliefs or thinking in one’s heart. They are based on basic Christian doctrine. This is an age when religious orthodoxy is assumed, as Chapman has pointed out (Kantrov 10). R. Brimley Johnson says essentially the same thing: “We have so entirely lost touch with the atmosphere of universal orthodoxy, or the assumption that all men are Christians, as to forget that it was once possible to believe and be virtuous without talking about it” (226). We are told, in passing, that in the novels a large number of the characters attend church, so one must assume it was as much a part of their lives as eating and sleeping but none of these activities receive much attention in the works. The sermons are practical in nature and stress those aspects of religious belief and ritual that can be justified by reason. Faith and reason are equally promoted in the sermons, as is the belief that spirit and reason work together to give full life. The fruits of

the spirit are considered the same as moral virtues but there must be knowledge, piety, prayer, and the practice of religious duties. Self-love and benevolence are compatible and the love of God and our neighbour is the whole of piety and virtue. Youth are to cultivate gentleness, piety to God, modesty, humility, sincerity, truth, and benevolent and humane affections. The conduct books, addressed mainly to young ladies, taught them to be prudent, modest, sober, meek, dutiful wives and daughters, to avoid all vanity, and to be employed with good works.

The eighteenth-century clergy and laity were seen as lax and materialistic in the use of non-resident clergy and traffic in livings which gradually became more the exception than the rule. Together with the earlier Wesleyan movement's influence, the Established Church introduced reforms. Evangelicalism also plays a role affecting Christian thinking. The Evangelical movement gained hold only towards the end of Austen's lifetime (Kantrov 11). Heart, emotion, and enthusiasm or what one feels and thinks determine behaviour. It is more than morality touched by emotion, as Matthew Arnold proposed (226), but through self-examination, self-command, prayer, and repentance, the individual achieves both a virtuous life and religious salvation. Austen's work demonstrates a seriousness about moral and religious issues, the significance of religion of the heart, and the state of the contemporary clergy.

A composite of the sermons and conduct books brings together the attributes which are a reality in the heroes' lives. Also an understanding of Jane Austen, the author, is undertaken by exploring the most recent biographies about her life. She was, without doubt, a devout Christian woman, and was familiar with the sermons and conduct books of her day. Her work shows her to be a Christian writer. She quietly illustrates her

Christian position in her novels. References to the church, the clergy, and Christian terminology further endorse her beliefs. She is the daughter, granddaughter, and sister of clergymen.

In the four Austen novels examined, we find Fanny Price in *MP* and Anne Elliot in *P* plainly representative of allegorical Christian figures. We see glimpses of Christ's image in Fanny and Anne, while Anne is her author's Christian self. Fanny has all the fruits of the spirit radiating from her. Anne takes on the martyr image while helping all who are near and denying her own needs. Emma in *E*, and Elizabeth in *P & P*, can be seen to follow the Christian journey of atonement and redemption, repentance and reform. Emma is a young lady in need of much improvement and the Christian hero, Mr. Knightley, helps her to achieve enlightenment or self-knowledge, atonement, and redemption. Elizabeth is changed, from the beginning of the novel, to a quite different individual by its ending. She also gains self-knowledge and the truth about others so as to regret and repent her earlier thoughts and actions. She is reformed and moves into a fuller life, one that seems Christ-like, where love creates peace and harmony.

Austen takes us beyond the limits of this world to one where spirit makes all life complete. The heroes are timeless, larger-than-life characters and seem to set an example of how to manage certain situations in life as a Christian. Their experiences are built on a Christian legacy, exemplified in the eighteenth-century but one that has been built up through the ages. Their spirituality can be seen and felt as the reader obtains a greater and more intense knowledge of the characters.

I Eighteenth Century Sermons Influencing Jane Austen's Characters

“Various volumes of sermons were popular reading in eighteenth-century England. Collections of sermons by such prominent clergymen as John Tillotson, Samuel Clarke, Joseph Butler, Thomas Sherlock, and Thomas Secker went through printing after printing. There was also a market for anthologies of sermons by these and other celebrated, and less celebrated, divines. The anthologies, most of which were published during Jane Austen's lifetime, or shortly before or after, bore such titles as *The Practical Preacher*, *The Family Chaplain*, *The English Preacher*, *Domestic Divinity*, *Family Lectures*, and *The Domestic Preacher*. Samuel Johnson remarked in 1781 that ‘Sermons make a considerable branch of English literature; so that a library must be very imperfect if it has not a numerous collection of sermons. Johnson himself was the author of as many as forty sermons (Kantrov 16). Jane Austen was six years old at that time.

The sermons were practical in nature, noting the importance of good works, and the religious principle needed for personal virtue and happiness. They were intended to direct society in the improvement of moral behaviour. They sprang from a Puritan heritage. Q. D. Leavis recognized the importance of the Puritan conscience in English literary history – a recognition that was to prove pivotal to her thinking on the novel and determine her view of the English novel as having “from its start an essentially and profoundly moral (I do not mean moralistic) framework and intention” (Leavis 3). Many sermons defended the Established Church, in response to the rise of Evangelicalism. Kantrov tells us Evangelicalism “was in some sense a reaction against the lack of emotion and enthusiasm in the Anglican pulpit” (Kantrov 17).

George Landow, Professor of English and Art History at Brown University, on The Victorian Web/Religion gives a succinct summary of Evangelical beliefs:

The Evangelical party of the Church of England (the Established Church) flourished from 1789 to 1850, and during that time increasingly dominated many aspects of English life. These heirs of seventeenth-century Puritans believed: that human beings are corrupt and need Christ to save them, and thus the emphasis upon puritanical morality and rigidity; that (in sharp contrast to the High Church Tractarians) the church hierarchy and church ritual are not as crucial to individual salvation as a personal conversion based on an emotional, imaginative comprehension of both one's own innate depravity and Christ's redeeming sacrifice, and thus the emphasis upon an essentially Romantic conception of religion that stressed imagination, intensity, and emotion, and also upon the Bible; ... that converted believers must demonstrate their spirituality by working for others, and thus Evangelical zeal in missionary work, Bible societies, anti-slavery movements, and many social causes; that the converted will be persecuted and that such persecution indicates the holiness of the believer, ... and thus Evangelicals' willingness to speak on behalf of unpopular causes and, ... to take any political, social, or religious opposition as a martyrdom; and that God arranged history and the Bible, of which every word was held to be literally true.

“The Evangelical movement spread very rapidly during the closing years of the eighteenth-century...in spite of the many drawbacks to the teaching they gave and the ideal life they presented” (Overton and Relton 248). “No scholarly work was produced by them at all. Sermons were in abundance, but they are unknown or unread today” (249).

In direct opposition to Evangelicalism, “Tillotson and his successors Clarke and Butler stressed those aspects of religious belief and ritual which could be justified by reason. This remained a trend in the Anglican pulpit throughout the eighteenth century” (Kantrov 17). The Deists argued for a rational basis of Christianity; Christian ethics could be discovered by reason alone.

John Tillotson (1630-1694) in a sermon preached at St. Paul’s in 1663-4, but published later, claimed that, “a perfect knowledge of nature is no where to be found but in the Author of it” (Simon 363). Tillotson was Archbishop of Canterbury, a Whig and a Latitudinarian (Jasper 8). He preached that “The great Principles of Religion are knowledge, faith, remembrance[of God], love and fear; by all which the Scripture useth to express the whole duty of man” (Simon 364). Worship and prayer with stress on being truly wise are also prescribed. Self-knowledge is utterly important. “He attempted a reconciliation of natural and revealed religion...but not contrary to, reason. He looked for “the life and essence of religion” in its moral rather than its doctrinal substance” (Tillotson, Fussell, Waingrow 204). These ideas are borne out in his Sermon “Of the great Duties of Natural Religion, with the Ways and Means of Knowing them,” based on Micah 6:6-8. “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”

This scripture encompasses justice—laws and obedience to them, a debt every man owes to society; mercy—pity and compassion, a favour and kindness, call it humanity; and piety—to walk humbly with God (206-207). He advises to do unto others as one would have them do unto oneself, and to make account of whatsoever is virtuous, expounding on the fact that God shows us what is good, in five different ways. What is good is shown to us by the fact of natural instinct and natural reason. Certain virtues are held in esteem by man, “So constant hath mankind always been in the commendation of Virtue, and in the censure of vice” (209). The other ways in which God shows man what is good are as follows: “2) Men do generally glory and stand upon their Innocency, when they do virtuously; but are ashamed ... when they do the contrary....3) Vice is generally forbidden and punished by humane laws. 4) by External revelation, 5) by the motions of his Spirit upon the minds of men” (207-211). Tillotson seems to believe that the laws are riveted in our souls and written upon our hearts by God. He also sees England as a corrupt nation that must recover its ancient virtue and “integrity of manners,” “notwithstanding all our noise and zeal about religion” (213). This is a lengthy sermon full of scriptural references and among those he uses as a great commendation of the Christian virtues—the fruits of the spirit, love, joy, and peace (211).

Tillotson’s sermon on WhitSunday, 1690 was entitled “The Fruits of the Spirit, The Same with Moral Virtues.” He speaks of the true Christians being known by “the temper and disposition of our minds, manifestly appearing in our lives and actions, by the practice of those real virtues which are the proper and genuine fruits of the Holy Spirit of God” (575). “Moral virtues are in their nature the very same with the graces and fruits of the spirit” (577). He continues with, “ these virtues are not all that... is necessary to

make a man a complete Christian and good man...for there must be knowledge,...faith,...piety and devotion towards God, and the constant practice of religious duties in public and in private such as prayer, hearing and reading the word of God, and frequent and reverent receiving of the Holy sacrament” (578). He further elaborates on perfecting the Christian by growth of the fruits of the spirit in us, -- goodness, righteousness, and truth, the very spirit of Christ. Tillotson adds that “Nothing is more easy to be known than it is, which of these qualities does possess and rule our hearts, and govern and bear sway in our lives” (581). Although Tillotson gave many names to the fruits of the spirit—charity, love, obedience to superiors and governors, piety at home and to requite parents, unity, peaceableness, courtesy, compassion and good-will towards all men, humility, and to abstain from all wrath and revenge, we find in Galatians 5:22 the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Jane Austen was most likely familiar with this scripture and this kind of sermon.

Samuel Clarke’s sermons XLIV and XLV were preached on humility, citing Luke 14: 11. “whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Clarke 271). “With regard to superiors in general, true humility consists, in paying them cheerfully and readily all due honour and respect” (272). In Sermon CXI, “Of the Nature of Moral and Positive Duties” on the text of Matthew 22: 40 which says “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets,” Clarke claims all moral duties of life may be reduced to these two heads: love of God and of our neighbors (707). He also states that “Everyman’s religion is, not what he professes, or what show he makes in external observances, but what influence it really has upon the man himself,

in the habit of his mind, and in the course of his actions, in his family, in his business, in his dealings with all mankind, in his common conversation, and even in his very diversions themselves, as well as in his more solemn acts of prayer and devotion.”

Clarke calls it “inward habitual virtuous disposition of mind” and maintains “the fruits of... his actions determine the man’s true character” (708).

“Joseph Butler, one of the most distinguished eighteenth century English moral philosophers, ranks among the greatest exponents of natural theology and ethics in England since the Reformation. He stressed the importance of conscience as an intuitive, natural faculty and argued the compatibility of self-love and benevolence” (Kantrov, Appendix A 272). Bishop Butler in a sermon titled “Upon the love of God,” a most reasonable sermon, speaks of so very reasonable a religion, as to have nothing to do with the heart and affections. He expounds that “the love of God and our neighbour ... contain[s] the whole of piety and virtue. His infinite greatness, his goodness, his wisdom, are different objects to our mind” (Family Lectures Sermon LXXX 484).

Thomas Secker (1693-1768), in his sermon “Discreet Warmth,” says “It is to man’s reason, then, that Christianity makes its primary appeal. Faith is not, as the writer of the book of Hebrews believed, ‘the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,’ but the logical upshot of a thorough examination of the evidence of Christianity” (Downey 93). For Secker, “The secret of happiness lies in a quiet acceptance of life as one finds it” (95). “In his theology, as in his life, moderation was all” (102). Secker’s father was a pious dissenter (Overton and Relton 118). “He had a morbid dread of enthusiasm, and with the best of intentions, unconsciously helped to keep the church at that dead level which so fatally crippled its energies in the eighteenth century. His

watchwords were reasonableness and moderation ...too often calculated to repress zeal” (120). He was narrow of mind in that “he did not perceive that the sort of mediocrity which was his ideal was not sufficiently stimulating to remedy the evils which he deplored. He was equally against Popery, Methodism, Latitudinarianism.” (121).

Hugh Blair’s sermons ‘On Patience’, ‘On the Government of the Heart’, and ‘On Sobriety or The Duties of the Young’ depict much of Jane Austen’s Christian virtue in her novels’ characters. He calls patience a virtue of universal use, and advises the practice of it. We need to cultivate it and this can only be accomplished “by moderation and self-command” (I 239). He names “that great model of it, displayed in the whole life of the saviour Jesus Christ” (240). Blair suggests one “keep the heart, with all diligence, attend not only to our actions, but to our thoughts and desires. The state of the heart is what determines our moral character and what forms our chief happiness or misery” (II 30). He speaks of self-denial, governing the passions, and says that “nothing is what it appears to be when you are under the power of passion” (64). “Passion is moderated by frequent meditation on the vanity of the world, shortness of life, death, judgment, and eternity”(66). In sermon XI, Volume I, he preaches that sobriety of mind needs to be inculcated in youth. This can be achieved, with difficulty, by “moderation, vigilance and self-government” (306). He points out the virtues necessary to be cultivated in youth. These consist of piety to God, gentleness and affability, the opposite of a cold heart, modesty and docility, humility, sincerity, truth, benevolent and humane affections, courtesy, temperance in pleasure, and diligence, industry, and proper improvement of time. “Affectation is certain deformity. By forming themselves on fantastic models, ... the young begin with being ridiculous; and end in being vicious and

immoral” (329). His conclusion is that after doing all this one’s happiness is not independent of God, for “every good, and every perfect gift, is from above” (331). Sermon XIII, “On the Power of Conscience” is primarily about our natural sense of knowing right and wrong, and experiencing guilt.

The Evangelicals stressed the inwardness of Christianity and its emotional component, but Hannah More (1745-1833) in *Practical Piety* argues that the “religion of the heart” is not hostile to active virtue, morality, and public utility. Heart—emotion and enthusiasm and conduct—seem equally important to Jane Austen. “Hannah More formed a link not only between ‘the unworldly’ and ‘the worldly’ but also between the Evangelicals and some earnest people whose religion was not altogether of the Evangelical pattern. More may be said to have gradually become Evangelical. The first step in her change ... was when she gave up play-acting” (Overton and Relton 244). “Her influence created less card-playing, and much less gambling; Sunday was more strictly observed, and the tone of general society became markedly serious” (245). More speaks of “Humility [as] the only true Greatness,” in *Christian Morals* (More 273). She also refers to scripture: “Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.” She tells us that we are to imitate Christ (276): “humility; by leading us to form a just estimate of ourselves, teaches us to discern the narrowness of our capacities” (278). “Recognizing how slowly religion produces effects on us, ... leads the humble Christian to be severe in judging himself and disposes him to be candid in judging others” (279). In describing the Christian, More writes:

‘The wisdom from above,’ which makes eternity the grand feature in the aspect of our existence, and this ambition, ... is the exclusive property of

the humble Christian. His desires are illimitable—he disdains the scanty bounds of time—he leaps the narrow confines of space. He it is who monopolizes ambition. His aims soar a bolder flight—his aspirations are sustained on a stronger pinion—his views extend to an immeasurable distance—his hopes rest in an interminable duration. (301)

Briefly put, More says complete humility can only be obtained through the spirit of Christ, which brings us to salvation and leaves us free of pride. She also writes in 1799, in Chapter VI of “Filial Obedience not the Character of the Age,” that “daughters have adopted something of the spirit of independence” (Johnson 404). Jane Austen’s heroines are given or must develop this spirit.

“In the sermons religion was perceived and promoted as beneficial to society and advantageous to the individual, both in this life and the hereafter, and Christians were told how to live a virtuous life in order to reap the rewards promised by religion” (Kantrov 18). The sermons further argue that “the individual’s means of achieving the ends of both a virtuous life and religious salvation, such as self-examination, self-command, prayer, and repentance. Christ and his disciples, for instance, are frequently held up as models of virtuous behavior that can and should be imitated; the stress is on Christ as pattern, ethical example, rather than atonement and redemption” (Kantrov 18-19).

Sermons, discovered in the Anthologies, “expounding the benefits of a virtuous and pious life, include ‘That Esteem that attends the constant Practice of Virtue’ based on Mark 6:20 and ‘The Duty and Advantages of Sincerity,’ by Thomas Newlin,” and similar others. Some sermons enforced “the necessity of religious faith to true morality.

Threatened by the English Deists, ‘who saw man as a self- sufficient creature, able to discern moral truth and act accordingly,’ a number of distinguished preachers came to the defense of the necessity of revelation. John Tottie contributes two sermons on the subject: ‘Moral Perceptions of Good and Evil, not a sufficient Rule for Human Actions without Religion’ and ‘Faith the Basis of all Christian Virtues’ ” (Kantrov 20). Dr. Tottie, in a sermon entitled “The Excellency of the Christian Morality,” preached before the University of Oxford at Christ Church, November 15, 1761, recommends that one ‘express every essential virtue and every ornamental grace.’ “Virtue consists in the conformity of our actions to truth. In Jesus, truth is the perfect will of God.... Resignation, contentment, humility, forgiveness, forbearance, meekness, gentleness, and goodness; every ornament of a quiet and inoffensive, unoffended spirit, is taken into the Christian morals...Gracefulness is not acquired from the rules of decorum, ...but it springs from the very spirit of his religion and grows upon the mind, and gentle virtues ... [are] its natural fruit. There is one thing more to be added, that must show the perfection and sublimity of the Christian scheme of morality... that it has a respect to man, not merely as an inhabitant of this world, but as a citizen of heaven.” He goes on to conclude that “the practice of every moral duty, and every Christian grace, that can purify his nature, and refine his manners; so as to make him a fit companion for angels” (Family Lectures 434-8). Fanny is referred to as an angel; Henry sees touches of the angel in Fanny.

Kantrov also tells us of an excerpt from one of Jane Austen’s father’s sermons, which seems to look at the controversial issue of spontaneous versus formal prayer:

It is indeed very unlikely that they should have fallen into a custom of praying always from the immediate impulse of the moment, when we consider that the Christian Church was founded upon the Jewish Church—The Apostles themselves were Jews—for the first eight years Jews only were converted and what is more, our Lord himself conformed while on Earth most strictly to the Jewish worship. (23)

In the words of Horton Davies, Anglicans conceived of common prayer as chiefly characterized by uniformity, dignity, comprehensiveness, order, and tradition, while Puritans and Nonconformists thought of public prayer as distinguished by spontaneity, particularity, and flexibility. Kantrov sees this as having implications for the nature of the relationship between the individual and God. She writes “Spontaneity in prayer went along with the conviction that a personal, passionate faith in Christ and the promise of salvation was the mark of genuine religion. This approach seemed to threaten not only the authority of the church to mediate between the individual and God, but all its other powers: thus the broader significance of defenses of seemingly minor points of church doctrine in such passages as the one from George Austen’s sermon” (Kantrov 23-4).

Although the eighteenth-century Church had its problems of criticism, dissent, and the rise of the Evangelicals, Edmund Burke makes a favourable observation: “The majority of the people of England, ... far from thinking a religious establishment unlawful, hardly think it lawful to be without one. ...In France ... they consider it as the foundation of their whole constitution, with which ... it holds an indissoluble union” (Overton and Relton 281). He adds “The nation as a body loved and trusted the national church. It formed ... a connecting link between the different classes of society. The clergy

personally conducted ... as a labour of love, the education of boys of the lower rank who ... deserved to be ‘bred scholars’” (282). This indicates to some degree the power exercised by the Church of England.

Sermons of Jane Austen’s times more directly addressed to women were similar in content to conduct books published at the time. James Fordyce’s *Sermons to Young Women* (1766) is read by Mr. Collins in *P & P* (P&P 63). In *M P* Mary Crawford refers favorably to Blair’s sermons (MP 83). *Elegant Extracts* is mentioned by Austen in *Emma* (E 27) as part of the library of the exemplary farmer Robert Martin.

James Fordyce, a Scottish Presbyterian minister, published two volumes of *Sermons to Young Women* in 1766. These were widely read by others than Mr. Collins. Fordyce spoke of female virtue, along with domestic, elegant, and intellectual accomplishments. He cautioned young women to be sober, virtuous, meek, quiet, and to get wisdom and understanding, as well as to be employed with good works. In one sermon on modesty, he preaches “that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness” (86). He calls “airs of disdain, those pretences of aversion to men,” not suitable practice for young women (87). The idea of a virtuous bashfulness is thought to be a beautiful grace. In Sermon III, he asks that young women “govern themselves by the exact rules of prudence and modesty” (107). Fordyce states “that the aged women may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children—what follows—to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home” (117). He gives warning to the young that there are everlasting consequences to inappropriate behavior, and they should contemplate approaching judgment. Therefore they must be serious and sober, control their passions, and keep themselves chaste. Another strong maxim taught by Fordyce in his sermons

was that “disobedience to parents is unnatural and vile” (124). Three sermons from Volume II were on the subject of female piety, one sermon on good works, and the final sermons on female meekness and a quiet spirit:

Daughters of Britain, are so many of you insensible to those brightest glories of your sex? Where is your love of your native country, which, by thus excelling, you might so nobly serve? ... How long will you be ambitious of flaunting in French attire, of fluttering about with the levity of that fantastic people? When will you be satisfied with the simplicity of elegance, and the gracefulness of modesty, so becoming in a nation like this, supported by trade, polished by taste, and enlightened by true religion? Say, when will you ... reflect credit on your profession of Christianity, give joy to all your connections, and confer dignity on Womankind. (39)

Among the bestsellers of Austen’s time, conduct books for women were didactic tracts—taking the form of sermons, letters, or fiction—admonishing young ladies to be “modest, and dutiful daughters and wives” (Johnson 391). From *Conduct and Behaviour* John Gregory’s ‘A Father’s Legacy to His Daughter’ places modesty, delicacy, and silence in company as best behaviour, while to show wit, humour, or good sense may be dangerous and expose one to prudery” (392). Thomas Gisborne, in “An Enquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex” (1797) suggests that “plays for amusement encourage vanity, excite a thirst for applause, destroy diffidence by unrestrained familiarity with persons of the other sex, and result in a general fondness for plays which many are improper to be read, or witnessed” (401). In “On the Employment of Time,” we read, “Let her studies

be confined within the strictest limits of purity. ...and bring [them] to the test of Christian principles” (404).

Jane Austen had no doubt read many of these writings and heard or read many of the sermons. We can assume that these influenced her beliefs and writings and that her characters should not surprise us if they have some of the Christian characteristics above mentioned and struggle with the conflicts often outlined in the sermons and the conduct books .

II Jane Austen and Her Time—December 16, 1775- July 24,1817

We are taught to speak respectfully of the dead; there seems to be no other way to speak of Jane Austen for many reasons but mainly for her contribution to literature. Carol Shields says she possessed a rare ability to expand insignificant material and a moral sensibility using family as a source of her art (8-9). It is generally believed that she died from Addison's disease at the early age of forty-one, but Shields claims that her symptoms don't match Addison's disease, and that "breast cancer seems to be a very likely cause"(173). She is buried in Winchester Cathedral, having written six novels which continue today to be well read and much loved. "Her grave is now visited annually by admirers from all over the world to pay her homage"(Tucker 198).

What kind of person was Jane Austen? She "was an intensely social being" (Shields 119). Home was what she loved best, the comfortable and familiar. "She loved the natural world and drew strength from it ... [J] her creativity flowed from the reality of the familiar" (86-7). She preferred country life. She began writing for recreation in her teens and while other women of the late eighteenth century were doing primarily domestic chores and searching for a husband, she was creating novels.

Jane Austen was born at Steventon, Hampshire, in 1775, the daughter of a profound scholar and clergyman. At nine years of age she was sent to school at Reading with her elder sister Cassandra, who was her lifelong friend and confidante, but she was largely taught by her father. Two of her brothers were clergymen, as were her mother's father and grandfather and several cousins (Grey 202). Two brothers became admirals in the navy. She and Cassandra loved and lost men, both clergymen, through early death (203).

Shields has identified Jane's true loved and lost as Tom Lefroy, an Irish man, who was taken away from her by his family because of her lower class and economic status (50). This occurred when she was only twenty and created sorrow in her life for a very long time, as she had expected an offer of marriage from him. She spent her early life in Steventon from 1775 to 1800, and in Bath 1801-1805, where her father died. From age 25-35 she may have suffered from depression, causing a ten year silence in her writings. The silence of her middle years seems to be the result of a series of discouragements, which conspired against her. These discouragements included an undesired move to Bath, her father's death, pinched financial circumstances, and the realization that she was unlikely to marry and establish a home of her own (129). She lived in Southampton for a short time, and then went to the village of Chawton from 1809-1817; finally she moved to Winchester seeking skilled medical attention for her illness, where she died in 1817.

Cheerfulness, sensibility, and benevolence were her real characteristics (Harding 31). "She was thoroughly religious and devout; fearful of giving offence to God, and incapable of feeling it towards any fellow Christian. On serious subjects she was well instructed, both by reading and meditation, and her opinions accorded strictly with those of our Established Church" (33). "She charmed children with her sweet manner, playful talk, and delightful stories, chiefly of Fairyland" (332). "She was on friendly terms with her neighbors... and liked to hear about them" (333). "[Of] her religious principles, she was more inclined to think and act than to talk, but it has been shown how much Christian love and humility abounded in her heart" (338). Shields writes that "her moral vision of society was steady and focused" (130). In this respect, she compares Austen to her heroines (170). Henry, Jane's brother, in "an unsigned "Biographical Notice of the

Author” is lavish in the praise of her person”(83-4). All this may make her sound too perfect a person, but she could be angry, mischievous and sharp in her remarks at times. “If I am a wild Beast I cannot help it,” she wrote to Cassandra (175). This seems related to her self-control, but Shields excuses Austen because of the difficult circumstances of her life—her poverty, her isolation, several times banished from her home, her lack of artistic recognition, and her lack of a love-filled marriage (176).

“She was a Tory rather than a Whig. She believes that the gentleman—as her words ‘consequence’ and ‘usefulness’ imply—derives his personal dignity from the contribution he makes at the head of an organic, hierarchical, small community. It is for such a community, ideally perceived, that her novels speak” (Butler 2-3). She had a particular genius for describing in detail ordinary life, as evidenced in her portrayal of Portsmouth or Uppercross in *Persuasion*. This genius applied also to “the involvements and feelings and characters of ordinary life” (Harding 370). This description of ordinary life may tend to prompt the reader of her novels to overlook the spiritual elements therein, because many fail to see the spiritual in everyday life.

“Her father allowed Jane to read what she liked” (Shields 27). Her readings included Samuel Richardson’s *The History of Sir Charles Grandison*, a lengthy book of worldly debauchery. Jane, reading at a young age, prompts Shields to suggest that Jane may have regarded it as fantasy rather than reality. Maria Edgeworth and Charlotte Smith were among her favorite novelists. She was also familiar with Dr. Johnson, William Cowper, and Fanny Burney. “Because her father and brothers were Anglican priests, Austen was as a matter of course thoroughly familiar with the *Book of Common Prayer*, from which the divine service is drawn. It is not surprising that she wrote some prayers herself,

presumably for private use at home” (Johnson 379). The following examples of her prayers demonstrate the major goal of her religion, to serve God and one’s fellow man in every significant phase of daily life. As in the novels, there exists a direct connection between religious belief and everyday life.

Evening Prayer No.1

Give us grace almighty father, so to pray, as to deserve to be heard, to address thee with our hearts, as with our lips. Thou art everywhere present, from thee no secret can be hid. May the knowledge of this, teach us to fix our thoughts on thee, with reverence and devotion that we pray not in vain.

Look with mercy on the sins we have this day committed and in mercy make us feel them deeply, that our repentance may be sincere, & our resolution steadfast of endeavouring against the commission of such in future. Teach us to understand the sinfulness of our own hearts, and bring to our knowledge every fault of temper and every evil habit in which we have indulged to the discomfort of our fellow-creatures, and the danger of our own souls. May we now, and on each return of night, consider how the past day has been spent by us, what have been our prevailing thoughts, words and actions during it, and how far we can acquit ourselves of evil. Have we thought irreverently of thee, have we disobeyed thy commandments, have we neglected any known duty, or willingly given pain to any human being? Incline us to ask our hearts these questions oh! God, and save us from deceiving ourselves by pride or vanity. (379)

The second prayer stresses human weakness.

Pardon oh! God the offences of the past day. We are conscious of many frailties; we remember with shame and contrition, many evil thoughts and neglected duties; and we have perhaps sinned against thee and against our fellow-creatures in many instances of which we have no remembrance... Thou knowest the infirmity of our nature, and the temptations which surround us. (Kantrov 71)

If there is to be any doubt regarding Jane Austen's religious beliefs, it is put to rest by her following prayer.

Above all other blessings oh! God, for ourselves and our fellow-creatures, we implore thee to quicken our sense of thy mercy in the redemption of the world, of the value of that holy religion in which we have been brought up, that we may not, by our own neglect, throw away the salvation thou hast given us, nor be Christians in name only. (Tucker 199)

Her prayers represent the various basic Christian principles found in the sermons of the day. Jane Austen's prayers reveal her central religious and moral beliefs, ones common to her time. Her patience is shown in her waiting six years for a response concerning her manuscript. Henry, her brother, had submitted *Northanger Abbey* in 1803 with no response. She waited until 1809 before she wrote a letter to the publisher in London (Shields 125 & 135).

In his Memoir J.E. Austen-Leigh, her nephew, tells of her dying days. She used the language of hope, knowing her end was near; she was happy in her family, Cassandra

caring for her and her brothers, the clergymen, standing by to administer the services suitable for a Christian's deathbed; she was just beginning to feel confidence in her own success; and she remained without any self-seeking or craving after applause. She was a humble, believing Christian (Harding 387). She understood pride and vanity, proven in her writing of *P & P*, whereas she seems to prompt humbleness in her heroines—especially Fanny in *MP* and Anne in *P*.

“At the end of her novels the standing of the heroine's soul in the light of the next world seems as decisively settled as her future financial security in this” (Butler 1). At her death we may say the same about the author: “She would also find herself comfortably on the same shelf and in the good and steady company of Chaucer and Shakespeare” (Shields 84).

Eighteenth and early nineteenth century England, in which the novels were written, was a time of greater acceptance of Christianity than in modern times. As Elizabeth Wordsworth has written, “There was a steadiness about life in those days, an acceptance of certain fundamental truths and social axioms, which helped to form most valuable characters, and to train men and women to live in the world, to judge rightly, and to act decidedly” (99). This is probably more true of the country towns and villages where the novels are primarily situated than in the cities like London. “Though the religious life of the period was most undemonstrative, it was, or could be, deeply real and sincere” (Wordsworth 99). However, with the advent of the Enlightenment, or the Age of Reason, many educated people ceased to consider themselves Christian (Anglican Timeline).

“During the war against France and against ‘revolution principles,’ pressure for a renewed commitment to religious and moral principle was ... characteristic of members

of the gentry, especially of those sections of the gentry that were, like the younger Austens , merging with the new professional classes” (Grey 204). Christian revival in England and America or The Great Awakening occurred earlier in 1738-1784 (Anglican timeline). Whether Christian lives were truly authentic in all individuals is difficult to determine, but in Jane Austen’s case we have evidence enough from her prayers and from her letters (<http://www.pemberley.com>) that she indeed practised what she believed. This is not proof that she wrote only from her beliefs, as authors are not necessarily obliged to do so.

In Austen’s time, there was a loosening of conventional belief and the rise of the fundamentalists—the Evangelicals. In fact there was a degree of downright religious and social skepticism (Tillotson, Fussell, Waingrow 1). Thus we see a complex mix in the social fabric of the late eighteenth century, but in general the religious conventions of Jane Austen’s day were going to church on Sunday, a day that was work-free and shopping-free, prayers and daily Bible readings in the home. There was laxity in the ministry, and in the Established Church. There was generally respect for God and King, but much criticism of the clergy, of whom many seem to have been corrupted by money and property. Traditional Church form was under attack, while more personal religion was gaining ground. The behaviour and attitudes of people were mixed. The times were perilous for England, an imperialist power, at war with both France and the Americans. “Austen’s last three novels are profounder than the first three ... because they are caught up in a national mood of self assessment and regeneration” (Koppel 5). Koppel also tells us that “as her [Austen’s] texts increase in both intensity and complexity, so does the spiritual dimension which is an integral part of them” (5). The subliminal spiritual

expression is no less true than the underlying events of Austen's day. Austen has been criticized for not writing about her own times, but neither did Shakespeare, Tucker tells us (69). Again if we look closely there is a connection to the events of the day in the novels. Furthermore most of the popular literature of her time can be classified as escapist. Tucker gives lengthy details of Austen's involvement in world affairs.

The Hampsons ... Jane's paternal grandmother's family were involved in the colonial affairs of Jamaica, while her father acted from 1760 as trustee for a plantation in Antigua. Jane's paternal aunt, Mrs. Philadelphia Hancock ... lived in India from 1752-1765. Jane was also a near neighbour during her early years of at least three men who were intimately connected with the American Revolution. ...Hulton was involved in the Boston Tea Party of 1773. ...Lord Dorchester, the former Sir Guy Carleton, ... was responsible for the repulse of the American forces at Quebec in 1776. He served as the British commander in chief for America from 1781 to 1783 before retiring to Hampshire, where Jane is known to have attended balls given in his home. The most far reaching worldly event that influenced Jane occurred in France in 1781, when her cousin Eliza Hancock, who had lived on the continent since 1777, married Jean-Francois Capot de Feuillide, a captain of dragoons in the Queen's regiment. ... Jane ...reveled in the glimpses of the glittering world of pre-Revolutionary France her cousin imparted.... She fled to England after the outbreak of the French Revolution. (Tucker 70-1)

Jane would have heard from Edward, who attended Oxford and lived in Dresden and Rome, and from her sailor brothers Francis and Charles, who were very involved in naval maneuvers in the Mediterranean, the Atlantic, the Baltic and the Indian ocean (72-3). “Although none of the Austens lost their lives in the long war with France...in February 1794, Jane’s cousin Eliza’s husband was guillotined in Paris during the Reign of Terror on a trumped up charge when he tried to help a friend who had been accused of conspiring against the French republic” (74). Cassandra’s fiancée died of yellow fever in San Domingo in February 1797. He had gone there as a military chaplain (74). Peace with France finally came in 1803, following the Peace of Amiens in 1802, which Napoleon had revoked. The blockade of the French and Spanish fleets in Cadiz led to the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. In 1808 the French took possession of Spain. Wellington drove the French back across the Pyrenees. In 1811 the Peninsular war had been carried on for three years. War with the United States broke out in 1812. Jane was very much involved with the events of her day, if for no other reason than that her family were directly involved with the wars, the revolution and the state of England’s safety (78-9). However, she, like many writers, did not write directly in her novels of the events of her time, but the influence of the times can be detected in the novels.

III *Mansfield Park*: Fanny Price's Spirituality-Glimpses of Christ's Image

Fanny Price has been compared to Cinderella (Kinsley ix); she has been depicted as a confident, modern, independent, incestuous, feminist by Patricia Rozema, director of the recent film, *Mansfield Park*; and she has even been compared to Frankenstein's monster by Nina Auerbach in her article "Jane Austen's Dangerous Charm" published in *Women and Literature* (Auerbach 210). Others have criticized Fanny as a wimpish, priggish, straight arrow, miss goody-two-shoes, too virtuous type of character (Trilling 212). Carol Shields asks "What is the matter with Fanny Price? Why is she so dutiful, passive, lacking in spirit, so relentlessly correct...? Where Fanny's finely tuned moral sense comes from is something of a mystery"(152-3). Q.D. Leavis sees Fanny as "overly delicate and timidly feminine with an almost superstitious respect for authority" (Leavis 165). Ilene Kantrov tells us "Austen presents in Fanny Price a picture of the self-examining Christian whose goal is self-knowledge, who measures her conduct against her principles, and who practices self-command and self-denial." She, indeed, is all of this. Her intentions are pure, as "in the quiet country homes such as Jane Austen depicts, where the religion, simple as it seems, was genuine, real, and absolutely without 'pose' or self-consciousness, where there was an unquestioning belief in the essentials of the Christian faith" (Wordsworth 98). Her heart, her mind, and her conduct exhibit the teachings of Christ. As Margaret Atwood said recently, and it is applicable to Fanny Price, "Women are socialized to please, to assuage pain, to give blood till they drop, to conciliate, to be selfless, to be helpful, to be Jesus Christ since men have given up on that role, to be perfect, and that load of luggage is still with us" (Atwood 32). Fanny was

taught by the Established Church to be Christ-like. Allegorically she is the spirit of Christ in a secular world, where the eighteenth century male authority figures fail to sufficiently play their role. I would argue that Fanny exhibits her spirituality in Christian virtues or fruits of the spirit, as seen in her quiet piety, much as St. Paul describes the fruits of the spirit as love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (Galatians 5:22-23) or additionally mercy, humility, forgiveness, charity, together with admonishing one another in all wisdom. (Colossians 3: 12-16). Fanny follows the Christian teachings of the sermons preached by the Established Church of this time. Demonstration of this is found in her pursuit of self-knowledge, her self-examination, introspection, self-denial, self-command and devotion to doing her duty.

She takes moral action, based on reasonableness and Christian principles. She will not marry Henry when she does not love him, and she does not love him because he lacks the principles of a serious, dependable suitor. Her firmness shows us that Fanny believed in the Christian principles of marriage. Henry Crawford learned when it was too late that he had passed over a pearl of great price: "a very few months had taught him, by force of contrast, to place a yet higher value on the sweetness of her temper, the purity of her mind, and the excellence of her principles" (MP 427).

Love is the cornerstone of the Christian: love of God, love of one's mate, love of family, and love of one's neighbors. The great commandment in both Old and New Testaments is love one another and one's neighbour as one's self, as the sermons we have examined emphasize constantly. Fanny's love for Edmund seems natural, for he cares for her when all the other cousins and aunts are less than amiable towards her. Time

and again her love for Edmund is visible: "Fanny's sick headache has as much to do with Edmund's attention to Mary Crawford as with her picking roses in the sun" (McMaster 22). When she receives the note and gold chain from Edmund, her love seems obvious. "[S]he seized the scrap of paper on which Edmund had begun writing to her, as a treasure beyond all her hopes." (MP 240). Fanny treasures Edmund with a depth of love that goes beyond the ordinary. "For her the full and mutual engagement of head and heart is what is passionate; and any substitute is a delusion" (McMaster 46). Recognizing and describing love is difficult for the novelist and not plainly or clearly seen by the reader. Jane Austen writes "The enthusiasm of a woman's love is even beyond the biographer" (MP 240). Fanny's love was difficult for the author to describe, yet she seems to have overcome this difficulty.

Fanny's love is fully evident in her love for her brother William and for Edmund. Both are a self-sacrificing love. She would rather bear pain and probably death herself than have William or Edmund hurt in any way. Fanny's love for William is observed during their visit over the Christmas holidays. "Their eager affection in meeting, their exquisite delight in being together, their hours of happy mirth, and moments of serious conference,...and the misery of the girl when he left her," are phrases which point to their love for each other (MP18). "[S]he loved him [Edmund] better than any body in the world except William; her heart was divided between the two" (MP 19). Her attachment to William is also expressed when she receives a letter from him, and trembles with joy over this letter. When William appears in his new Lieutenant's uniform, before he must leave for sea, Fanny throws her arms around him and sobs (MP 349-50). Some have taken this as a suggestion of incest, but it is a tender and true brotherly love, (a love

encouraged in Christian teaching), for how could a young woman with such pure motives act in any other manner? Her loves are selfless, where the lover wishes only the well-being of the beloved, at the risk of no gain for self. This is love embraced by Christians, like the love taught by Christ. It is a rich, deep, abiding, self-sacrificing love, comparable to the love of Christ for the church. It is the principle on which Fanny makes her decision regarding marriage.

Together with her love for Edmund and William, Fanny displays a compassion for others; it conveys a love of her neighbors. Considering herself “nothing”, Fanny always thinks well and highly of others, perhaps with the exception of Mrs. Norris, who is her most trying acquaintance, and everyone else’s. Mudrick speaks of “appraising the author’s acceptance of the Mansfield standards, and this of course involves Fanny’s acceptance of them too: ‘It is always clear to her that Sir Thomas and Edmund—the guardian spirits of Mansfield Park—are good and just.’ [I]t may be argued that Sir Thomas is a failed parent (and perhaps husband), that Edmund is largely blind (witness his feelings for Mary Crawford) and that Fanny is blind to these faults because of her acquired status” (Handley 63). Fanny does not seem blind, but keenly aware of Edmund’s blindness and Sir Thomas’s errors. She defends Edmund when his father berates his lack of judgment in regard to the play. Fanny’s compassion, in this instance, causes her to utter, “Oh! Not to him. Look to all the others, but not to him” (MP 166). This is a beautiful demonstration of compassion and love for Edmund as well as an example of her viewing Sir Thomas as fallible. Fanny also refuses to be forced by Sir Thomas into marriage with Henry Crawford. “She had a rule to apply, which settled

everything. Her awe of her uncle, and her dread of taking a liberty with him, made it instantly plain to her, what she had to do. She must absolutely decline the proposal” (397). Her rule was not to marry without love.

This was very difficult for Fanny to do, in view of her principles based on church teachings of the period, such as Hugh Blair’s Sermon XI “On Sobriety”, a sermon which preaches to the young the value of modesty and docility, of reverence to parents, and of submission to those who are superior in knowledge, station, and in years (Blair 319). Gregory’s *Conduct and Behaviour* taught that young ladies should be modest, and dutiful daughters and wives. They were to be delicate and silent, not to challenge authority.

Sir Thomas has been called “a patriarchal English country gentleman,... an absentee plantation owner, and in parliament an active member of the West Indian lobby” (Johnson 494-5). His travel to Antigua makes him an absent authority for two years. His advice by correspondence arrives too late to be obeyed. Joseph Lew suggests a loss of morals for Englishmen in the West Indies, for without their wives accompanying them during their lengthy visit, they become depraved in principles and taste (506). This may be what Mrs. Norris is implying, when she suspects a foreboding evil with Sir Thomas’s longer stay in Antigua. The theatricals in his house transgress patriarchal authority. Even Edmund who has been left in authority by his father eventually goes along with the others. The worst affront to Sir Thomas is the turning of his billiard room and bedroom into the theatre. His authority is mocked. His abrupt return and his setting in order the chaotic household resembles Christ overturning the tables of the merchants and throwing the money-changers out of the temple (Matt.21:12-3). He wants to maintain authority and return Mansfield Park to order and propriety. The final overthrow of Sir Thomas’s

authority is Fanny's refusal to marry Henry. This is "a treasonous act, ... punishable by exile and even death" (Johnson 507). Fanny's "No" is an act of rebellion. "By repudiating the principle of submission it struck at the heart of the master's moral self-justification and therefore at his self-esteem" (508). He had wanted Maria to marry Rushworth with 12,000 pounds per year and a large estate, to add to his own respectability and influence. Now he wants Fanny to do similarly, for Henry Crawford would secure further connections and alliances for Sir Thomas. Fanny has said "No" with good conviction, for she has read Macartney's *Travels in China*, where she learns paternal authority may be abusive. However, "In Great Britain ... both pro- and anti-abolition tracts illustrated, the patriarchal family was regarded as both a microcosm of the monarchical state and necessary to the continuance of that state. All individual wills are and must be subordinated to that of the father. To do otherwise 'would be unnatural and wicked' (509). Sir Thomas has left himself open for Fanny's refusal. "If Fanny Price's inner life is a silent rebuke to Sir Thomas Bertram's failed leadership, ... Jane Austen looks to a new generation of leaders who are on the point of redeeming the mistakes of the old" (Butler 285). Fanny, together with Edmund, will save Mansfield Park.

Mansfield is governed by a fallible authority. The domestic scene at Mansfield is further weakened by a silent, present, but absent, indolent Lady Bertram, to whom Fanny has become a slave-like companion. Perhaps she is the perfect fit for the recommended submissive wife, reclining lazily on her sofa with her dog Pug. "All of Mansfield's life makes reference and obeisance to Sir Thomas's wife, who is gentle and without spite, but mindless and moveless, concerned with nothing but the indulgence of her mild, inexorable wants" (Trilling 227). Lady Bertram is the rich, fat, dull matron sitting on her

cushion. Sir Thomas is absent; Mrs. Norris is cruel, wicked, and manipulative; the cousins are abusive; Fanny is akin to a servant; she is harassed by Henry Crawford; she is banished by the wrath of the Bertrams to Portsmouth (Shields 154). Mansfield Park was financially and materially sound but the treatment of Fanny there only convinces us that the house and family are spiritually bankrupt.

Compared to Fanny's Portsmouth home, "whose house was the scene of mismanagement and discomfort from beginning to end", ironically, Mansfield seems to represent perfection, propriety, civility, harmony, peace and tranquillity (MP 355-57). The Portsmouth home embodies vulgarity, with its noise, uncleanness, hallooing, and sounds of contention. Her father has coarse manners; he swears and he drinks, and he scarcely notices Fanny. He is another father who has failed in authority. Her mother spends her days in a kind of slow bustle; she practises no restraint on her children; she has no talent and no conversation and most importantly no affection for Fanny. Mrs. Price prefers her sons to her daughters. Fanny, seeing her parents' lack of interest in her future and their lack of love for each other, sees this as another reason to follow her decision not to marry Henry.

Her concern for justice for others is expressed when she takes up her work again, that is her work making clothes for the parish poor, and when she tells Edmund that she asked Sir Thomas about the slave trade (MP 178). Austen is, no doubt, aware of the debates in Parliament on the abolition of the slave trade. Fanny is quite well read. It may be inferred that Fanny seeks to be just, or at least is concerned about a practice that she believes to be unjust. Why else would she bring up such a subject with Sir Thomas? Sir Thomas had his duty in Parliament, and he had his losses in the West Indies, Antigua.

The debates revolved around justice, humanity, and sound policy, versus commerce, wealth and employment for the English sailors (Johnson 406-410). Since this would be an issue very difficult to expand on because the Bertrams' wealth was obtained from the efforts of slaves, Sir Thomas answered the question with dead silence.

On the other hand, we have the Bertrams' assisting Fanny and William by delivering them from the poor life they have inherited from the poor Price's of Portsmouth. Thus there exists both complexity and inconsistency in compassion for the under-privileged.

Fanny's concern for others is expressive of her charity and love for her neighbour. Her kindness, gentleness, and generosity are illustrated in her concern. From her experience at Sotherton gate, she knows that Maria does not love Mr. Rushworth, but that she is interested in Henry Crawford. When Maria would not wait on Mr. Rushworth to fetch the key, but goes beyond the locked gate with Henry Crawford, in spite of Fanny's attempts to stop her, it is evident that true love for Mr. Rushworth is not in Maria (MP 89-90). It is also a foreshadowing of Maria's running off with Henry later in the novel. Fanny knew Sir Thomas was wrong in endorsing Maria's marriage to Mr. Rushworth. In her compassion, she would like to have saved Maria from her wrongful marriage, but she also realizes that she lacks influence over Maria. Fanny's reaction to the news from Mary Crawford, that Maria has run away with Henry, is one of shock, but it is also one of compassion. Fanny totally empathizes with Maria's situation, her guilt, and what consequences will follow. Her concern is for the parents, for Julia, Tom and Edmund and for their sufferings and disgrace, but also for the lack of principles from which Henry and Maria have acted. She could not rest, or sleep, and she experienced "feelings of sickness to shudderings of horror" (MP 402).

As for Edmund, she sees his blindness and patiently waits and prays that he will not be overcome with Mary's charms. "God grant that her influence do not make him cease to be respectable" (386). Her kindness and generosity to Mary are remarkable.

Fanny is always helping where she can, and acts kindly towards everyone even when it is not deserved. As for Mrs. Norris, Fanny bears her cruelty admirably without criticism. "She had never received kindness from her aunt Norris, and could not love her" (21). She does, however, make up her mind with Edmund's persuasion to make the best of living with her aunt, which in the end she does not have to do. When Mrs. Norris strongly tries to prevent Fanny from going on the outing to Sotherton, Fanny stands by patiently without a word, taking her aunt's cruel treatment bravely (MP 70). Would not most of us protest somewhat, particularly at that age, and when it was to be such a special and rare outing for Fanny? Cutting the roses in the heat and walking twice to the White house, as per Mrs. Norris instructions, gave Fanny what appears to be sunstroke, at least a severe headache, but uncomplainingly, Fanny lies on the sofa, although even this act causes Mrs. Norris to attack Fanny (64). All in all, Fanny tends to think first of others, before herself, and even when pressed by a Mrs. Norris, she seems to give her the benefit of the doubt. This is loving one's neighbour in the extreme, a true example of rational morality being applied to a real situation. Her kind, gentle, forgiving and self-denying manner can be compared to Jesus and his relationship to such less reputable characters as Matthew, the tax collector (Matt 9:9), or that rascal Zacchaeus, the publican, who was disliked by many (Luke 19:2-10), or to his crucifying persecutors.

Fanny's joy, a Christian virtue that is seldom discussed, is difficult to conceive and contrary to her long-suffering; however, it is plainly seen when the reader looks carefully.

Her joy creates a path for cheerfulness, which James Fordyce in his *Sermons to Young Women* claims is the most natural effect of real goodness (Fordyce I 178). Fanny's expression of joy is observed several times in the novel, at Sotherton, at the ball given for her coming out celebration, in spending time with William, in receiving gifts and care from Edmund and in nature, the stars, in biography and poetry, and in her prospect of visiting her parents in Portsmouth, as well as in her return to Mansfield Park from Portsmouth. She was, in nature, quite a happy creature, in spite of her suffering.

William's letter has already been mentioned, and there is also Edmund's gift of the plain gold chain for William's cross (MP 236-7). These are truly joyful moments for Fanny. Fanny and Edmund, at the window gazing at the sky, illustrate her great joy, even rapture in nature. She sees harmony in the stars and the constellations and goes so far as to think there would be less wickedness and sorrow in the world if the "sublimity of Nature were more attended to" (102). In her journey to Sotherton, all that she observed seemed new and pretty to her and she was very happy. She found entertainment in the appearance of the country, the roads, the soil, the harvest, the cottages, the cattle, and the children. Her joy springs from her delicacy of mind—her own thoughts and reflections, we are told by the narrator (73). Fanny's joy in spring, gardens, flowers, the leaves and the woods is expressed, while she longs for them when residing with her parents in Portsmouth. This is a pleasure she has lost for a time. She delights in biography and poetry and is ecstatic when she joins the library in Portsmouth, to become a 'chuser' of books, as well as to introduce Susan, her sister, to her own pleasure of reading. As for her happiness and joy regarding the ball given by Sir Thomas in her honour, her feelings were mixed. "She had hardly ever been in a state so nearly

approaching high spirits in her life" (247). It was more honour than happiness to be opening the ball for the first dance, but she was happy whenever she looked at William and at the end of the ball, she concluded, "that a ball was indeed delightful" (255).

Fanny was joyful at the first thoughts of returning to her family in Portsmouth. "Had she ever given way to bursts of delight, it must have been then, for she was delighted, but her happiness was of a deep, quiet, heart-swelling sort; and though never a great talker, she was always more inclined to silence when feeling most strongly" (336). The epiphany of Fanny's joy occurs when she returns to Mansfield Park, where she is useful, beloved, and safe from Henry Crawford. She receives increased regard from Sir Thomas, and Edmund is no longer the dupe of Mary Crawford.

Peace, for the Christian, is another personal, spiritual trait or fruit of the spirit. It suggests a calm mind in a composed body. For Fanny peace was a calm mind created when carrying out the right action: "Her mind had been never farther from peace," when she had to face Edmund's decision to act in the play, "Lovers' Vows," which she held to be a wrong choice (143). Peace was also escape to her rooms, where she could think, meditate, or pray in quiet solitude, which she does on several occasions (136, 324, 393). It is interesting to compare Christ's desire for peace, when he would slip away from the crowds, or when he went into the garden to pray. Peace meant keeping harmony or order within, not like life at Portsmouth, but more like life as at Mansfield Park. Peace also meant amiable relationships, which Fanny developed as she grew up at Mansfield Park. Fanny exemplified the spirit of peace; she loved non-confrontational situations, and went out of her way to keep the peace.

Lionel Trilling has found Fanny too virtuous. He questions how any age could be interested in patient Griselda. He claims that characters, persons are endeared to us by their transgressions or being of the devil's party (212). Be that as it may, if we look at Fanny as an allegorical figure we see the true import of her Christian character. Fanny's patience is comparable to Boccaccio's Griselda. Fanny verges on the edge of martyrdom, probably stemming from the Evangelical influence, where one's holiness or purity is enhanced by self-denial and long-suffering. Juliet McMaster tells us that "Fanny has the air of a martyr; but her martyrdom is very real, for she is made to witness, and even to prompt, exchanges where the private signification is perfectly understandable and deeply painful to her" (McMaster 35). She becomes the go-between for Edmund, the man she loves, and Mary Crawford, the woman he loves. Like Boccaccio or Chaucer's Griselda, she is born into poverty; she is tested by Mrs. Norris and her cousins, Maria and Julia; she is punished by her return to Portsmouth; and she is harassed by Henry Crawford and Sir Thomas. She endures all this, accepting the abuses, as well as her deprivation and humiliation on her return to Portsmouth, after she has been privileged with a more physically and mentally abundant life.

Griselda, the heroine of the last tale in the *Decameron*, by Giovanni Boccaccio was noted for her enduring patience and wifely obedience.

Chaucer based his "The Clerk's Tale" of *The Canterbury Tales* on this story, where Grisildis is tested for her constancy as the wife of a "markys" (marquis). She had such excellent qualities of character-- discreet, reverent and loved by all-- that the imagery of Christ is found in stanza 290 (Cawley 229-231). The tale of Griselda is gruesome. Walter, a Marquis, marries poor Griselda and makes her promise to obey his every wish

and will. He then viciously tests her constancy by taking her two children from her shortly after their birth, and allows her to believe he has killed them. He next returns her to her father in the same poor clothes she was wearing when she came to the Marquis. When their oldest child, a girl, is twelve, the Marquis returns both children, who had been kept safely in Bolonga. The girl is to be his new bride and he asks Griselda to return and make the wedding arrangements. She is the silent sufferer, acquiescing to his every action, denying herself every human reaction and taking it all with a composed, cheerful countenance. She is true and constant in her love for her persecutor. This is comparable to Christ Himself. Walter then pities Griselda and tells her the truth. She and her children are happily united, and as well she forgives this Marquis. This is an extreme example of patience and faithfulness, no-one will dispute, but there is some of this in Fanny. However, Fanny shows more backbone or spunk and reason than Griselda. She refuses Henry's offer of marriage; she refuses Sir Thomas's and Edmund's promotion of that marriage. She is a woman of principles and remains firm in her convictions.

Fanny's patience can certainly be compared to the patience of Griselda. She endures abuse, mistreatment, and dismissal of her feelings. She is given a cold room without a fire in the fireplace, an deprivation imposed by Mrs. Norris. Maria and Julia treat her as an inferior, a servant. They talk of her ignorance, calling her odd and stupid: "and though Fanny was often mortified by their treatment of her, she thought too lowly of her own claims to feel injured by it" (MP 17).

Another incident, when Edmund and Mary leave Fanny alone resting on the bench for a great period of time in the wilderness at Sotherton, incites Maria when she comes upon her, to cry out "how ill you have been used by them!" (87). Fanny is hurt but does not

complain. A similar incident occurs in her daily horse back riding. The selfishness of Mary Crawford deprived Fanny of taking her daily ride for her health, but the fact that Edmund had forgotten her when he and Mary were riding hurt Fanny worst of all (60-1). Her patience is noted by Henry Crawford when Fanny assists the slow Mr. Rushworth in learning his part in the play, "Lovers' Vows." Probably the most reproachful act comes from Henry Crawford, who sets out to amuse himself by trying to make Fanny fall in love with him. In his attempts to do so, Fanny's patience is put to the severest test in resisting Sir Thomas's promotion of her marriage to Henry. Her patience with Edmund throughout the novel is beyond the call of Christian duty, and he thanks her for her patience in the final pages of the novel.

Fanny's gentility, meekness and humility are present throughout the novel. We see her first as a weak, delicate, timid child of ten, poorly nourished and most likely neglected by her family as she arrives at Mansfield Park, a place where tea is a ritual, life is a ritual, similar to the Established Church (Leavis 56). She "was ashamed of herself, and could scarcely speak to be heard" (MP 10). Her misery was increased by Mrs. Norris' making her feel guilty for not feeling grateful and happy at her good fortune in coming to Mansfield Park. Her weariness from the journey and her new surroundings were overwhelming, and she was frightened, yet Fanny only expresses gentleness, meekness, humility, and long-suffering in this arrival scene. One is reminded of the poor in spirit—Fanny is about to be blessed with a better material life style than the one which she had at Portsmouth, might she inherit the Park?

From the beginning Fanny is ill-treated by her female cousins but in this she is meek and mild and seems to always feel inferior to them. Mrs. Norris agreed with Maria and

Julia as to Fanny's deficiencies, while all believed Fanny did not need to be as accomplished as her cousins. Fanny's humility is evident when the Bertram family is talking about the gaiety of the balls they have attended. Fanny "thought too lowly of her own situation to imagine she should ever be admitted to the same [balls]" (MP 31). She also thinks of herself as of no consequence, in her discussion with Edmund, when it seems likely that she will be moved to the White house to live with Mrs. Norris, since Mr. Norris has died (23). She is truly most humble.

Nothing is made of Fanny, when the cousins and friends decide she can be an actor in the play "Lovers' Vows." It was "nothing of a part," and she "felt nothing again" (131,152). Fanny's humility is flagrantly played with by the others, and yet she continues to think humbly of herself. Her meekness and humility are a glaring contrast to the Bertram sisters' pride: "Their vanity was in such good order...believing they had no faults" (30). When she is alone, Fanny cries tears of gratitude over the kindness afforded her by Sir Thomas, for he orders a carriage to carry her to the Grants for dinner. Mrs. Norris has, just before this, pronounced her disgusting, yet fiercely ironic advice, "I do beseech and intreat you not to be putting yourself forward,...you must be the lowest and the last" (199). (Who would end up first and who last?) Fanny's thoughts reveal that "she rated her own claims of comfort as low even as Mrs. Norris could" (199). Henry Crawford, having fallen in love with Fanny, against his better judgment, describes her as gentle, modest and sweet, as well as being well principled and religious (266).

In Jane Austen's novels, teaching of others is a common practice. In *Mansfield Park*, Edmund becomes Fanny's teacher and advisor; however, it is Fanny who eventually advises and teaches both Edmund and his father by example. Howard Babb "recognizes

the skill with which Fanny's consciousness is revealed to us. The conversations ...spell out the nature of the characters, and the author's moral judgment is brought to bear on the misjudgments of her creatures. Mrs. Norris is obtuse, while Sir Thomas stands corrected, particularly in his support of Maria's decision to marry Rushworth despite the fact that he—Sir Thomas—knows that she is indifferent to him" (Handley 73). "She [Austen] 'omnisciently presents insights into her characters', moving , as with Fanny Price, from intelligent neutral observer to intimate identification in her heroine's consciousness" (65). Out of this consciousness arises the tenets of Christian principles; Fanny's actions resemble those of one created in the image of Christ. She becomes a breath of fresh air at Mansfield Park. Although at first she is a weak, delicate, puny, non-confident, and timid child of ten, she gradually becomes a teacher of all the others living at Mansfield Park (Leavis 9). Fanny's self-development follows these lines, even the achievement of obtaining her voice signifies this development. Fanny arrives at Mansfield Park as an outsider, although she is a niece and cousin to the family. She is shy, receding and very quiet, yet Fanny can be seen as a teacher of Sir Thomas and Edmund. Kyubong Kahng tells us Fanny has two important roles, as educator especially of Sir Thomas and Edmund, and as the novel's surest judge, for she evaluates most situations correctly (382). She has come to the Park to redeem it.

Having examined Fanny's Christian virtues in light of the never-changing, age-old New Testament spiritual virtues, there is also evidence that she fulfills all the demands prescribed by the sermons of the cultural church orthodoxy of the times. "[S]he of all the characters struggles hardest and comes closest to achieving that self-knowledge and self-restraint which she identifies as the major effects of religion on a person's character"

(Kantrov 139). Fanny went to the Anglican church, the Garrison chapel in Portsmouth with her family. This could represent a Christian follower in form or name only, but there is further proof of her applied Christian actions—her prayers, her seeking to do what she ought, her comments on the chapel at Sotherton, and her comments on the clergy.

Her prayers are cited several times throughout the novel. “God grant that her influence do not make him cease to be respectable!”, Fanny says when she is concerned that Edmund will marry Mary Crawford (386). This spontaneous kind of prayer was being endorsed by the Evangelicals at the time. On discovering that Sir Thomas has ordered a fire to be lit in her east room every day, she questions her ungratefulness in opposing Sir Thomas’s wishes that she marry Henry Crawford. She asks, “Heaven defend me from being ungrateful” (292). Prayer, with Fanny, seems to be part of her everyday language. She prays “fervent prayers for his [Edmund’s] happiness,” when she believes he will marry Mary. (239) Her whole idea of prayer is expressed in her comments at Sotherton when she says, “A whole family assembling regularly for the purpose of prayer, is fine!” (77). As Christ taught, she believes in prayer, and practises prayer in her daily life. As well, Fanny seeks quiet solitude in her rooms, where she meditates and thinks peacefully. This is her escape from the worldly confusion ever surrounding her. Her meditation may be interpreted as prayer.

She is constantly seeking to know herself, to have self-control, and to do what she ought. What she ought and what others ought is a frequent phrase used by the Austen and it seems to coincide with right Christian action as taught by the clergy of the times. What one ought to do is based on Christian principles to a greater extent than purely on

manners. This is in keeping with “the faculty of judgment” which Kahng sees as “of prime importance,” as the vocabulary of *MP* suggests. “The word judgment itself occurs 37 times, and the associated words judge (noun and verb), judicious, just, justifiably, justly, justice, injustice, injudicious, injudiciously, unjust, unjustifiable, well-judging, ill-judged, ill-judging, make up a total of 116 occurrences in all” (374). Fanny is the novel’s surest judge.

As to the theatricals, Fanny experienced a doubting spirit in the matter of taking part in the play or not. She continually examines herself, questioning what she ought to do? “Was she right in refusing to act in the play?...was it not ill-nature- selfishness- and a fear of exposing herself?” (MP 137) “She was inclined to suspect the truth and purity of her own scruples” (138). With the theatricals, Fanny judged rightly throughout, had been consistent; her feelings had been steadily against it from first to last. Edmund had been inconsistent, deceiving himself. She was faithful to her principles. Perhaps we see the influence of the Evangelical movement here on Jane Austen and in turn on her characters. Hannah More herself gave up play-acting and Thomas Gisborne totally denounced play acting.

Her strong will to do as she ought is seen in her response to the invitation to the Grants for dinner. Fanny was delighted at the invitation, her first, and wanted to go, but she offered to stay with Lady Bertram, if she could not do without her. Her tone was one of self-denial (MP 195). Sir Thomas tells us, “She appears to feel as she ought”(197). Even though Fanny strongly desired to go to the dinner, she appeared “properly submissive and indifferent” (196). She exhibits not only self-denial, but also self-command and consequently acts and feels as she ought. Fanny’s greatest decision, as to

what she must do, was in dealing with Henry Crawford's proposal. Her thoughts reveal that Henry "Can feel nothing as he ought" (205). However, he speaks of treating Fanny "as she ought to be, what do they [Sir Thomas and Edmund] do for her happiness, comfort, honour, and dignity in the world to what I should do?" He confirms Maria and Julia's unkindness towards Fanny and shows, at least in words, his love for Fanny. Later, when Edmund tries to persuade Fanny to accept Henry, Fanny reminds him that Henry "does not think as he ought, on serious subjects" (318). Although Edmund accuses Henry of acting too much on his feelings, he is basically lacking in principles. Henry, eventually, helps the poor and oppressed in order to impress Fanny, "acting as he ought to do" (369). Once more, Fanny is concerned with "what she ought to do," when she receives the letter from Mary indicating that she and Henry are going to Portsmouth "that very day" (398). Not welcoming Henry's pursuit of her, she must decide how she was to respond. And, even later, it is more difficult when she must go against Sir Thomas's wishes.

Her participation in the talks at Sotherton further indicate her Christian beliefs and her imitation of Christ. At Sotherton, when they entered the chapel, we first learn of Fanny's knowledge of chapels. She is familiar with them in poetry, for she expects arches, aisles, banners and buried monarchs. Her wisdom, that is, her spiritual wisdom is uncovered in her words, "It is a pity...that the custom should have been discontinued. It was a valuable part of former times. There is something in a chapel and chaplain so much in character with a great house, with one's ideas of what such a household should be! A whole family assembling regularly for the purpose of prayer, is fine!" (77) Fanny expresses regret over the neglect of the chapel and the loss of a custom of which she

approved. Here, we see again that Fanny prays, that she believes in prayer, that she follows Christ's advice, and that it is an important part of her life. This is in deep contrast to Mary Crawford's idea on the subject, who would have everyone going their own way and not stopping to gather for prayer. We cannot miss the irony, as this is exactly the way Mary acts in the selfish choices she makes. Tillotson informs us that "Prayer for the Christian is a required constant practice of one's religious duty, both in public and private as is hearing and reading the word of God" (Simon 578).

Her comments on the clergy further testify to her Christian principles. Jane Austen had told her sister Cassandra that she was going to write on a completely new subject—ordination (Letters 298). By her discussions of the clergy, the taking of orders, and sermons, Austen did give us a new subject in the novel. If we regard Edmund and Fanny as a doppelganger effect, we may see, although Edmund is the one who is to become a clergyman and who becomes ordained, that it is Fanny who speaks out frequently on spiritual matters. Mary Crawford helps to clarify this doppelganger effect, when she says to Fanny, "You have a look of his sometimes" (MP 151). Furthermore, although Edmund is Fanny's teacher for a good portion of the novel, and it is Edmund who speaks of the duties of the clergyman as the teacher and example of the people, it is Fanny who ends up teaching the others, even Edmund and Sir Thomas. With these ideas in mind, we, perhaps, will see the conversations on the clergy in a different light.

Mary Crawford argues from the opinions of fashionable society that the clergyman is of no social consequence. She "fancies parsons were very inferior [in the past] even to what they are now." Edmund argues that clergymen influence manners, but "The *manners* I speak of, might rather be called *conduct*, perhaps the result of good

principles; the effect, in short, of those doctrines which it is their duty to teach and recommend; and it will, I believe, be every where found, that as the clergy are, or are not what they ought to be, so are the rest of the nation. ‘Certainly,’ said Fanny with gentle earnestness” (84). This one word emphasizes Fanny’s theology, that of the importance of the clergy and their teachings for the health of the nation. Although the clergymen of Jane Austen’s England did not all live lives in the image of Christ, as Mary so eagerly points out, it is Fanny who is fatigued with the overwhelming burden of the concern of doing what is right, of following right principles. David Lodge has recorded that “principle” is the key word in *MP* (Handley 76). For Fanny it is a Christian, Christ-like principle and she practises it faithfully.

Dr. Grant’s profession as a clergyman kept him from worse evils. In Edmund, Mary and Fanny’s discussion of Dr. Grant’s self-indulgence, Fanny is charitable towards him. She notes that he “would have been in a greater danger of becoming worse in a more active and worldly profession” (MP 101). His teaching others their duty, going to church twice every Sunday, and preaching very good sermons help make him a better man.

Fanny’s heart is spoken of frequently in the novel; we read of her tenderness, her great depth of feeling, her possession of more heart than most, and having a heart with no guile. Early in the novel, Edmund finds Fanny to have “an affectionate heart, and a strong desire of doing right” (MP 14). As for love, her heart was divided between William and Edmund. Her heart was gladdened when she was momentarily let off the hook of acting in the play, *Lovers’ Vows*, but her heart was against Edmund’s decision to act. She experiences “tremors of a most palpitating heart,” when she must act in Mrs. Grant’s place, her absence necessitated by Dr. Grant’s illness. Both Edmund and Fanny

“feel at heart” when reprimanded about the production of the play, by Sir Thomas.

Fanny’s tender heart suffers loneliness for her absent cousins who are undeserving of such affection. Austen supplies knowledge of Fanny’s guarded heart, when Mary Crawford learns of her brother’s cruel intentions to make Fanny love him. Although the word heart is not used, Edmund accuses Fanny of “feeling ... things a great deal too much” (237). Sir Thomas, in prompting Fanny to marry Henry, asks, “if your heart can acquit you of ingratitude,” which caused bitter crying and broke her heart (289). Fanny has a pre-engaged heart, unknown to Henry. Mary Crawford finds Fanny and the Bertrams to have “so much more heart among you, than one finds in the world at large” (326). Edmund, when discussing Maria and Henry’s running off, sees Fanny as one whose heart knew no guile and says that she should not suffer. She was too good to suffer at Henry Crawford’s hand. The use of the heart and feeling is outlined. These references attest to the Evangelical influence of the times, when heart, affection, and emotion were considered important components of Christian behaviour. Again we see Fanny as representative of the changing religious thinking in the Established Church of the day, and this capacity for feeling presents and clarifies her spirituality.

Fanny exemplifies most of the character traits shown in the sermons of Jane Austen’s day. She is emotional, imaginative, and intense. She believes herself corrupt and in need of improvement and salvation. She practises introspection and self-examination, and learns self-command. She prays, repents, and complains little as if she plays the martyr or the image of a persecuted holiness. She is an allegorical figure, representing the “incredible good”, virtue, or the spiritual borders of Christian living. She is always sincere and follows reason as her guide. She represents the Christian of her age, molded

in reason and form by the Established Church, yet controversially full of heart, feeling, and emotion. She is representative both of the Established Church and of the Evangelical influence.

Fanny is Mansfield Park's salvation, much as Christ is the individual's salvation. She gives Mansfield Park heart and love, where little or none exists. She establishes within it the Christian "aspirations on a higher plain" as Hannah More so beautifully stated it. The Park has rules and ritual, even tea is a ceremony, like the established religion of the day. Q.D Leavis tells us Mansfield stands for "heart"--strong instinctive feelings fully expressed (Leavis 122). Mansfield Park is orderliness, with all in their places, representing civilized society. Fanny sees this when she is at Portsmouth with all the domestic disorder. Even though Mansfield Park is "elegance, propriety, regularity, harmony, peace and tranquillity, with everybody having their due importance; everybody's feelings consulted," tenderness is missing. The outcome of the lives of the Bertram family attests to problems in the household. The children had no respect for the parents, except for Edmund. The sisters are in disgrace. In Sir Thomas's departure for Antigua, no love for him is shown. Maria has a "hatred of home, restraint, and tranquillity"(MP 182). Tom lives a prodigal life and becomes a sickly burden. Julia marries away from the family. Edmund is deceived by Mary for some time. Fanny becomes the only one of whom the Bertrams can be proud. She puts heart into Mansfield Park. Mary Crawford's moral shallowness is exposed. As Mary said to Fanny, "You are so good, that I depend upon being treated better than I deserve" (MP 395). Fanny treated everyone, including Mrs. Norris, better than they deserved. Finally the love shared by Edmund and Fanny, and their common love for the church and ministry, is on

that higher plain, like Christ's love for the church, and it establishes a totally different home in Mansfield Park, a home with heart. Fanny is the only one who can be trusted, it would seem, and her essential value is set free, establishing a home based on Christian love and principles.

IV *Persuasion*: Anne Elliot—Her Author's Christian Self

In Jane Austen's *Persuasion*, the heroine, Anne Elliot, is similar in her spirituality to Fanny Price, but she is also quite different. She reminds us of Jane Austen herself. "Anne is many people's favorite among Jane Austen's heroines" (Butler 283). She can also be seen as a Christ-like allegorical figure. Fanny and Anne are alike in their constancy, patience, and faithfulness. They are both outsiders in their families. Fanny is a cousin; Anne is a daughter and sister. Fanny is very poor and Anne is reasonably comfortable. They each have a gentle, meek, and humble presence, beginning as seemingly weak characters who evolve into strong, principled women. They are listeners to other people's problems and offer a great deal of charity, even to those who treat them unjustly or unkindly. They are first and foremost virtuous and loving. They are warm, sensitive, intelligent, and intuitive. They are different in social standing. Anne has more humour than Fanny, and Anne from the start is mature, whereas Fanny begins as a child and grows to maturity. Austen described Anne as "almost too good for me" (Koppel 94). She is a selfless, dutiful daughter. Marilyn Butler calls Anne "the resolute Christian, the perceptive bystander, implicitly the conscience and censor of her world. She rebukes the Elliots because she is above worldly vanity, the Musgrove elders because she is meditative; unlike Louisa, she has the real strength which derives from reflection, principle, and a sense of duty" (Butler 283). She never openly criticizes anyone but through her living example serves to show up the errors or faults of others. "Anne comes near to being dangerously perfect. ... Although it is given less explicit Christian coloring than Fanny's, her intense, withdrawn inner life would suggest the 'saint' even without her

hints to Captain Benwick on moral and religious reading” (284). “She ventured to recommend a larger allowance of prose in his daily study; and ... such works of our best moralists,... calculated to rouse and fortify the mind by the highest precepts, and the strongest examples of moral and religious endurances. ... [T] preach patience and resignation to a young man whom she had never seen before” (P 122). She thought he needed to balance his reading of Lord Byron with some prose. Benwick had been reading much of Byron and “Austen underlines the dire effects of certain kinds of romantic literature—most notoriously, perhaps, the works of Byron” (Booth 425). Fanny believes such works contribute to the follies of certain characters like Benwick. Booth states that certainly Byron contributed to Benwick’s weakness (426). Anne seems to be acting out her author’s literary and moral ideas. She is helping her neighbour, teaching him how to live with his loss of Fanny, his deceased fiancée, while directing his reading to fortify his mind with moral and religious ideas.

The question of how Anne can endure such harsh treatment by her family, the loss of her mother and the loss of the love of her life is uppermost in one’s mind while reading *Persuasion*. “Anne continues to serve and even try to love her [cold] sister and [vain] father during the difficult years after her unselfish rejection of Wentworth. [T]he motivations behind such decisions can more reasonably be traced to religious commitment, and the strength which results from such commitment, than to any other source” (Koppel 121). This seems plausible because there is definitely an inner strength drawn upon in her acceptance of life as it is, no matter how painful, while her self-denial seems painful to the reader.

Anne's strength and beauty is displayed against the failed authority on the part of her father at Kellynch-Hall and the disorder at the Musgroves. Anne's Christian values are made prominent when contrasted with the vanity, shallow self-importance and misjudgments of Sir Walter Elliot and his eldest daughter, Elizabeth. (P 8) Their extravagance, debt, and failed retrenchment are set against Anne's modest, humble, undemanding, and sound judgment. "Anne was nobody to either father or sister: her word had no weight; her convenience was always to give way; --she was only Anne" (37). Anne's father and sister acted toward her in many ways just as Mrs. Norris, Maria, and Julia acted toward Fanny. Anne had no choice of residence to which the Elliots must move. Bath was chosen, a place she disliked as she had spent three years there at school after her mother's death. She was saved temporarily from Bath because Mary, her hypochondriac, younger sister at Uppercross, needed her. Elizabeth was unforgivable in her comment, "Then I am sure Anne had better stay, for nobody will want her in Bath" (61). Sir Walter's cold treatment of Anne is evident in his dressing-down of Mrs. Smith, Anne's friend: "Westgate-buildings! Said he: and who is Miss Anne Elliot to be visiting in Westgate-buildings? --a Mrs. Smith. A widow...and who was her husband?...Upon my word...you have the most extraordinary taste! Everything that revolts other people, low company, paltry rooms, foul air, disgusting associations, are inviting to you"(P 169).

Anne's arrival at Camden Place, Bath, also shows how she was ignored. Anne looked upon it as an imprisonment. "Her father and sister were glad to see her, for the sake of showing her the house and furniture. [T]hey had no inclination to listen to her" (151). She was basically "overlooked." There is little wonder, with her experience of loss and unkindness, that she became pale and fragile in health. Throughout this mistreatment,

and more, Anne is gentle, kind, respectful, and gracious to all and never has a negative word to say about them.

The loss of her mother must not be minimized, for Anne was only fourteen, a time when one's mother is of vital importance. Her suffering was terrible, but she found support in Lady Russell, who loved her. Lady Russell was a benevolent, charitable, good woman, of strict integrity, yet prejudiced in that "she had a value for rank and consequence" (42). Anne was aware of their differences of opinion, for example, in regards to Wentworth and the young Mr. Elliot, but their close friendship remained intact. Anne shows the depth of her forgiveness in forgiving Lady Russell's advice on her proposed marriage to Wentworth eight years ago. Although the eight-year loss of Wentworth caused Anne to suffer in silence, his rejection of her on his return to Kellynch Village might have created in her a dislike for him. Instead, her forgiveness of him is quite plausible when we consider Anne's constant, loving, kind and benevolent heart: "the love at the core of Anne Elliot's personality is nourished, perhaps even kept alive, by her close friendship with Lady Russell, and by Anne's deep personal commitment to serve her unappreciative family, Sir Walter, Elizabeth, and Mary and her children" (Koppel 39). She gained some fulfillment from helping her family members and friends—Mrs. Smith, and Benwick.

Anne's benevolence as well as her judgment are perfectly shown in her choice of visiting her poor, suffering friend, Mrs. Smith, rather than the pedantic Lady Dalrymple whose sudden invitation she received. Anne's kind, compassionate visits to Mrs. Smith reveal once more her Christ-like characteristics.

A small but significant trait is observed by Anne in the young Mr. Elliot. She noted in him some bad habits—Sunday travelling and carelessness on all serious matters (172). We learn that Anne goes to church on Sundays (115). This directs one to her endeavour to keep the Sabbath day holy and to think carefully on serious matters, two of the teachings found in eighteenth century sermons.

Anne has all the Christian, domestic qualities for the lady of the house as taught by the Established Church, qualities magnified when viewed against the disorder of the households at Uppercross. The disorder at the Musgroves can be seen as a lack of cordial relationships: unruly children, impulsive, unthinking behaviour, trivial actions, back-biting, excessive complaining, and pretense, all overshadowed by hunting, attending the assizes, an array of dinner parties, music, and dancing. It is the trivial, unthinking, external lives of those in society as Marilyn Butler calls it. “Around 1816 the basic characteristic of the Christian was felt to be her rich, inner life, compared with the trivial, unthinking, external lives of those in society” (290). (*Persuasion* was published in 1818 after Jane Austen’s death, which meant it was written during 1816-17.) This disorder among the Musgroves at Uppercross, the first class of society in the country, both at the mansion house and Mary and Charles’s cottage, focuses on Mary, the hypochondriac at odds with her mother-in-law and her husband, always putting herself forward before the elder Mrs. Musgrove, and complaining to Anne of how badly she suffers. She does not want to be a mother to her children; the children obey Anne better than they do either parent. Mary and Charles leave Anne with their injured child while they immaturely and selfishly go to his parents for dinner. Mary and Charles are frequently out of humour. They disagree over the children and blame each other for their disorderly conduct. Anne

becomes an umpire between Charles and Mary. Mrs. Musgrove, the children's grandmother, keeps them in tolerable order by feeding them more cake than is good for them. Charles Musgrove "did nothing with much zeal, but sport; and his time was otherwise trifled away, without benefit from books, or anything else" (70). Anne had refused Charles' offer of marriage and it was thought that Lady Russell felt that "He was not learned and bookish enough for Anne" (111).

The Musgroves' home was visited by everybody; they were very popular and put on rather constant dinner parties. There was music, singing, talking, and laughing in their home. One merry, joyous party is described and there is so much of friendliness and of flattery; the old so hospitable; the young so agreeable. Henrietta and Louisa, the more lively and of higher spirits, are both infatuated with Captain Wentworth, which creates some rivalry with Charles Hayter, the curate, who has set his mind on Henrietta. Anne had to bear with all this frivolity, with great pain. Both girls are somewhat shallow and wild, wild for dancing. All of this activity is presented as quite superficial, if not artificial, when viewed by Anne's serious nature.

Nor was all joy and gaiety, for there was also the death of young Dick Musgrove abroad before he was twenty, which caused anxiety in his mother and further disorder in the family. He had been "a very troublesome, hopeless" son (76). The Musgroves were wretched comforters for each other. The whole family seemed to depend quite fully on Anne for support, then, and also when young Charles fell and broke his collar-bone, and when Louisa fell at the Cobb in Lyme. Anne, viewed against this disorder, becomes almost a saint, the allegory of the near perfect Christian, showing her unselfishness versus their total self-involvement; using her calm, patient assistance and support in time

of need; denying any pleasure for herself in order that others may have their way; being everyone's confidante without a word against anyone. "She could do little more than listen patiently, soften every grievance, and excuse each to the other, give them all hints of the forbearance necessary between such near neighbors" (72). She is most charitable when she allows herself to believe that Captain Wentworth may be happy with Louisa and that there is no hope for her relationship with him. Anne, in contrast to the rest of the family, is not wishing for attention even from Captain Wentworth at this time in the novel, yet everyone seeks her attention, even young Walter, who besieges her by climbing on her back. On one dinner party occasion "Anne offered her services, as usual, and though her eyes would sometimes fill with tears as she sat at the instrument, she was extremely glad to be employed, and desired nothing in return but to be unobserved" (95). Here we see her humility, her striving to be content in the situation in which she finds herself, and as usual offering her services to others. This, of course, is played out in contrast to the Musgroves, Crofts, and Captain Wentworth, all having a merry and joyous time.

With all the "bustles at Uppercross", and the "domestic hurricanes" at the Musgroves, Anne has little peace, but on going to Lyme she becomes revitalized at the Harvilles, a warm and friendly type of home. Her bloom and freshness of youth returned. Anne relaxed in this setting as it seemed a more fitting place for a woman of such Christian and domestic qualities. The Harvilles' home was a "picture of repose and domestic happiness" (120). Mrs. Harville was a caring person. Mr. Harville was open, obliging, and the perfect gentleman. Their children were not conspicuous, but seen and not heard. They are only mentioned. It was not the smallness of the house and rooms and the

inexpensive value, but the Harvilles' sympathy and good-will to Captain Benwick, and the uncommon hospitality, friendly and warm reception to the Musgrove, Wentworth and Elliot party that impressed Anne. Louisa, taken there after her fall, is given Mrs. Harville's bed and Harville arranged everything. They were so kind, sincere and obliging. Everyone was "united ... by the distress of the day" (135). The Harvilles reflect Anne's goodness, while Captain Benwick is another example of a sorrowing heart like Anne's. It is through their conversation that we see Anne assisting a fellow sufferer—Captain Benwick—to deal with great loss, his great love Fanny.

Anne's whole experience at Lyme—the sea air, the charming environment, the cliffs, the Cobb, the tide, the sea-shore—refreshes her, but one cannot underestimate the effect of the attention given to Anne by Mr. Elliot, which is noticed by Wentworth. This inspired her hope and confidence. This experience is contrasted to Anne's experiences in secluded Kellynch or Camden Place, those cold, unfriendly, artificial, pretentious places. There, her genuine, simple, quiet, and humble presence stands out like a single rose among thorns. Her Christian respect to her failed father and her charity to her misguided sister seem beyond most human ability.

There are at least three scenes in the novel where Anne is seen to possess the characteristics of constancy, hope, love, and forgiveness, like Christ. These scenes are at Lyme when Louisa falls and Anne displays her calmness and strength (P 129), in the drawing room at the White Hart when Anne and Captain Benwick converse to reveal Anne's constancy (235-38), and when Anne nurses her nephew, Charles, to show her kindness and selflessness (82). A fourth scene may be added as an indirect description of Anne, when Wentworth and Louisa are discussing the nut, which conveys strength and

beauty, firmness without weakness (110). To this may be added the daughterly duty when she attended to Lady Russell's advice not to marry Wentworth.

Anne might have become a vengeful Heathcliff, for he was forced to give up his beloved Catherine (Jack 149,166), but Anne depicts nothing of vengeance, only all that the term forgiveness, in its widest sense, entails. "Forgiveness is precisely the deep and abiding sense of what relation—with God or with other human beings—can and should be; and so it is itself a stimulus, an irritant, necessarily provoking protest at impoverished versions of social and personal relations" (Bass 135). Anne performed her daughterly duty in her acceptance of Lady Russell's advice without vengeance and expressed her forgiveness of the wrong done to her. This behaviour and her forgiveness of Wentworth's behavior on his return to Somersetshire symbolize her non-vengeful nature and her forgiving heart. She does her duty toward her parent-guardian—Christian action in keeping with the teachings of the church.

I have been thinking over the past, and trying impartially to judge of the right and the wrong, I mean with regard to myself; and I must believe that I was right, much as I suffered from it, that I was perfectly right in being guided by the friend whom you will love better than you do now. To me, she was in the place of a parent. Do not mistake me, however, I am not saying that she did not err in her advice. It was, perhaps, one of those cases in which advise is good or bad only as the event decides; and for myself, I certainly never should, in any circumstance of tolerable similarity, give such advice. But I mean, that I was right in submitting to

her, and if I had done otherwise, I should have suffered more in continuing the engagement than I did even in giving it up, because I should have suffered in my conscience. I have now, as far as such a sentiment is allowable in human nature, nothing to reproach myself with; and if I mistake not, a strong sense of duty is no bad part of a woman's portion.

(248)

Anne is at peace in accepting Lady Russell's advice because she believes that it was the right action to have taken, based on the Christian principle of respect for one's parent or guardian.

Louisa's fall at Lyme recalls another fall, that of young Charles who had fallen and injured his back and broken his collar bone. These scenes allow an accurate observance of Anne's inner strength, inner peace, and her love of others. When little Charles is brought home injured, the responsibility for everything seemed to fall on Anne. "Anne had everything to do at once—the apothecary to send for—the father to have pursued and informed—the mother to support and keep from hysterics—the servants to control—the youngest child to banish, and the poor, suffering one to attend to; ...besides sending proper notice to the other house" (P 79). These actions are only exceeded by her kindness and selflessness in staying with young Charles while his mother Mary and father Charles go to the Musgroves for dinner. Louisa's fall on the Cobb at Lyme caused Mary to say "She is dead" and her face is described like death (129). It is again Anne who takes charge, in the face of possible death; she orders Benwick to comfort Wentworth, then with Charles attending Wentworth, sends Benwick for the surgeon (P 130). Anne rubs Louisa's hands and temples and tries salts to arouse her, while trying to

comfort all those involved. One is reminded of Jesus' healing of pain and sickness and in little Charles's case His love and blessing of children. These events are also closely linked to the good works so emphasized in the sermons of the time.

Woman's position in the home, according to the eighteenth-century church, was a modest, obedient, self-denying and caring one, but her value was highest in regard to her chastity and constancy. Anne, even in her single state, is portrayed as the perfect virtue of constancy. She is the allegory of Constancy. James Clifford has quite recently described allegory as

The employment of one set of agents and images with actions and accompaniments correspondent, so as to convey, while in disguise, either moral qualities or conceptions of the mind that are not in themselves objects of the senses, or other images, agents, fortunes, and circumstances so that the difference is everywhere presented to the eye or imagination, while the likeness is suggested to the mind: and this connectedly, so that the parts combine to form a consistent whole. (Clifford 101)

Anne's consistent pattern of Christian behaviour illustrates this allegory of constancy, even more so the allegory of the Christ-like Christian.

In her conversation with Captain Harville she claims that women do not forget men as soon as men forget women. She describes the life of a woman: "We live at home, quiet, confined, and our feelings prey upon us" (236). They discuss inconstancy. Harville using the Bible—Psalms and Proverbs—to demonstrate women's fickleness. Anne, anything but fickle, will not allow books to be used because of the inequality between women's and men's education, but she strongly claims for her own sex the tenet "of

loving longest, when existence or when hope is gone" (238). The reader can see she is speaking from experience, and explicitly displaying her constancy and hope. If one looks closely one can see an effort on Anne's part to let Wentworth, who is sitting a few feet from them, know she remains faithful to him and thus we know of her hope for their future together. Although she had feared ever to hope again, it appears she does now. Further proof of her constancy, if necessary, is found in her refusal of marriage to Charles Musgrove, who afterwards marries her sister Mary. Anne seems to have resigned herself to Wentworth or nobody and her agitations whenever he is around, or about to come around, vividly demonstrate her constant love for him. He affects her as only a beloved one might: "She was much affected by the view of his disposition towards her. [I]t was proof of his own warm and amiable heart, which she could not contemplate without emotions so compounded of pleasure and pain, that she knew not which prevailed" (113). Anne's emotion, her blushes and anxiety are quite evident when Mrs. Croft speaks of her brother Edward who has married, for Anne thinks it is Frederick.. Again she experiences agitation when Wentworth shows up during breakfast at Charles Musgrove's: "A thousand feelings rushed on Anne" (84). A certain proof of her constancy is that "with all her reasonings, she found that to retentive feelings eight years may be little more than nothing" (85). Time has stood still in her constant love and faithfulness to Wentworth. Anne's devoted self represents the virtuous woman whose price is above rubies, (Proverbs 31:10) the Christian companion idealized by the church of Austen's time. Her character recalls Fordyce's sermons, especially his sixth sermon on female virtue, emphasizing domestic and elegant accomplishments, highlighting that she be a sober, modest, chaste, keeper of the home. Furthermore, Anne's rejection of Mr. Elliot

continues to show her constancy, even though he has such a high estimation of her merit, in that he describes her modesty as “too modest, for the world in general to be aware of half her accomplishments, and too highly accomplished for modesty to be natural in any other woman” (P 196). Mr. Elliot has no possibility of winning such a constant heart.

Lousia and Wentworth’s discussion of the “nut”, overheard by Anne, tells us more about Anne than it does about Louisa to whom it is subscribed. This metaphor comparing character to the strength and firmness of a nut describes Anne perfectly. She is the epitome of one who will stand firmly by her principles. What is interpreted as weakness, in following Lady Russell’s advice not to marry Wentworth, is actually strength in self-denial and adherence to the Christian principle of honoring one’s father and mother or guardian as the case may be. Marilyn Butler speaks of Captain Wentworth’s praise of the nut as his symbol for hidden richness, perfection and strength. “Anne, the hidden listener, has ... all the richness and secret strength he is attributing to Louisa” (278). Anne is finely represented by the image of the nut—rich at the kernel, and made private by its strong defensive exterior shell. Anne suffers and rejoices in silence for the most part and we see her richness expressed in her feelings not obviously apparent to others in the novel.

Anne is never so close to following the Christian teaching of her day as when she follows through on her guardian Lady Russell’s advice not to marry Captain Wentworth when they were young and had not the means. Samuel Clarke spoke in his sermons regarding superiors, to respect and obey them. Sherlock also taught love for superiors, to honour and respect them. They also preached that virtuous behaviour brought happiness. Secker spoke of reason and moderation, and that the secret of happiness was a quiet

acceptance of life as one finds it. Furthermore Hugh Blair spoke of government of the heart, that one should govern one's passions by practising self-denial. In true concurrence with the teaching by learned clergymen of her day, Austen created Anne to be obedient to her guardian and therefore she had no problem accepting Lady Russell's advice. She later had difficulty living with her decision, but never blamed Lady Russell. Lady Russell was her mother's appointed guardian and Anne believed, right or wrong, the right action was to accept Lady Russell's decision, all would work out for the best.

Anne has been criticized as not matching her world, not fitting into the world of reality (Butler 283). It is a truism for the follower of Christ. This is a common problem for the Christian and further affirms her Christian character. The conflict is played out perfectly in the "nut" symbol. Anne is rich in her pure, interior life, while her exterior is hard like the shell of the nut, the better to buffet the slings and arrows of a tough, real world, and necessary for the survival of the Christian in an external, secular world.

Anne is Christ-like, an imitator of Christ. It is seen in her likeness to Fanny: in her advice given to Captain Benwick; in her charitable, respectful relationship with her proud, vain, and demeaning family; in her daughterly duty through self-denial and her forgiveness of Lady Russell's advice; in her forgiveness of Wentworth's folly; in her benevolence to Mrs. Smith; in her judgment of Mr. Elliot; in her attendance at church; in her domestic qualities while at Uppercross; in her bloom and freshness at the Harvilles where she takes on renewed life and hope; in her inner strength seen in her nursing of Louisa at Lyme; in her conversation of constancy with Captain Benwick at the White Hart (significantly pure heart); in her nursing her nephew, Charles; and lastly in her indirect (Wentworth and Louisa talk of the nut) comparison to the 'nut'.

V *Emma*: Atonement and Redemption

The Christian pattern manifests itself differently in *Emma* and in *Pride and Prejudice*. It is perhaps more difficult to glimpse the spirituality or the spirit of the Christian in Emma, or in Elizabeth, but a careful analysis will demonstrate that each one of them attains a state of atonement, enlightenment, and redemption. Unlike Fanny Price Or Anne Elliot, neither Emma nor Elizabeth begin in a true Christian spirit; they must learn their spiritual enlightenment from others. Whereas Fanny and Anne are allegorical figures of Christian affirmation and may be said to be searching for their true home (Shields 13), they are accepting of their situations, are searching for their rightful purpose in life, and set the larger than life example of the true Christian. Emma and Elizabeth are educated by the dedicated hearts of Knightley and Darcy. “The character of Emma—by Christian standards, is the most deeply flawed of Jane Austen’s heroines” (Koppel 37). Susan Morgan has observed that “Emma’s ‘leap beyond the self’ is clearly applicable to a Christian interpretation—the combating of pride, of egotism, is one of the prime challenges to the religious person” (52). In *Emma*, George Knightley is the gentle, gallant, exemplary Christian figure who guides Emma to self-knowledge, true repentance, and regeneration. He reminds us of Edmund Spenser’s Redcrosse Knight, in Book I of *The Faerie Queene*, who is Saint George, the patron saint of England, who represents Holiness (Abrams et al 150).

Emma is educated by Mr. Knightley, her moral guardian and counsellor, her voice of conscience, who points out her errors, for which she suffers and atones (Kantrov 172). She is redeemed through the love of Mr. Knightley, who in his near perfection seems to

represent a Christ-like figure in the novel. He is the model Christian gentleman—humble, charitable, and accurate in judgment, of firm principles. He loves Emma, wants to guide and teach her, and is completely reliable. He leads Emma to a knowledge of humility, love, truth, and charity. Butler has said that Emma's moral progress towards the truth is the central theme of *Emma* (269). For the Christian, the imitation of Christ is the truth. Emma moves toward this Christian truth, led by Knightley.

Knightley offers Emma his enacting of Christian virtues. He exhibits humility in his frugal and careful habits, for example “keeping no horses, having little spare money...to getting about as he could, not using his carriage so often” (E 196). He is benevolent in considering Jane Fairfax's ill health by providing a carriage for Miss Bates and her niece, to the Coles' dinner party, which is humbly done as “an act of unostentatious kindness” (206). Emma calls Mr. Knightley good-natured, useful, considerate, and benevolent, not a gallant man, but a very humane one. He practises charity by sending yearly a sack of apples to poor Miss Bates (219). He is an ideal neighbour, brother, magistrate and landowner who judges rightly. He is a fair and concerned employer as shown in his support of Robert Martin. He is a best friend and counsellor to Robert, who seeks his advice about marrying Harriet. He lives a relatively quiet life: when he is at home he reads or settles his accounts; he walks over to Highbury frequently. He is useful to Mr. Woodhouse, “so ready to write his letters, ... so glad to assist him,... so cheerful, so attentive, so attached to him” (432). He takes pity on Harriet at the dance and dances with her when Mr. Elton has so badly neglected her. He “attempts tender consideration” when he consoles Emma regarding her supposed loss of Frank (394). He is happy with his farm, sheep, library, and parish to manage, and with his brother's children (207).

Emma regards him as a Christ-like figure when “She supposed she must say more before she were entitled to his clemency” (395). This is the language of forgiveness in the true Christian sense. Emma’s is thinking of confession and repentance, in order that she may be forgiven and receive pardon. Again Emma implies something similar when she reflects that “Mr. Knightley, always so kind, so feeling, so truly considerate for everybody, would never deserve to be less worshipped than now” (417). His Christian behaviour and his values command her respect.

Emma, on the other hand, is blinded with a deeply flawed character for much of the novel. Her pride, egotism and lack of feeling for others are interestingly offset by her love for her father, in which she is flawless. “The real evils indeed of Emma’s situation were the power of having rather too much her own way, and a disposition to think a little too well of herself” (5). These evils revolve around her feelings for other people, her duty to others, personal relationships, and treatment of her neighbours. This is most clear when her character is compared to Frank Churchill. She has a penchant for matchmaking and a reckless desire to manage and control. She has no patience, no industry, only makes lists and rarely sits still long enough to read. She was composed of two spirits, a vain one and a serious one, a spirit of self-will and one of conscience. She visits the poor and the sick. She feels she has no need to marry. She exhibits compassion, kindness, respect and patience, toward her father. She also has a natural ease with children. Emma displays some forbearance and keeps the peace at times. However, virtuous behaviour remains a struggle for Emma, who is far from the perfection of Anne or Fanny. She must learn to overcome her defects, to know herself and use self-command for good. Mr. Knightley is truly her best conscience.

There are several important scenes where Emma is reproved by Mr. Knightley. We are informed early in the novel of this: "Mr. Knightley ... was one of the few people who could see faults in Emma Woodhouse, and the only one who ever told her of them" (10). John Knightley also sees Emma as "blind and ignorant and in want of counsel" but he takes little interest in correcting her. It is George Knightley who corrects her in regard to her "success" in matching Miss Taylor with Mr. Weston, pointing out the reality to Emma's fantasy (12). He corrects her in the matter of Harriet Smith's desire to marry Robert Martin and warns her that she is not a friend to Harriet if she pursues her attempts to undo Harriet's affection for Robert (57-9). Emma's dislike of Jane Fairfax does unjustified injury to her. She is envious of Jane's perfection, idolized by all, and distrusts her reserved nature. Knightley reproaches her for ignoring Jane Fairfax: "It is very shameful" to neglect Jane; she has "neglected her too long"; she "ought to have been more her friend" (268). Emma is also reproached by Knightley for her cruel treatment of the poor Miss Bates at the Boxhill picnic. The most complicated reproach is when Knightley, who is envious of Frank in his attention to Emma, attempts to correct Emma for her judgement regarding Frank Churchill (396). Frank has behaved mysteriously and mischievously, and has not been open. This is not unlike the way Emma has acted.

The Evangelical teaching of Jane Austen's day readily applies to Emma, who is weak, fallible and in need of redemption. One sees her faults rather constantly in her relationships with several other characters in the novel. These include Harriet Smith, Jane Fairfax, Miss Bates, and Frank Churchill.

Emma is deceived by Frank Churchill. She totally misjudges him. She fails to recognize her inner self in her resolve never to marry while flirting with Frank. He

dances with her and is greatly attentive to her at the Coles' party, making rude remarks about Jane Fairfax (212). Emma imagines that Frank is in love with her. Her self-deception springs from her pride and selfishness. Frank virtually makes a fool of her, yet Emma is never really serious about him, for her imagination has already chosen Frank for Harriet. Frank and Emma are very similar characters in their deceit, secretiveness, and lack of seriousness. Their failing openness is reproved by Mr. Knightly. Early in the novel Mr. Knightley sees Frank as proud, luxurious, selfish, a son who neglects his duty to his father (135). Frank differs from Emma here, for she loves and respects her father. Knightley distrusts Frank and suspects that Frank likes Jane; he discovers Frank's double-dealing along with Emma's blindness. Although Knightley tries to show Emma the attachment between Frank and Jane, Emma denies it and is sure there is no admiration between them (323-24). Frank's relationship with Emma reaches a fever pitch when he asks Emma at the Boxhill picnic, in front of Jane, to find him a wife (345). Totally deceived in regard to the relationship between Jane and Frank, Emma continues to have Harriet in mind for Frank. When Mrs. Weston relates news of Frank and Jane's long, secret engagement, Emma's reply reveals her surprise, "Jane Fairfax!—Good God! " (366). Frank has, as Knightley notes, "[N]one of that upright integrity, that strict adherence to truth and principle, that disdain of trick and littleness, which a man should display in every transaction of his life" (368). One might add, neither has Emma, for she has done much the same in her matchmaking schemes. It is only toward the end of the novel that Emma repents and admits her blindness about Frank. She wishes she had attended to Mr. Knightley's caution (393) and when he attempts to console her for her loss of Frank, she confesses that she is ashamed and that she never was attached to Frank

(394). She also admits that it was her blindness to what was going on that led her to such actions and that her vanity was flattered. Mr. Knightley concludes by calling Frank the favourite of fortune, for he has used every body ill and they are delighted to forgive him (396). Emma has received a lesson and grown with this experience, but to speak of Emma's relationship with Frank without including her treatment of Jane Fairfax is only half the picture.

Jane Fairfax is very accomplished and superior as well as being just Emma's age, so it is expected that they would be friends. However, we read that she is "a person she[Emma] did not like" (152). She had reflected on why she did not like her and remembered "Mr. Knightley had once told her it was because she saw in her the accomplished young woman, which she wanted to be thought herself" (152). Her conscience tells her this is true at times. Emma's feelings begin to change toward Jane but only for a short time; "she determines to dislike her no longer," she feels compassion and respect for her; "she recants her past prejudices and errors" (153-4). Emma relapses from her charitable feelings when she again sees Jane showing off her superior piano skills and when she notices her suspicious reservation (154). Emma appears to be deeply jealous of Jane. She could not forgive Jane, for she is suspicious in view of Jane's reserve that Jane has somehow betrayed Frank with a questionable relationship with Mr. Dixon, who had married Colonel and Mrs. Campbell's daughter for her money. Knightley sings the praise of Jane Fairfax and Emma begins to pity Jane. Genuine or not, she sends her and Miss Bates a hind-quarter of pork. Emma is beginning to give Jane the attention recommended earlier by Mr. Knightley. Emma is again "determined not to utter a word that should hurt Jane Fairfax's feelings" (275). Emma pities Jane, befriends

her and strives to like her better, yet she is also cruel to her at Boxhill as mentioned above. Jane becomes ill and one learns she has given up on Frank and accepted a position as governess with Mrs. Smallridge. This creates in Emma a need to be kind to her and she goes to great lengths to help her but Jane refuses all of Emma's efforts. Emma is sorry, very sorry, mortified (362). Her intentions are good and no reproof is necessary from Mr. Knightley. Emma, in essence, repents. She recognizes her errors or sins and expresses a contrite heart, while she tries to make amends. She understands Jane's reaction to her offers of help. Emma confesses to making Jane unhappy. She bitterly regrets her actions and "Of all the sources of evil surrounding the former [Jane], ... she was persuaded that she must have been the worst " (390). She realizes that she has not loved her neighbour as one ought in the Christian sense and that her behaviour towards Jane has the aura of evil — jealousy, covetousness, ego.

Emma and Miss Bates represent the neighbourly relationship that brings the novel to its climax on Boxhill. Emma displays her sarcastic attitude toward Miss Bates earlier when Frank asks if he should call Miss Bates for her opinion regarding the dance arrangements. "'You will get nothing to the purpose from Miss Bates', said Emma. 'She will be all delight and gratitude, but she will tell you nothing. ... I see no advantage in consulting Miss Bates'" (235). She deplorably belittles Miss Bates. Mr. Weston's words tell us how wrong Emma is: " We are growing a little too nice. She is a standing lesson of how to be happy " (235). This is a foreshadowing of Emma's cruel treatment at the Boxhill picnic, when she rudely and mockingly tells everyone that Miss Bates will have difficulty in speaking only *three* dull things. (342) Emma delights in her cleverness. She is presiding over the picnic and seems to allow her arrogance full play. Knightley

reproaches Emma most sternly for her conduct. She lacks compassion for the poor, for Miss Bates. Her deficiency is expressed earlier in that she also seldom went near Miss Bates and was negligent in contributing to her comfort. She is sorry to the point of tears, thus regretting her behaviour. With penitent heart, true contrition, and hope of forgiveness, she visits Miss Bates the next morning. This is the third lesson in self-knowledge and human relationships between Emma and the other characters.

The most involved relationship, discounting Emma's relationship with Mr. Knightley, that lays open Emma's sins, is her relationship with Harriet Smith. Emma through Harriet touches Robert Martin, Mr. Elton, Frank Churchill, and Mr. Knightley. Emma's relationship to Harriet contains the most mischievous elements because she nearly caused her to lose the man who loved her and was best suited for her. She might have ruined her life.

Emma's arrogance in supposing that she will lose Harriet's friendship and that Harriet will be cut off from all good society (meaning Emma's) if Harriet marries Robert Martin is the height of vanity. After urging Harriet to refuse Robert's offer of marriage, and setting her plan in motion for Mr. Elton to be the groom, she was sorry but could not repent even though Mr. Knightley was angry (65). She continues her mischief by being dishonest in her attempts to leave Harriet alone with Mr. Elton, lying about her untied shoelace so that she stays behind them (83-4). Emma does not see Mr. Elton with much clarity and is totally surprised when he professes his love for her, causing her to become quite angry (121). Emma has brought the greater evil on Harriet. Harriet, herself has been deceived, misled, mistaken and disgraced by Emma's misjudgment. One notices the mention of evil at least a dozen times in the novel on pages 125, 129, 130, 140, 165,

171, 182, 208, 402, 417, 419, 438. Here Emma has “the conviction of her having blundered most dreadfully”, and she wakes the next morning “ready to see alleviations of the evil before her” and the “evil hanging over her” (128-30). Emma does penance with Harriet; she was “grossly mistaken and misjudging”. Her confession completely renewed her first shame” (131). Emma is humbled and comforts Harriet. She is atoning for her errors and is learning about her fallibility. Mr. Elton becomes “a moral light, as a penance, a lesson, a source of profitable humiliation to her own mind. [H]e gave Emma pain” (167-8). However, at this point, Emma could still not repent for separating Harriet from Robert Martin.

Emma’s next misjudgment is that she imagines Harriet and Frank together. It seems she cannot prevent herself from match-making or one might say that the devil makes good use of idleness. Emma is reminded of her sins by Harriet and her treasure Tunbridge-ware box containing fond mementoes of Mr. Elton. She once again confesses her sins and her shame over her senseless tricks. Emma is no friend to Harriet, who is “the second time the dupe of her [Emma’s] misconception and flattery.” Emma “had been risking her friend’s happiness on most insufficient grounds” (372). Emma makes another grave mistake when she thinks Harriet is speaking of Frank rescuing her from the gypsies when she actually means the incident when Mr. Knightley asked her to dance when she was left alone and insulted by Mr. Elton (376). When Emma realizes it is Mr. Knightley of whom Harriet speaks, it is like an epiphany for her. She is suddenly aware that “Mr. Knightley must marry no-one but herself” (378). She sees her own conduct as improper, inconsiderate, indelicate, irrational, unfeeling, blind, mad, a poor counsel to Harriet. She suffers inwardly.

She was most sorrowfully indignant; ashamed of every sensation but the one revealed to her — her affection for Mr. Knightley. — Every other part of her mind was disgusting.

With insufferable vanity had she believed herself in the secret of everybody's feelings; with unpardonable arrogance proposed to arrange everybody's destiny. She was proved to be universally mistaken; and she had not quite done nothing — for she had done mischief. She had brought evil on Harriet, on herself, and she too much feared, on Mr. Knightley. (382)

Emma regrets her behaviour, feels contrite, and atones for her sins. Evidence for this is plainly given: "She felt for Harriet, with pain and contrition" (399). One might say that Emma learns the truth and is saved, once she recognizes it, by her love of Mr. Knightley, the Christian example.

Emma fails time and again, attempts to do better, but has difficulty in her self-command. She realizes that her wretchedness is all her own work. She resolves on her own better conduct once more and hopes to be more rational and more acquainted with herself in the future. Mr. Knightley's declaration of love for Emma changes her. She has the certainty of being loved, "Faultless in spite of all her faults" (400). This situation suggests Christ's love for the individual who is loved regardless of his or her sins. Mr. Knightley's unrelenting love and correction of Emma's faults seems to clear her of her ignorance, jealousy, and mistrust, while the truth prevails. Forgiveness from Jane, Miss Bates, and Harriet are achieved. Emma forgives Frank and is "now in perfect charity with Frank" (403). Mr. Knightley beautifully describes the later relationships as he

states: "My Emma, does not everything serve to prove more and more the beauty of truth and sincerity in all our dealings with each other?" (413). Emma's lessons of her past folly teach her humility and circumspection. Her love for her father and her consideration of him in her marriage to Mr. Knightley give further proof of Emma's redemption from her sins. She fails, suffers, regrets, is remorseful, is penitent, forgiven, and redeemed as in the Christian plan of salvation. Christ's presence is felt through Mr. Knightley.

The reasonable, sober, moral evaluation and the Christian religious language used in *Emma* are in keeping with Jane Austen's time and the teachings of the Established Church, which further substantiates the view of Emma's regeneration and Christian character. The emotions of the Evangelicals and the reason of Tillotson, Clarke, and Butler are merged to bring about Emma's enlightenment and regeneration. Throughout Emma's learning and regeneration her spirituality is evident. There is a spirit world beyond the everyday one. Her serious spirit and her vain spirit, were each in conflict with the other. Her serious spirit overcame her vanity, guided by Mr. Knightley's love, the love of the Christ-like figure. The novel's ending reveals a changed Emma, in peaceful harmony with all the other characters with perhaps the exception of the Eltons on which she will need to work. She is not perfect yet as is in keeping with all the Christian teachings of her time.

VI *Pride and Prejudice*: Elizabeth and Darcy Repent and Reform

Dorothy Van Ghent says of Jane Austen that her “subject matter is itself so limited—limited to the manners of a small section of English country gentry who apparently never have been worried about death or sex, hunger or war, guilt or God. [I]t [*Pride and Prejudice*] (*P & P* hereafter) makes no pretense to rival—the spiritual profundity of the very greatest novels” (*P&P* 362-63). However, *P & P* offers all the elements of character change that are in keeping with the spiritual profundity of the Christian journey that we find in eighteenth century sermons. Faults, failures, weaknesses, and sins are reproved; the spiritual journey is expressed most profoundly in the confessions and forgiveness which is depicted in the moral regeneration in both Elizabeth and Darcy. The deepest part of their spiritual lives is touched, while most of the other characters, among them Mr. Collins, Lydia, Mrs. Bennet, and Lady Catherine, remain as shallow examples of the very defects that the main characters amend. Darcy and Elizabeth demonstrate faults that are rectified through their love for each other. In contrast to Emma, who is guided and taught by Mr. Knightley, Darcy and Elizabeth mutually assist each other. They learn from one another. Both are spiritually changed in temper and disposition by the end of the novel. They both must go through a sort of “conversion” experience in this changing.

Elizabeth has to overcome her pride and prejudice where Darcy is concerned. In the beginning she is less than charitable towards him, but eventually sees him in a different way in order to realize his true qualities. Her sorrow and regret or repentance over her own mistakes, recognized finally at Pemberley, is atonement enough and she experiences

a form of redemption or reconciliation, with all forgiven and changed. Where once she was blind, she now sees or is enlightened. She is redeemed.

Marion E. Crowe points to the place of Christian spirit or orthodox faith in *P&P*. She argues that G.K. Chesterton's claims about romance, that in romance erotic love, adventure stories, and orthodox faith are all combined, is fully illustrated in Jane Austen's *P & P* (Crowe 219-21). Christian faith and spirituality in the novels can be traced in *P & P*, by using Chesterton's comparison of romance to orthodox faith, and by recalling what the Established Church says about self-knowledge, temper, disposition, truth, humility, self-command, the power of the passions, the state of the heart and relationship to one's neighbors, and applying this knowledge to the novel.

The Established Church and the clergy's teaching of the time are evident in the transformation of the characters—Darcy and Elizabeth. Tillotson's emphasis on the importance of self-knowledge and the idea that the true Christian is known by the temper and disposition of his mind are plainly observed in Darcy and Elizabeth. Among many examples is Darcy's asking Elizabeth to destroy his letter which he says was written while he was in a wrong temper (254). Truth is also one of the prominent themes in the sermons of the eighteenth century. Truth is seriously sought amidst the appearances and deceit prevalent in the novel. Elizabeth continually strives to know the truth about Darcy, Wickham and her own feelings. Clark's sermons emphasize humility and how one's actions determine a person's true character. Both main characters' actions reveal their true selves and they are humbled in the process of their regeneration. We note Blair's idea of self-command and the power of the passions, as well as his preaching on the state of the heart in determining moral character. This thinking is based on the Old Testament

text in Proverbs 23:7 which says “As a person thinketh in his heart, so is one.”

Elizabeth’s interview with Lady Catherine portrays a remarkable performance of self-command. Hannah More speaks of being severe in judging oneself which disposes us to be candid in judging others. We see considerable unfair criticism or even moral judgment throughout the novel—Mrs. Bennet of Darcy and Wickham; Elizabeth of Darcy and Mr. Collins; and Wickham of Darcy. Elizabeth becomes the more candid as she journeys toward moral regeneration. We also find talk of neighbors and much discussion of one’s relationship to one’s neighbors, recalling for us Sherlock’s preaching on love of one’s neighbour as paramount for the true follower of Christ. Love of neighbors is rarely seen until near the end of the novel when Darcy is benevolent to the Gardiners and to Elizabeth’s sister Lydia and to Wickham.

Temper and disposition are at the heart of Elizabeth’s struggle. We know first hand of her inner life, all her feelings, but we only learn through others of Darcy’s heart. Austen, like Henry James, saw that “The moral life was located in emotional intelligence” (P&P 367) and temper and disposition are surely part of emotional intelligence. Blair claims that “the state of the heart is what determines our moral character.” “Elizabeth’s ongoing efforts to acknowledge and understand her feelings are as much an indication of her moral reformation as her renunciation of her past prejudices and conduct” (Kantrov 116).

Elizabeth’s disposition is best observed by Reuben Brower when he says “In the beautifully graded progress of feeling, from ‘hatred’ or any ‘dislike’ to ‘respect’ to ‘esteem’ to ‘gratitude’ and ‘a real interest’ in Darcy’s ‘welfare’ each sentiment is defined with an exactness that is perfectly appropriate to Elizabeth’s habit of mind” (P&P 386).

She begins in “a mixture of sweetness and archness” (385). In the first half of the novel she is sure of her judgment and reacts with anger and resentment, behaviour that she should have suspected from hearing and reading Christian sermons. She experiences embarrassment, shamefulness, and regret, but her disposition is such that she learns to exercise restraint whereby she finally achieves the truth about her own feelings and eventually about her love for Darcy. Her confession and enlightenment come in the middle of the novel. “It follows the prescribed pattern for Christian repentance: self-exam, self-knowledge, self-reproach, and remorse” (Kantrov 110). This evidence is centered in the effects of Darcy’s letter, but what should we make of Darcy’s temper and disposition?

Darcy’s temper and disposition is revealed primarily through the comments of others. Mrs. Reynolds tells us that he was a sweet-tempered boy, and was loved and admired by his servants and tenants (P&P 169-70). He has a good relationship with his sister. Not unexpectedly his anger overcomes him when Elizabeth refuses his first proposal, but his disposition is such that he immediately tries to correct her bad opinion of him with his letter and action thereafter. He is generous to Lydia and to Wickham, who is his worst enemy. This magnanimity of character grows out of his love for Elizabeth but he didn’t want her to know of it. He wanted her only if she loved him, not for any kindness he gave to her family (252). That is the reason he did not want known his part in the wedding of Wickham and Lydia. This fact speaks well of his authenticity.

Among all of Darcy’s attractive qualities his fineness, tallness, handsomeness, and nobility—he has two less desirable qualities in that he is proud, or at least haughty, and he is overly reserved. Pride for the Christian is the greatest of evils. At the beginning of

the novel, he is seen as shockingly rude, disagreeable, and horrid, the very opposite to Mr. Bingley. He gives offence to her family and to Elizabeth by calling her only “just tolerable” (P&P 12). As to his temper, Darcy, in his conversation with Miss Bingley and Elizabeth, introduces us to the concept of self-command when he says “But pride—where there is a real superiority of mind, pride will be always under good regulation” (39). He expands this truism but has difficulty practising it. However exaggerated her view may be, Elizabeth tells him that his defect is to hate everybody (40). His pride is mentioned again by Wickham who claims that Darcy’s pride “has often led him to be liberal and generous, -- to give his money freely, to display hospitality, to assist his tenants, and relieve the poor” (57). Pride of this nature seems hardly a defect. He also has family pride, filial pride and brotherly pride and affection. His problem in essence is that “He can be a conversible companion. Among those who are at all his equals in consequence, he is a very different man from what he is to the less prosperous” (57). This is not Christian behaviour: this is, in Wickham’s view, Darcy’s haughtiness and condescension. Darcy reveals his nearly disastrous arrogance when he attempts to keep Bingley from marrying Jane, even though he suggests it is because he feels Jane is indifferent to Bingley (136). Whatever the truth of this may be, it is not perfectly clear to the reader. It recalls Austen’s remarks by the narrator in *Emma*: “Seldom, very seldom, does complete truth belong to any human disclosure; seldom can it happen that something is not a little disguised, or a little mistaken” (E 399). Jane’s indifference to Bingley is questionable, for it is probably more the passivity and modesty expected of women of that age, and clearly Darcy’s mistake of judgment has grown out of his pride and his prejudice.

Darcy once said that he hardly ever forgave, that resentment once created was unappeasable and that he hoped he never allowed himself to be blinded by prejudice, (P&P 65) but this is exactly what he is about to do with Elizabeth. His “tolerable powerful feeling towards her soon secured her pardon” (66). He forgives her. He does not know himself in love nor what he may do because of his feelings for Elizabeth. Here we see how passion affects reason, which is warned about by the church and clergy. He admits his strong feelings and emphasizes his pride and prejudice even in his proposal, when he says “In vain have I struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you” (130). He wishes to marry her in spite of her inferior connections and likes her against his will, against his reason, and even against her character. Elizabeth angrily accuses him of arrogance, conceit and of showing selfish disdain for the feelings of others from the beginning of their acquaintance (133). Ever the gentleman, Darcy asks forgiveness for taking her time. She reviews his faults – preventing Bingley from marrying her sister, his abominable pride, and his assumed cruelty to Wickham. Darcy’s letter of apology is quickly delivered.

Elizabeth sees in the first part of the letter a style not penitent, but haughty. “It was all pride and insolence” where Jane’s situation was concerned (141). However, through a very full self-examination, and considering all aspects of others’ opinions and the Wickham part of the letter from Darcy, Elizabeth recognizes that “she had been blind, partial, prejudiced, absurd” (143). It is a humiliating discovery; she is ashamed of herself. She uses phrases that speak of the blindness caused by passion and the importance of self-knowledge.

Had I been in love, I could not have been more wretchedly blind. But vanity, not love has been my folly.—Pleased with the preference of one, and offended by the neglect of the other, on the very beginning of our acquaintance, I have courted prepossession and ignorance, and driven reason away, where either were concerned. Till this moment, I never knew myself. (144)

“Elizabeth’s confession, containing analysis of her errors and her self-reproaches need only be set beside the passages from the religious writings to illustrate the similarities in assumptions, judgments, and terminology” (Kantrov 110). Secker has warned of the blinding effect of the passions and self-deception. Elizabeth struggles for the truth and to overcome her horrible prejudice. Realizing her failings she is able to correct them. The nature of the correction of her judgment regarding Wickham and Darcy is the major part of her enlightenment. Blair’s claim that “the state of the heart (which comprehends the disposition as well as the ‘affections’, passions, and desires) is what determines our moral character” is played out in Elizabeth’s self-examination (116).

As customary at the time, Elizabeth takes daily solitary walks for reflection and introspection while visiting the Collinses for six weeks. She repents further as she realizes that she has been unjust in condemning Darcy. She begins to have compassion for him, feels gratitude and respect toward him, but she cannot approve him yet and cannot repent her refusal of marriage (147). She regrets her past behaviour. She has compassion when she begins to see her own prejudice toward Darcy and the fact that she has been deceived by Wickham’s appearance. It is at Pemberley that Elizabeth continues to change her thinking about Darcy when she hears Mrs. Reynolds’ praise of

him. To her he was, as a boy, the sweetest-tempered, most generous-hearted boy in the world, and affable to the poor. He is now the best landlord, and best master that ever lived. The tenants and servants give him a good name and he would do anything for Georgiana, his sister (169-70). To add to this perfect picture, Darcy has altered as well; his manners are softened; he is friendly with the Gardiners, Elizabeth's aunt and uncle. He is really more than civil; he is attentive and he wants Elizabeth to meet his sister (175-6). Darcy's exceptional change is astonishing. He earnestly wants to please and is free from self-consequence or unbending reserve. It is evident that his love for Elizabeth has created this significant change.

Elizabeth changes as well; she is ashamed of ever feeling dislike for him and is convinced of his valuable qualities. She now respects and esteems him and feels gratitude for his steadfast love and his forgiveness for her rejection of him. Just when she begins to realize that Darcy is exactly the man who would most suit her she is concerned that Darcy may never attach himself to a family with Lydia's disgrace of running off with Wickham. She is humbled, grieved, and repents, although she hardly knew of what (213-14). She further grieves and is humbled even more when she learns of the magnanimous action that Darcy has taken in settling Wickham's debts and securing him a commission in the army so that Lydia may be taken care of. She is proud of him, "proud that in a cause of compassion and honour, he had been able to get the better of himself" and thus to achieve that self-command so promoted by the Established Church (224). She is even more content when she sees that Darcy has promoted the relationship of Bingley and Jane.

When Elizabeth tells Darcy of her change of heart, he is delighted and admits his behavior has been unpardonable. Gradually all her former prejudices have been removed and she sees that they are now different people from what they were before. Darcy admits that Elizabeth taught him a lesson in humility; he was selfish, and overbearing, proud and conceited, and he thought meanly of the rest of the world: "You shewed me how insufficient were all my pretensions to please a woman worthy of being pleased" (255). There is forgiveness all round and Darcy has amended his mistakes. Elizabeth has overcome her pride and prejudice all in the name of truth and love. Knowing the truth and knowing herself allows her to love. This can be said of Darcy as well. Moral regeneration is accomplished in the hero and heroine, the best examples of Christian love, Christian repentance, and forgiveness. They have shown their human weaknesses and may remain imperfect, but they are well on their way to loving mercy, seeking justice, and loving their neighbour as themselves, in other words, serving Christ. Their love is an imitation of the love of Christ, the love that cannot let one go and the love that lays down one's life for the loved one. They are both Christian heroes by example.

Reginald Farrer states that "of all writers, she [Jane Austen] it is who pursues truth with most utter and undeviable devotion" (P&P 342). The very first line of the novel *P & P* states a truth. "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife" (1). This is Austen's wit at its best, but the tone changes as we see Elizabeth inwardly face several truths about herself, her family and her future husband. She believes in marriage based on love as is clearly depicted in her thoughts and actions regarding Charlotte Lucas's marriage to Mr. Collins, her endorsement of Jane and Bingley's love, and her advice to her father regarding Lydia's

accompanying Mrs. Forster, the Colonel's young wife, to Brighton when the officers departed Meryton. Marriage based on love is at the heart of Christian teaching on marriage. She cannot herself marry for less. On first reading Darcy's letter she thinks no love exists in him but on further reading and in consideration of remembered comments from others, she gradually sees the truth. Elizabeth's retreat on this matter [Darcy's separation of Jane and Bingley and his feelings towards her family] indicates her evolution in thought. In the end, Elizabeth "knew herself" and she didn't like what she now knew (144). Her own pride and her own prejudice were paramount in her mind and these oppressed her conscience. Elizabeth's self-recognition reveals for us the true nature of things and allows her love for Darcy to develop.

The teaching of the clergy of the time and the teachings of Christ are clearly seen in several characters' relationship with their neighbors and of the use of judgment both of self and of others. Jane Bennet, for example, can only think the very best of everyone to the point of being naive about Wickham. Jane has sound doubts that Bingley could be deceived by Darcy's character (59) and she is correct here. She is charitable to Charlotte Lucas in understanding that Charlotte makes a right decision in marrying Mr. Collins, for plain Charlotte is willing to ask less than Jane or Elizabeth and to settle for her own home (88). Jane can seemingly neither think nor do any wrong, something like Mr. Knightly in *Emma*. On the other hand, Elizabeth judges wisely for the most part except where she is blinded by her prejudice toward Darcy and its effect on her relationship with Wickham. Jane in fact has supported Darcy from the earliest part of the novel. "Elizabeth's conviction that "there was truth in his [Wickham's] looks" is now exploded and Jane's opinion vindicated" (Shaw 287). Elizabeth correctly evaluates Lady

Catherine, Miss Bingley, and Mr. Collins and sees them as they really are, pompous, proud, and unfeeling. She is wiser than her father when she advises him that Lydia should not be allowed to go to Brighton, which becomes Lydia's downfall. Although Mr. Bennet thinks: "For what do we live, but to make sport for our neighbors, and laugh at them in our turn," this is far from Elizabeth's way of thinking (P&P 251). She is greatly concerned with the image her family creates and she uses her neighbors in a civil, caring manner as much as she possibly can, even in refusing Mr. Collins' proposal and in her visits to the Bingleys and the Collins.

Darcy's neighbourly relations are best described by others as in Mrs. Reynolds' words regarding his tenants' and servants' love for him. We learn that he has been seen in church (119) and that he has considerable patronage in the church (125), which demonstrates to some degree his compassion for others. He is Bingley's amiable and well-loved friend and intends to act in Bingley's best interest (albeit not in Jane's best). Darcy's pride, but not his prejudice, is partly explained away by his shy reserve. His most commendable actions toward his neighbour is without doubt his rescue of his teenage sister from Wickham's wiles and his management of Lydia and Wickham's escapades. His actions in the latter situation sound clearly and loudly of loving one's neighbour more than oneself to a point of love for one's enemy or those who hate you. This is Darcy following the example of Christ. He also has the greatest forbearance in Mrs. Bennet's case. She has been mean and cruel to him, outwardly displaying her dislike for him, but he endures her quietly for the sake of Elizabeth. There is also Darcy's hospitality towards the Gardiners, in inviting them to dinner, and asking Mr. Gardiner to fish in his ponds.

Where once we viewed proud and prejudiced heroes, for at least half of the novel, they are now changed into humble, loving, truthful, friendly, respectful and grateful individuals in possession of self-knowledge, self-command and good judgment. All this fits with “reformed” lives of Christians in the religious literature of Austen’s day. Their moral regeneration occurs through the gaining of self-knowledge and truth, which means recognizing one’s faults and frailties, with regret, repentance, and amendment, to arrive at a higher level of spiritual well-being. This spiritual renewal has the priceless element of love, which claims it fully as a Christian journey for Elizabeth and Darcy.

Turning to G. K. Chesterton’s idea that orthodox faith is a type of romance much like the adventure story or falling in love gives us another perspective of the Christian experience in *P & P*. The following interpretation is taken from Marian E. Crowe’s article, “G.K. Chesterton and the orthodox romance of *Pride and Prejudice*”, in *Renascence*. Chesterton equates the rich human experience of falling in love with believing in the Christian faith. This broader understanding of “romance” may account for some of the power of *P & P*. As Michel Beaujour writes in “Some Paradoxes of Description”, “Literary description always opens onto another scene set, so to speak, “behind” the this-worldly things it purports to depict” (Clifford and Marcus 99). The love story in *P & P* can be seen as the spiritual development of Darcy and Elizabeth. Chesterton admired Austen’s work—her understatements, her moral seriousness. He sees *P&P* as romantic, “not only because of the love story, but because it has the thrill of adventure, the satisfying closure of story, and the exciting engagement with ultimate questions that characterize faith. ... For Chesterton anything truly romantic involves a paradoxical conjoining of accident and free will. The excitement of romance stems from

its power to keep together in creative tension two apparent opposites (the two parts of the paradox), but keeping their individuality fully intact. Thus in a Chestertonian romance, separateness is valued as much as union” (Crowe 2). Free choice is essential to Chesterton’s understanding of romance. In Christian orthodoxy, Chesterton argues that “a romance is exciting because it has a strong element of will, of what theology calls free will. ... A story has behind it, not merely intellect which is partly mechanical, but will, which is in its essence divine” (Crowe 5). Darcy and Elizabeth’s romance is full of will, accident and surprise. There is also mystery in their relationship. Darcy says “I was in the middle before I knew I had begun” (P&P 262). Elizabeth “never knew herself till now.” These unknowns created the mystery that encouraged their self-analysis and learning of the truth about each other.

Elizabeth and Darcy’s romantic journey begins with surprise and a notable absence of strategy; it culminates in astonishment, issuing in a rational, purposeful and serious examination of the self. Romance has served as a catalyst for spiritual growth. Love of one another has some sense of the divine.

Another quality that gives Darcy and Elizabeth’s relationship its excitement, its tension, and its seriousness is an example of what Chesterton sees as the distinctive characteristic of Christian love of God and of neighbour: separateness or what he also relates to otherness. Otherness is important, not only for our understanding of the Deity, but for comprehending human love as well. If souls are separate, love is possible. If souls are united, between them love is obviously impossible.

Elizabeth and Darcy achieve a love that not only allows but encourages the definiteness and singularity of their personalities. Their love seems to have about it a

kind of aggression that the Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno ascribed to the virtue of charity:

True charity is a kind of invasion—it consists in putting my spirit into other spirits, in giving them my suffering as the food and consolation for their sufferings, in awakening their unrest with my unrest, in sharpening their hunger for God with my hunger for God. It is not charity to rock and lull our brothers to sleep in the inertia and drowsiness of matter, but rather to awaken them to the uneasiness and torment of spirit. (Crowe 8-9)

Being autonomous and distinct individuals readily applies to Darcy's and Elizabeth's spirits. Chesterton argues that part of Christianity's uniqueness consists in its insistence on keeping two apparently contradictory truths (such as Christ's divinity and His humanity), but keeping them both intact instead of blending them into an amalgam of the two.

The romance of Elizabeth and Darcy shares another characteristic of Christian orthodoxy—its excitement and sense of narrowly escaped danger. Not only does Chesterton say of orthodoxy, "Nothing was ever so perilous or so exciting," but he compares it to a "heavenly chariot [that] flies thundering through the ages, the dull heresies sprawling and prostrate, the wild truth reeling but erect" (9). This image seems to fit Elizabeth and Darcy, whose intelligence, discrimination, honesty and attention allow them to live with a kind of plenitude and integrity not possible for most of their contemporaries. This reminds us of Hannah More's idea of the Christian. It is also similar to the idea that it takes a "Star-Wars" kind of thinking, an actively charged imagination to visualize the Christian life.

The most romantic love affair is that in which the lovers are most free, and at the same time, least free, are most rational and least rational. Of all the couples in *P & P*, Darcy and Elizabeth are the most separate, autonomous, distinctive individuals. They are also free but not free, rational but not rational. Like the adventure of orthodox faith, their union keeps two apparent opposites yoked in a creative tension, allowing each to be fully itself. Yet they are fully engaged with each other. They are serious, they listen, they pay attention, they take risks. Real dangers threaten. Metaphorically, if not literally, they travel a great distance to meet. Like a medieval romance, their love is a journey—a spiritual journey. Largely characterized by contingency and surprise, their love gains in dignity and excitement by the careful and non-manipulative use of reason, reflection, and conscious, deliberate choice. This dignity and excitement gained is their moral regeneration or their spiritual growth, lifting them to a new level of life. Their spirituality is like the wind, blowing here and there but firm, genuine, and full of life. Can you see what I hear? The tree falls in the forest. Does it make a sound if no one hears it?

Conclusion

The novels of Jane Austen, especially *Mansfield Park*, *Persuasion*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Emma*, have a spiritual dimension, in which the heroines display lives based on Christian principles. This spirituality is not mutually exclusive with a rational morality, as spirit and reason work together to give full life. Although spirituality and faith are unseen images, they are analysed in observing the thinking, and actions or behaviour of the characters. We are observing, not a noisy expression of spirituality, but a quiet, almost reticent, unspoken one, taught best by example.

The sermons of the eighteenth century, primarily based on the scriptures, and the conduct books of the period in which the novels were written, provide a clear image of Christ-like behaviour, to which the heroes are compared.

Fanny price is the picture of the self-examining Christian whose goal is self-knowledge, who measures her conduct against her principles, and who practices self-command and self-denial. She does what she ought to do. She expresses a rational yet spiritual life. Her hope is larger than life. She is the weak, long-suffering, oppressed figure, who Christ-like becomes triumphant.

Anne Elliot epitomizes the spiritual life in that she bears her suffering—the loss of her beloved Frederick and her family abuse with an attitude of assurance and sense of self, as viewed in her quiet, winning, suffering servant spirit. Her wisdom shines through the imagery of weakness.

Emma experiences the Christian journey to self-knowledge, truth, enlightenment and salvation through love of God's creature, man, and his love for her. Elizabeth Bennett

also journeys along a path similar to Emma's. The dignity and excitement of hers and Darcy's love represent their spiritual growth to a new level of Christian life.

Jane Austen wrote her novels before the Industrial Revolution and before the material age with its hostile, secular environment in which God was declared dead. She takes us beyond the limits of this world to life where spirit makes all life complete. The reader needs a "Star Wars" kind of imagination to reach the Christian moral plateau from which she works. Her novels share endings with a sense of renewal. What her critics may fail to see is a spirit world beyond this one. Marilyn Butler has a "Star Wars" imagination, and sees the heroines' souls in the light of the next world as decisively settled as their financial security is in this. As Hannah More has so aptly illustrated in describing the Christian: his/her aims soar a bolder flight, his/her aspirations are sustained on a stronger pinion, for not just this world but eternity is the grand feature of existence.

There exists the material, reasonable, logical world but there also exists something beyond reason, a spiritual world. Life is made up of the two world views, each real in themselves. They meet in the individual. Because the spiritual world seems so often ignored today, current day readers may have difficulty seeing spirituality in novels. Blindness, where the human and the divine meet, is all too common in us all.

Time and place dictated the heroines' actions, as did the dictum, "As a person thought in one's mind, so he acted." These statements apply fully to the the Austen heroines. Fanny's, Anne's, Emma's and Elizabeth's actions were based on an inherited, transmitted Christian legacy, the evidence of which we have seen in the eighteenth century divines sermons. The characters' intensified experiences have been sifted out from the late eighteenth century. The readings are similar to Greenblatt's idea of "speaking with the

dead”, (Clifford & Marcus 1) a basis for the heavy import of Jane Austen’s writings. At the time, women’s position in the home was the moral center of the community. Human relations were more communal, more community-oriented in the country gentry setting. General education, largely influenced by the home, libraries, and the church, consisted primarily of books of sermons, and conduct books. The influence of the Established Church was based on Christianity as it appeared in the Scriptures, which taught at the time the combining of logic and spirit, of reason and faith.

The heroines are recognized by their fruits. “Ye shall know them by their fruit. Do men/people gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?” (Matthew 7:16). Fanny and Anne are the embodiment of the fruits of the spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, charity, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, humility, and self-control. Emma and Elizabeth are not without fruits of the spirit, for their paths have all those similarities mentioned in Christian orthodoxy. Furthermore Tillotson’s claim that true Christians or followers of Christ are known by the temper and disposition of their minds, manifestly appearing in our actions by the practice of those real virtues which are the proper and genuine fruits of the Holy Spirit of God. We have observed the tempers and dispositions of Austen’s heroes and heroines. Saint Paul could just as well have been addressing Fanny, Anne, Elizabeth, Darcy, Knightley, and Emma as he spoke to the new Christians in Colossae when he advised them about their behaviour.

As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all clothe yourselves with love, which

binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your heart (Col 3:12-15).

Paul could , more importantly, have seen his advice followed by the Austen heroines, as they carried out the acts of charity (Corsiglia 56 Plate). The closure of the novels is representative of the love that binds everything together in perfect harmony.

Finally, the reason the novels remain eternally classic and are read so avidly is primarily due to the fact that Christian values are universal ones. The novels are cherished today in a rather hostile, secular society where Christian values seem not to be part of our contemporary social fabric but where such virtues continue to be sought. When one truly knows oneself, one's spirituality becomes part of that knowledge. It may be suggested that each, in one's own way, is searching for spiritual knowledge.

Since Jane Austen's novels cleverly depict, in a quiet, unassuming way, all the behaviour one may see in a Christian, we may ask as William Blake asked in 1804 in his poem "Milton":

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the Holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?

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