

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI

A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

FREEDOM AND GRACE:
MAINLINE PROTESTANT THOUGHT IN CANADA, 1900-1960

by

Hubert Richard Krygsman, B.A., M.A.

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of History
Carleton University
Ottawa, Canada
June 23, 1997

Copyright, 1997
H. R. Krygsman



National Library
of Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services

Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-26857-8

Canada

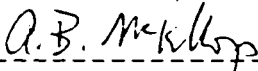
The undersigned hereby recommend to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies acceptance of the thesis

"FREEDOM AND GRACE:
MAINLINE PROTESTANT THOUGHT IN CANADA, 1900-1960"

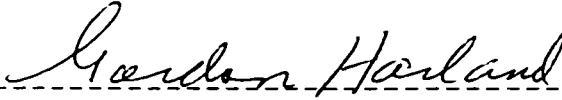
submitted by
Hubert R. Krygsman, B.A., M.A.,
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy



Chair, Department of History



Thesis Supervisor



External Examiner

Carleton University

2 July 1997

ABSTRACT

Krygsman, Hubert R. "Freedom and Grace: Mainline Protestant Thought in Canada, 1900-1960."

Carleton University, Ottawa: Ph. D. dissertation, 1997.

This study examines 20th century mainline Canadian Protestant theology and philosophy. Focusing on Presbyterian and United church scholars, it highlights their struggle to define a "modern" evangelicalism amid the disillusionments of modernity.

Part I traces the crisis of 19th century progressive evangelicalism and the ways that progressives defined secularization during the early 1900's. To them, urban society, critical science, and the tragedy of World War I obscured God's spiritual presence in experience. While fundamentalism and naturalism fragmented evangelicalism, "mainline" progressives sought a "modern" evangelicalism that affirmed modern science, and appealed to personal values, the Incarnation, and mysticism, to assert a real divine spirit and to disentangle Christianity from "secular" life. By 1928, however, these strategies seemed unable to answer critical suspicion. Meanwhile, new ideals like those of Barth offered alternative ways to affirm a transcendent God and the limits of temporal life.

Part II identifies three variations by which a disillusioned generation of clergymen-scholars drew from "realist" social criticism, Whitehead's "organic" idealism, Biblical theology and church history, and the ideas of Barth, Brunner and Niebuhr, to reclaim Augustine's themes of human sin, a transcendent God, and tension between God's Kingdom and the world. Richard Roberts and John Dow revised liberal evangelicalism with an idealist Augustinianism. They envisioned a hierarchical tension between the natural City of Man and a spiritual City of God, in which the spiritual sanctified natural life. Alternatively, John Line, R. B. Y. Scott, Gregory Vlastos, and J.

King Gordon developed a Christian socialism which envisioned the entry of God's revolutionary Kingdom into history, and called for its embodiment in the "realities" of social structures in a socialist order. Thirdly, Presbyterians like Walter Bryden most fully adopted Barth's ideas concerning the radical chasm between God and sinful human nature. For Bryden, God's Kingdom came solely in the existential experience of God's Word.

In different ways, Part III shows, these theologies posed a dynamic tension between God's Kingdom and "secular" society. Post-World War II church statements on culture and society, and the scholarship of R. C. Chalmers, John Irving, and Northrop Frye, reflect ways that mainline Protestants claimed divine grace to preserve human freedom and transform culture.

Acknowledgements

The completion of this work, finally, is a tribute to the support of many people. While too numerous to mention individually, I am deeply grateful to family members, librarians and archivists, professors, and colleagues who helped me along the way of this project.

There are those, however, who have lived with the burden of this project in special ways. Though they are not responsible for its faults, this project could not have been completed without their support. I am grateful to the History Department and the Faculty of Graduate Studies at Carleton University for their patient wait for the completion of this project. Also, my board-members not only indulged my lengthy project with grace, but offered kind encouragement and advice. I owe special thanks to Dr. Gordon Harland for his passionate interest in this project and his experienced scholarly advice. Most importantly, my thanks go to my supervisor, Dr. Brian McKillop, whose own interest in the history of ideas in Canada helped to sustain this project, and whose patient encouragement, advice, and gracious readiness to help somehow fits the theme of this project.

Beyond the academy, I daily am grateful for Nancy, and for Brian, Paul, and Jana, whose support and love not only contributed to this project, but gave joy to the life of scholarship.

Volume I: Table of Contents

<i>Abstract</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>Table of Contents</i>	<i>vi</i>
<i>Abbreviations</i>	<i>viii</i>
Introduction	1
PART I: MODERN CHRISTENDOM IN CRISIS	
Chapter 1: The Modern Hope of Christendom	26
I. Evangelicalism and the Moral Vision of History	28
II. The Rise of Progressive Evangelicalism	41
III. The Triumph and Tensions of Progressive Evangelicalism	62
IV. Progressives and the Problem of Spiritual Reality	90
V. Conclusion: Christendom in Crisis	106
Chapter 2: Christendom in Crisis: Rethinking Modern Christianity, 1914-1924	109
I. World War I and the Apogee of Christendom	112
II. The Mission of Christianity	126
III. The Message of Christianity	145
IV. Progressive Protestants and the Quest for the Spirit	164
V. Conclusion	182
Chapter 3: Modern Evangelicalism and the Quest for God, 1924-28	185
I. The New Apologetic	188
II. The New Evangelism	208
III. Christianity, Culture, and the Limits of Personalism	234
IV. Conclusion	251
Chapter 4: Freedom and Grace	255
I. The Crisis Generation	258
II. The Spirit in the World	271
III. Mysticism and Grace	297
IV. The Spirit and the World	314
V. Conclusion	332
Chapter 5: Christianity and World in Crisis, 1928-34	338
I. The Jerusalem Council and Foreign Missions	340
II. The Social Meaning of Christianity	348
III. Historicism and the Challenge of Secular Thought	360
IV. The Arrival of Barth and Crisis Theology	374
V. The Crisis of Preaching	383
VI. Conclusion: Which Way Christianity?	392

Volume II: Table of Contents

PART II: THEOLOGIES OF GRACE AND FREEDOM

Chapter 6: Between Two Worlds: the new Liberal-Evangelicalism	400
I. Spirit and Nature; a New Theology of Grace	402
II. Evangelism versus Revolution	418
III. Church and World	451
IV. Conclusion: the Revival of Liberal-Evangelicalism	479
Chapter 7: Revolutionary Christianity	483
I. Towards the Socialist Fellowship	485
II. The roots of "Radical Religion"	489
III. The Coming Revolution; the Revival of Prophecy	514
IV. The Hope of Revolution	531
V. The Dilemmas of Radical Religion	564
VI. Conclusion	573
Chapter 8: The Reality of Grace	575
I. From Mystical Realism to Barth's Dialectic	578
II. The Word and the World	587
III. The Judging-Saving Word	622
IV. Conclusion	653
PART III: TOWARDS A CULTURE OF FREEDOM AND GRACE	
Chapter 9: Nature and Grace: Prospects for a Christian Culture	657
I. The Return to Theology	658
II. The Problem of Christianity and Culture	677
III. Conclusion	708
Chapter 10: The Culture of Grace and the Gospel of Grace	710
I. Instruments of Grace: the Augustinian-Idealist Revival	711
II. The Soul of Culture	725
III. Grace Against Nature: the Neo-orthodox Critique of Culture	743
IV. Conclusion	777
Postscript: "Freedom and Grace" in Post-World War II Canada	780
<i>Bibliography</i>	797

Abbreviations:

The following abbreviations have been used throughout in source references:

NAC = National Archives of Canada

UCA = United Church Archives

PCC, AP = Presbyterian Church of Canada, Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly

UCC, RP = United Church of Canada, Record of Proceedings of the General Council

CF = Canadian Forum

CJRT = Canadian Journal of Religious Thought

CG = Christian Guardian

NO = New Outlook

PW = Presbyterian Witness

Introduction:

In 1933 a rural United Church minister wondered whether any "religion" could answer the stark desperation of the depression. "What," he wondered, "can you say to a man who is really every day face to face with seemingly insuperable difficulties?"¹ The standard counsel to trust God, he added, was both trite and blasphemous: God was not in question, nor was he responsible for the depression. On the contrary, it was modern human society that robbed people of both life and faith. But even "religion" itself now seemed part of that human system -- a system which now was manifestly corrupt. How then, in the midst of such a system, could God be revealed, and faith and life restored?

The preacher's outburst was one indication of a profound reorientation in twentieth-century mainline Canadian Protestantism. During the nineteenth century, evangelical Protestants especially in the Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian communions had come to dominate and shape Anglo-Canadian culture. As the past two decades of scholarship on the topic indicates, such mainline Protestants had forged a peculiar synthesis of evangelical piety and critical, idealist progressivism which provided the intellectual framework and impulse to embrace and shape modern Anglo-Protestant culture for God's Kingdom. At the heart of that synthesis was a moral interpretation of history centered on the belief that the spiritual reality of God was present and manifest in the temporal world, there working out the divine purpose in history. On this faith, evangelical Protestants had assumed that God was accessible to human experience and modern critical thought, and that God's Kingdom was being worked out in the progress of modern western civilization into the embodiment of the divine rule in a modern "Christendom." As John Baillie noted during World War II, modernist Protestants had come to feel at home in modern culture and in the hope of the self-sufficient progress

¹Anonymous, "Is any Religion Adequate? Musings of a Rural Minister," New Outlook (15 February 1933), 153.

of history.²

Baillie's critical comments, and those of the anonymous preacher, reflect the disillusionment of twentieth-century mainline Canadian Protestants with that nineteenth-century progressive vision of history. Two features of the anonymous preacher's plea capture the central dilemma of that reorientation. First and most clearly, amid the cataclysms and complexities of the twentieth century, the progressive Protestant hope in divine immanence and the inevitable, visible progress of God's Kingdom in western culture was shattered. Like Jerome, after the Visigoth attacks of 410 had demolished his confidence that Rome enjoyed the favour of God, so the preacher and his parishioners confronted the failures of western civilization. Notably, their despair did not involve doubt about the reality of God; rather, it involved a new-found discovery of the profound ambiguity of historical experience, and the attempt to reclaim the reality of a transcendent God whose grace might transform a modern civilization now seen as secular and alien to God's Kingdom.

Though disillusioned with modern society, however, the preacher's inclusion of "religion" within human systems also reflected his continued commitment to a modern critical and historically-conscious perspective and its application even to religion. This enclosure of even "religion" within the matrix of historically relative human culture, however, threatened to obscure God from any standpoint within a history now considered to be "secular".³ Herein lay the dilemma of modern Protestantism, namely the ongoing struggle to identify the reality of a transcendent God and the work of redemptive grace, but from within the modern assumptions of historically self-conscious critical thought and human freedom.

This study examines the emergence of this dilemma in twentieth-century mainline Canadian

²John Baillie, Invitation to Pilgrimage (Grand Rapids: Baker, [1942] 1976), 76-83.

³Heinz Zahrt also detects this problem as central to the departure of European Protestants from liberal theology during the early twentieth century, in The Question of God: Protestant Theology in the Twentieth Century, R. A. Wilson, trans. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966, 1969), 16-17, 25-26.

Protestant thought, and the attempt of those modern Protestants to reinterpret the relationship between God and history and thus the parameters of God's Kingdom. In that process mainline Canadian Protestants came to criticize not only their modern western culture, but the entanglement of their faith in that culture, and consequently they struggled to recover a transcendent word of God by which they might critique and transform their culture. By differentiating God and human systems, the preacher also hinted at that renewed search for the transcendent source of Christian faith, but also indicated a crisis in Protestants' understanding of the relationship between God and history. In the unfolding of this crisis, twentieth century Protestants abandoned their optimistic hope that western civilization might progressively become God's Kingdom, and sought a new modus vivendi marked by tension between God and history, and also between Protestantism and modern Canadian culture.

* * *

Any attempt to interpret the development of twentieth-century mainline Protestantism depends at least partly on one's interpretation of the legacy of nineteenth-century evangelical Protestantism, and particularly the contours of nineteenth-century evangelicals' vision of history and the Kingdom of God. By all accounts, evangelical Protestants dominated nineteenth-century Anglo-Canadian culture, so much so that one scholar describes Canada's nineteenth century simply as "the evangelical century."⁴ Their immigration to the relatively fluid context of British North America during the previous century had given them an unusual opportunity to shape the newly emerging Anglo-Canadian culture. Their development of diverse voluntary church denominations, colleges, political reform movements, and non-sectarian but generically Protestant school systems like that organized by Egerton

⁴Michael Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century: College and Creed in English Canada from the Great Revival to the Great Depression (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).

Ryerson in Ontario, all testify to the success of evangelicals in challenging the established hierarchical structures of early nineteenth-century Canada, and institutionalizing their evangelical faith in a liberal, scientific, and capitalist Anglo-Protestant culture.⁵

The specific relation of evangelical Protestantism to these cultural forms, and especially the inter-relationships between evangelicalism and secularization, however, has been a matter of considerable debate among historians. On the one hand, advocates of what may be called a "secularization" thesis such as A. B. McKillop, Ramsay Cook, and William Westfall, have argued that by the 1920's evangelical Protestants themselves ironically had adopted a secularized interpretation of the world.⁶ These works focus on what might broadly be called the philosophical thought of nineteenth century Protestants, especially their views of society and science. In their adoption of idealism, critical science, and sociological priorities, Protestants had located the sacred within the world, and in doing so had shifted from a theological interpretation of the world oriented toward a transcendent God to a "scientific" interpretation of the world in terms of natural processes.⁷

In their rejoinders to this secularization thesis, Michael Gauvreau, John W. Grant, and Marguerite Van Die, have stressed the continuity of traditional, "orthodox" evangelical piety. Though evangelicals adjusted to, and indeed contributed significantly to changing social and intellectual trends, these accommodations were rooted in their religious faith, and indeed were undertaken to extend the

⁵For a survey of recent scholarship on this topic, see Burkhard Kieseckamp, "Christendom, Nationalism and the Fate of the Nineteenth-Century Evangelical Consensus," Acadiensis, XXV, 1 (Autumn 1995), especially 125-6.

⁶Ramsay Cook, The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985); A. B. McKillop, A Disciplined Intelligence: Critical Inquiry and Canadian Thought in the Victorian Era (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979); William Westfall, Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989).

⁷These works accord well with the arguments of Owen Chadwick and James Turner, who conclude their studies of British and American Protestantism with the transition from liberal Protestantism to a naturalized "religion" of humanity. See Owen Chadwick, The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 17, 156-67, 252-64; James Turner, Without God, Without Creed: The Origins of Unbelief in America (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1985), xiii, 245, 261-67.

claims of evangelicalism against other forces of secularization.⁸ Notably, both Gauvreau and Van Die nevertheless still conclude that, by the early twentieth century, at least the clergymen-scholars who articulated evangelical Protestantism had succumbed to the secularizing influences of modern culture.

As Marguerite Van Die argues, for example, evangelicalism

had become inextricably connected to, and in the end vitiated by, culture.... by the early decades of the twentieth century, evangelical Christianity had been undermined perhaps more by the compelling vision of men and women of faith than by the destructive seeds of religious doubt.⁹

With similar conclusions, Michael Gauvreau maintains that nineteenth century evangelicals resisted the corrosion of modernism until the twentieth century, when, in a strategic blunder, Protestant theologians accepted the latest methods of historical criticism and thereby surrendered to the relativizing influences of historicism.¹⁰ The recently published revisionist work of Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau on twentieth-century Protestant social work can be seen as an extension of this argument. According to Christie and Gauvreau, progressive evangelical Protestantism survived the intellectual and social challenges of the late nineteenth century, and continued to shape Canadian ideas and society well into the twentieth century, especially in the development of corporate liberalism and social welfare action. Woven through their argument is the suggestion of a gap between the elitist theology of academic clergy-theologians and the continuation of popular experiential pietism. That continuation culminated in a shift during the 1930's from a progressive "social evangelism" to a renewed emphasis on personal pietism which differentiated between church and state, religion and

⁸Michael Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century: College and Creed in English Canada from the Great Revival to the Great Depression (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991); John Webster Grant's most recent work, A Profusion of Spires: Religion in Nineteenth Century Ontario (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988); and Marguerite Van Die, An Evangelical Mind: Nathanael Burwash and the Methodist Tradition in Canada, 1839-1918 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989).

⁹Van Die, 12-13.

¹⁰Gauvreau, 230.

intellect, and God and history.¹¹ As will be seen, this pietist solution to the crises of the inter-war years was only one among several modern Protestant attempts to disentangle evangelism and religion from the complex and ambiguous structures of modern thought and society.

In part, the differences in these arguments hinge on the problem of defining "religion" and "secular," and tangentially on the potential dilemma of interpreting religious commitments from historical phenomena. In one of the pioneering studies of the relationship of Protestantism to modern Canadian society, S. D. Clark identified "religion" with transcendent or otherworldly concern, but his study focused on the social institutions and role of Protestantism, which he assumed were secular and could be accounted for as the products of social forces. Predictably, therefore, Clark found that virtually every attempt to express Protestantism in socially significant terms constituted a shift from transcendent to secularized concerns.¹² As a partial response to Clark, the church histories written by H. H. Walsh, John W. Grant, and J. S. Moir during the 1960's demonstrated the continuation of the Protestant tradition in twentieth century Canada, but confined their treatment to the institutional church as a parallel to the "secular," especially political development of Canadian culture.¹³ Subsequently, surveys of modern Canadian history have portrayed post-World War I Protestantism as retreating from secular culture into conservatism and isolated institutions, with doctrine that was

¹¹Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Churches and Social Welfare in Canada, 1900-1945 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 241-43.

¹²S. D. Clark, Church and Sect in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948), xii, 270, 433-35. See also Clark, The Developing Canadian Community, 2nd Ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), 125-27, 145-48.

¹³H. H. Walsh, The Christian Church in Canada (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1950); J. S. Moir, Church and State in Canada, 1627-1867: Basic Documents (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967). Walsh's work became the anchor of a three-volume study of A History of the Christian Church in Canada edited by John Webster Grant in the early 1970's.

assumed to have little relevance for the lives of Canadians by the 1950's.¹⁴

In different ways, participants on both sides of the more recent debate on evangelicalism and secularization share the definitions and the dilemma of Clark. Cook defines Protestant religion in terms of other-worldly concern articulated through theology, but, like the earlier models of S. D. Clark and Ernst Troeltsch, his focus on what he assumed to be the historically significant change of Protestant social thought is, by his own definition, a focus on the "secular" dimensions of Protestant life.¹⁵ As Van Die's comments on the "threat" of cultural engagement suggests, the rejoinders of Van Die, Gauvreau, and Grant, seem likewise to assume an inherent dichotomy between religion and social and cultural activity. Gauvreau, for example, identifies nineteenth century evangelical "faith" variously with individual conversion experience, simple "Biblical theology," and perfectionist moral activism. Arguing that early nineteenth-century evangelicals had broken decisively from Enlightenment thought, he juxtaposes the activities of "religion" with "secular" fields of thought such as Enlightenment philosophy, social science and hermeneutics.¹⁶ Consequently, he dismisses the culmination of modernist evangelicalism in the commitment of Protestant theologians like William Jordan to post-Kantian philosophy as an anomalous "error" in judgement on the part of elite academics.¹⁷ Ironically, Gauvreau's attempt to portray Protestant "historical theology" as a struggle to balance faith and thought invariably focuses on the reflective writings, or "thought," of Protestants, and particularly those of theologians, rather than on some abstracted faith in itself or popular non-theological expressions of evangelical faith. In fact, Gauvreau focuses more on developments in

¹⁴John H. Thompson, Allan Seagar, Canada 1922-1939: Decades of Discord (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), 75; Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond, John English, Canada Since 1945: Power, Politics, and Provincialism (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 109.

¹⁵Cook, 4-5.

¹⁶Gauvreau, 7-8. See also Van Die, 9-10.

¹⁷Gauvreau, 230.

Protestant theories of epistemology, history, and anthropology than on developments in Protestant theology such as the victory of Arminianism over Calvinism.¹⁸

The latest work of Christie and Gauvreau continues to assume a normal distinction between essential experiential piety and cultural and social forms, such that accommodations to modern critical social science and liberal social structures were secondary rather than central to religion. Their claim that early twentieth-century progressives and mid-twentieth century pietists were alike reverting to "orthodox" evangelicalism thus assumes that religion can be abstracted from the cultural and social expressions of its faith, but paradoxically can only examine that faith in its cultural and social forms.

Though all of these works have made important contributions to the study of nineteenth century Protestantism, their assumption of a dichotomy between religious faith and socio-cultural activity presents, at the very least, a methodological dilemma for historical interpretation, since the career of religion is evident only in socio-cultural phenomena. Definitions of religion strictly in terms of an essential internal experience or an otherworldly orientation simultaneously render socio-cultural phenomena ambiguous, leaving historians to argue that engagement in socio-cultural activity constitutes secularization, or alternatively that such activity is merely the extraneous expression of religion in variable forms. Meanwhile, that definition assumes that a tension between spiritual experience and external "natural" forms is normative, rather than a significant historical development in Protestants' identification of the object and meaning of their faith. And by minimizing the commitments of Protestant to both evangelical faith and modernist thought, these interpretations also obscure the roots of both the continuation and the crisis that Protestants would encounter after World

¹⁸Gauvreau's suggestion that the term "neo-orthodoxy" is inappropriate for "crisis theologians" like Karl Barth, on account of their radical repudiation of the nineteenth century synthesis of "historical theology," reflects Gauvreau's identity of nineteenth century evangelicalism with Protestant orthodoxy, and his lack of attention to the significant theological, as well as philosophical, changes that the triumph of evangelicalism brought. Compare his assessment of Barth with G. C. Berkhouwer's critical appreciation of Barth's attempt to return to the root themes of the Protestant Reformation, in The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1956).

War I in developing a new relationship with secularized culture.

In contrast to the assumption of a normative distinction between religion and cultural engagement, the phenomenological approaches of McKillop and Westfall treat Protestant religion more broadly as a "myth of concern" that provides a comprehensive ordering of experience in reference to "transcendent" reality.¹⁹ Admittedly, these approaches risk limiting religion to its social and intellectual manifestations, and thus foreclosing on what Gauvreau argues was the central claim of Protestants to the presence of God in history and the "theological" concern which informed their cultural activity.²⁰ While Gauvreau's point is well-taken, the phenomenological approach more readily admits the integrality of religion with its cultural function.

In the hope of avoiding some of the pitfalls in the secularization debate, and the tendency to reduce either religion or secularity to an epiphenomenon of the other, this study begins from the assumption that cultural engagement is not inherently "secular" or contrary to religion, but that the tensions between the experiential spiritual faith and "natural" socio-cultural life posed by evangelical Protestants was a problematic constructed in the very birth of Anglo-Protestant evangelicalism, and was thus an historical development. This point of departure follows David Lyon's suggestion that religion and culture are not "normally" or inherently separate. Instead of regarding it as opposed to religion, according to Lyon, the modern phenomenon of "secularization" (as distinct from the process of claiming independence for non-clerical institutions in Medieval Europe) might best be understood as a process of change in religion, as the accepted norms or authority for different fields of culture

¹⁹McKillop, 3-4; Westfall, 5.

²⁰Gauvreau, 6-7. See also Westfall, 10-14, and David Lyon's critique of Durkheim's treatment of religion in The Steeple's Shadow: On the Myths and Realities of Secularization (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1987), 34, 140-2.

were brought into question and shifted from divine sanction to some other ultimate sanction.²¹ In traditionally Protestant cultures, "secularization" was the process of claiming or conceding independence from divine authority or revelation to the primacy of "natural" reason and law-structures in particular areas of thought and society. As it occurred within Protestant cultures, secularization was characterized by divided or fragmented religious commitments; hence, we will see, as evangelical Protestants claimed the primacy of internal experience of God and the direct authority of God in spiritual and moral matters, they were left with the difficulty of clarifying the relationship of that internal spiritual authority to what by implication were now the ambiguous "fields" of historical-structural life.

Implicit in this approach is a definition of religion as the root motive of human thought, action, and community, and conversely a view of human socio-cultural activity as the incarnation of religious commitments.²² The Dutch political-economist Bob Goudzwaard describes the relationship between religious "motives" and social and intellectual life thus:

[t]hese motives can be described as religious because they embrace hope for the future, faith in God or man, and love for self or others. From this depth level we have always received, and still receive today, the impulse to think, to live, to work, and thus to contribute to the ongoing construction and reconstruction of that gigantic

²¹Lyon, 16-17, 20-22. For further critiques of modern interpretations of religion, especially those of Troeltsch, Weber, Durkheim, and Habermas, see also the works of Paul Ricoeur, Herman Dooyeweerd, and Sidney Greidanus. Ricoeur's critique is directed especially against the claims, on the part of critical social theorists, to give a positivist "total explanation" of history. Ricoeur seeks to maintain a world "open" both to a word of God, and to human creative historical response. See especially his response to Jurgen Habermas in Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences; Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation, John B. Thompson, ed. and trans. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); see also his protest against claims to a total explanation of religion in terms of social structures, in "Philosophy and the Unity of Truth," in History and Truth, 54-56. Herman Dooyeweerd's earlier critique of modern theory, especially of Edmund Husserl's phenomenology, is developed most extensively in A New Critique of Theoretical Thought, 3 Vols., David H. Freeman and William S. Young, trans. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1953 [1935-36]). For a masterful critique of Ernst Troeltsch's historical-critical treatment of religion, see Sidney Greidanus, The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1988), Ch. 2.

²²For the definition of religion specifically in terms of "ground-motive," and for the religious roots of both philosophical and theological theory, see Dooyeweerd, A New Critique of Theoretical Thought, Vol. I, 5-22, 56-60.

coral reef which is called western society.²³

Similarly, in his masterful Reaping the Whirlwind, Langdon Gilkey argues that in the contingent process of history from the possible to the actual event, the decisive acts of free and responsive humans are rooted in convictions about and responses to the source and meaning of life.²⁴

Understood thus, religion indeed may be articulated and cultivated in formal theological systems, symbolic forms, and cultic institutions, but these cultural formations are not the only expressions of religion, nor are they isolated from their broader context; rather, religion is situated and embodied in the whole horizon of human experience. Daniel Levine's description of religion as a "long-term dynamic of motivation" which unites and mobilizes a community, provides a framework for interpreting and criticizing its past experience, and identifies its authority structure and purpose, suggests the rich and vital role of religion in intellectual and social life.²⁵

While recognizing both the depth and broad scope of religion, this study is confined by several boundaries. The focus here is particularly on the systematic discourse of twentieth-century Protestant scholars and clergymen to interpret the relationship between God's Kingdom and the world. This focus on "intellectual history," or on what Paul Ricoeur calls "reflective discourse,"²⁶ also concentrates especially on scholars and clergymen who were most active in that debate, and on their published writings and exchanges. Among the most prominent participants in this debate were Ernest

²³Bob Goudzwaard, Capitalism and Progress: A Diagnosis of Western Society, Josina Van Nuis Zylstra, ed. and trans. (Toronto: Wedge, 1979), xx.

²⁴Langdon Gilkey, Reaping the Whirlwind: A Christian Interpretation of History, (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), 7-8.

²⁵Daniel H. Levine, "Religion and Politics in Comparative and Historical Perspective," Comparative Religion, 14 (1987), 95-122.

²⁶Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics, Don Ihde, ed. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), 101-103, 265. See also his essay "Toward a Hermeneutic of Revelation," in Paul Ricoeur, Essays on Biblical Interpretation, Lewis S. Mudge, ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980).

Thomas, William Morgan, John Baillie, George Brett, Richard Roberts, John Dow, John Line, Gregory Vlastos, Walter Bryden, Charles Norris Cochrane, and James Smart. The discourse among these scholars not only constituted a significant historical work in itself, but also served the crucial function of interpreting the object of faith and the meaning of religious commitments for life in the world, for the Canadian Protestant community.

Their discourse on the meaning of Christianity, and particularly on the relationship between God's Kingdom and the world, involved not only theological reflection on issues like sin and redemption, but also philosophical and historical reflection on the structure and development of the world.²⁷ This interweaving of theology, philosophy, and history was crucial in the development of a comprehensive Protestant world-view. As one philosophical theologian argues, for example, theology and philosophy are inescapably related:

[k]nowingly or not, theology always moves within the larger mainstream of some philosophical tradition....For philosophy deals with the more general, theology with the more specific. Philosophy paints a totality picture within which theology explores in depth a community's faith-life and confessional expressions.²⁸

In other words, theology's articulation of faith about humanity's relationship with God also requires a philosophical, and one could add historical framework, to articulate the meaning of that relationship for the historical-structured world in which life is lived. Only then does faith function, as Peter Berger suggests, as a framework for interpreting life in terms of a "sacred cosmos" of meaning for civilization.²⁹ Contrary to Gauvreau's argument that theology and philosophy, and systematic

²⁷For a discussion of the distinction between theology and philosophy, see especially Wolters, 8-9.

²⁸Gordon J. Spykman, Reformational Theology: A New Paradigm for Doing Dogmatics (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 97.

²⁹For a discussion of the views of Berger and others, see Richard V. Pierard and Robert D. Linder, Civil Religion and the Presidency (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 21. Gilkey refers to this framework as a coherent "shared symbolic world" by which social relations are shaped. Gilkey, Reaping the Whirlwind, 17.

reflection and pastoral preaching, were inherently in tension,³⁰ one of the themes of this study is that it was through the interplay of theological, philosophical, and historical reflection that modern Protestants articulated their understanding of the relationship between God's Kingdom and the world.

The discourse among Protestant scholars was facilitated by their participation in several levels of community that intersected in their work. In most cases, their church affiliation, including membership in church committees and denominational colleges, provided both the background and the institutional context in which they worked and exercised their influence. At another level, they also were linked to each other by affiliation with public universities, colloquia, and especially scholarly journals like the Canadian Journal of Religious Thought that provided a network for scholars from across different denominations and institutions. At still another level, they participated in a trans-national discourse that was opened to them through a number of ways. Though a minority received their graduate training in German or American universities, most of these scholars were trained in British universities or in Canadian universities which were derivatively British. Through these, Canadian Protestant scholars imbibed the British tradition of Kantian idealism and moderate "reverent" criticism, but they also encountered new currents of continental European thought like that of Karl Barth. Also, in the beginnings of the "information age," they had access to a trans-national body of published books and scholarly journals that enabled them to keep in touch with British, continental, and American ideas. Finally, their participation in growing ecumenical organizations like the International Missionary Council brought them contact with a global debate about the identity of Christianity and its relation to western culture.

Participation in these scholarly and denominational networks, however, did not exclude, pace Christie and Gauvreau, local concerns and social influences. To the contrary, like the more famous

³⁰Gauvreau, 7-8, 248-49. In contrast to Gauvreau's portrayal of the relations between philosophy, theology, and preaching, see Gordon Spykman's survey of the intricate relations of philosophy and theology in Reformational Theology: A New Paradigm for Doing Dogmatics (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1992), Pt. I.

twentieth-century cases of Karl Barth and Reinhold Niebuhr, central figures in Canadian Protestantism like Roberts, Baillie, Dow, Line, and Bryden, were deeply influenced by their experiences, at the beginnings of their careers, in local pastorates or chaplaincies, in many cases among disillusioned labourers, students, and war veterans. As Lesslie Newbigin argues, the task of preaching was by its nature bound to the life of the broader Protestant community which it addressed.³¹ Local clergy were supported by their parishioners, and were responsible for articulating and sustaining the Protestant tradition, especially the meaning of the gospel, for the life and in the idiom of the community. As Sydney Wise discovered in the case of Nova Scotian Presbyterians, preaching was central to the Protestant tradition and elaborated the main features of the Protestant world-view.³² In particular, it attempted to relate the two vital realities in Protestant experience, namely God's word and the context of contemporary life, and in so doing it articulated the Protestant understanding of the broadest parameters of history and the norms for cultural action.³³ Like the anonymous preacher, it was out of the problem of preaching among those for whom the promises of progressive, optimistic evangelicalism no longer seemed certain, that the scholars examined here began to re-consider the relationship between God's Kingdom and temporal-natural life.

Though the choice of subjects always involves some arbitrariness, the selection of scholars and sources for closest examination in this study is intended to reflect the career of this discourse. Though Baptists and Anglicans occasionally appear in this study, the most prominent participants in reorienting modern Protestant thought were Methodists and Presbyterians who, after 1925, became

³¹Lesslie Newbigin, The Gospel in a Pluralist Society (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1989), 53.

³²S. F. Wise, "Sermon Literature and Canadian Intellectual History," Readings in Canadian Social History, Vol. 2: Pre-Industrial Canada, 1760-1849, Michael S. Cross and Gregory S. Kealey, eds. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982).

³³Sidney Greidanus, "Redemptive History and Preaching," Pro Rege, XIX, 2 (Dec. 1990), 9. See also his more extensive treatment in The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text (Grand Rapids, 1988), Ch. 1.

affiliated with either the United Church or the continuing Presbyterian Church. In contrast to the Baptist tradition of separating church and state, and the Anglican establishment tradition, Methodists and Presbyterians had invested most heavily in nineteenth-century progressive evangelicalism and in the modern hope of Christendom to be achieved by establishing God's Kingdom in the structures of society. In turn, they experienced the sharpest disillusionment during the twentieth century, and so demonstrate the struggle of Protestants to redefine their understanding of the relationship between Christianity and modern culture. Also, it was this group of scholars that participated most fully in the institutions and journals that brought the relationship between Christianity and modern culture into question.

Moreover, this study focuses on published documents, for it was in the dynamic of public perception and exchange that these scholars began to question and systematically revise their views of the relationship between Christianity and modern culture. Part I of this study, then, focuses on the cross-currents of debate in church committees and journals through which the modern hope of Christendom was questioned. In Part II, major monographs and journal articles reflect the systematic response of Protestant scholars to the crisis of modern Christendom, and their efforts to redefine their understanding of the relationship between God's Kingdom and history. Part III, in turn, focuses especially on church confessions and committee reports to demonstrate the incorporation and institutionalization of a new modus vivendi between Protestantism and modern Canadian civilization.

* * *

This study examines the reorientation of twentieth-century mainline Protestants' interpretations of the relationship between God's Kingdom and history, and thus of the relationship between Christianity and modern western culture, in three main parts. Part I examines the roots and crisis of the

progressive evangelical interpretation of that relationship from the nineteenth century to the mid-1920's. The roots of that shift lay deep in the origins of Anglo-Protestant evangelicalism, particularly in evangelicals' distinction between spirit and nature and in their commitment to a modern "experimental" perspective, which together left an enduring problematic for twentieth-century Protestants. Through the nineteenth century, most Canadian evangelicals adopted an idealist and progressive view of God's Kingdom as a spiritual reality that was immanent in the historical-structural world, especially in human consciousness, and that was being realized in the progress of western, particularly British, culture and society through human agency and the moralization of social relations. This emphasis on the immanent presence and realization of spiritual reality also was intended to locate the divine within the process of historical experience so that the reality of God could be validated by modern critical science.³⁴ The millennial commitment of Protestants to World War I was the pinnacle of mainline Protestants' identification of Canadian and western culture with the coming of God's Kingdom, and of their hope for the realization of an historical Christian world order that also would justify Christian faith.

Already before the war, however, the theoretical framework of this identity began to erode, not because of Protestant "retreat" from science and society,³⁵ but because of the failure of the modern critical perspective, which mainline Protestants shared, to locate the reality of God in the world. While scholars like Albert Schweitzer dismissed the liberal, romanticized image of the historical Jesus to a distant and alien past, the certainty of absolute spiritual reality slipped from the grasp of idealist and pragmatist philosophers and the new advocates of the human sciences. The hiatus of theological discourse prior to the war was symptomatic of the coming crisis. Though the

³⁴Jaroslav Pelikan, The Christian Tradition, Vol.5: Christian Doctrine and Modern Culture (Since 1700) (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989), 60-61, 187.

³⁵Cook, 229.

abandonment of theology was consistent with the traditional emphasis of evangelicals such as Nathanael Burwash on religious experience,³⁶ it was also, as Jaroslav Pelikan notes, the consummation of modern evangelicals' privileging of human experience and judgement, which ultimately left them unable to distinguish a distinct word or act of God in history.³⁷ As A. B. McKillop suggests, the Protestant moral crusade that crested during the war was a Hellenized Christianity which, having lost its moorings in an historical, objective, and distinctive revelation, placed its hope in the subjective human consciousness of the good.³⁸ Though Protestants' treatment of World War I as an urgent millennial conflict briefly muted doubts about this hope, the tragic course of the war led most Protestants to question the identity of modern western history with God's Kingdom.

By the close of the war and during the 1920's, Canadian Protestants had become disillusioned with modern Canadian and western civilization, and with the possibility that God could be discerned or progressively realized as an immanent spiritual reality. Interpretations of this concern as a retreat from social activism and a turn to conservatism offer only a partial glimpse into this central crisis of foundational reality.³⁹ At stake in this search, as H. R. Niebuhr noted, were profound philosophical and theological questions about whether Protestants had discerned God and the order of the world at all.⁴⁰ In one indication of the scope of this crisis, the Canadian chaplains' pastoral message to the home churches called attention to the growing disillusionment of Canada's war-weary youth, and to

³⁶Van Die, 185-89.

³⁷Pelikan, viii, 5-6.

³⁸A. B. McKillop, "The Idealist Legacy," in Contours of Canadian Thought (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 109-110.

³⁹Richard Allen points similarly to the crisis of spiritual reality in his suggestion that the emerging crisis of the social gospel movement during the 1920's was rooted in the loss of the vision of divine immanence. The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada, 1914-28 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 356.

⁴⁰H. Richard Niebuhr, Christ and Culture (New York: Harper, 1975 [1951]), 114.

the need to rediscover the reality of God to sustain the impulse for the progress of God's Kingdom on earth.⁴¹

Herein, however, lay the crux of the crisis for modern Canadian Protestants. As efforts to realize God's Kingdom on earth seemed to fail, and as a deepening historicist criticism by erstwhile Protestants like Ernst Troeltsch and George Brett challenged claims to knowledge of divine reality in experience, progressive evangelicals like William B. Creighton, editor of the Christian Guardian, began to criticize Canadian culture as "secular," and to urge the recovery of the distinct spiritual reality of Christianity.⁴² As David Lyon suggests, this use of the term "secular" by Protestants can be seen as an attempt to disentangle Christianity from its identity with western culture, in order to "locate the real enemy" of Christianity so as to challenge what modern western culture had become.⁴³ From their own commitment to a critical, historically self-conscious perspective, however, Protestants at the same time searched for some way to discern the distinct "other" reality of God from within the matrix of their own historical context. In this crisis, the modern Protestant synthesis of the divine and history was fragmented, while the alienation of fundamentalists on one side, and revolutionary modernists on the other side, also left the nineteenth century evangelical consensus fragmented.⁴⁴

This section culminates in a demonstration of the incremental process by which Canadian "mainline" Protestants who remained committed to a modern "enlightened evangelicalism" reoriented their interpretation of the relationship between what they took to be the spiritual reality of God's Kingdom and the world. First, an older generation of theologians that included William Morgan, E.

⁴¹"The Message of the Canadian Chaplains Overseas Military Forces to the Churches of Canada," Army and Navy Board, Box 3, File 65, Methodist Church of Canada, United Church Archives.

⁴²ed. [William B. Creighton], "Christianity and Chinese Nationalism," New Outlook, July 1, 1925; 3.

⁴³Lyon, 134.

⁴⁴Van Die, 192.

F. Scott, and to a lesser extent John Baillie, who were trained in the Kantian idealism and reverent historical criticism of the late nineteenth century, developed a neo-Kantian apologetic for religion on the grounds of "values" in an attempt to sustain confidence in "religious consciousness" and so preserve Christian morality. Coinciding with this personal idealism, the clerical establishment, especially in the newly-formed United Church, developed a "new evangelism" which sought to answer the post-war search for spiritual reality by focusing on a personal encounter with the divine spirit in the person of Jesus. This was a narrowed, modernist form of pietism. Though intended to preserve the distinctive spiritual claims of Christianity and the impulse of social morality, it seemed to retreat into human subjectivity while withdrawing Christ and the claims of the Kingdom of God from historical structures. By the late 1920's the "new evangelism" had produced little more than the preacher's crisis, for Christian "religion" seemed indistinguishable from mere human sentiment and the status quo, while the problems of the objective reality of God and the prospects for transforming society remained unresolved.

An alternative, and more radical departure within modern evangelical Protestantism began to appear in the late 1920's in the early work of a new generation of scholars, including Richard Roberts, John Dow, John Line, and Walter Bryden, who would dominate mainline Canadian Protestantism after 1930. Most of these had more fully absorbed the disillusionment of the war period during their formative years, and with a new sense of Augustinian tension between God's Kingdom and the world, they began to criticize human sin and western society. Also, though they were trained partly in the tradition of Kantian idealism, they were more convinced of the apogee of historical theology in Albert Schweitzer's dismissal of the historical Jesus, and were sympathetic to the Biblical theology movement advocated in Britain by C. H. Dodd and James Denney, who attempted to move beyond the crisis of historical theology by affirming the testimony of the Bible and the church to the crucified and risen

Christ of the cross.⁴⁵ Their connection to moderate British Biblical scholarship⁴⁶ thus enabled these modern evangelical Protestants to preserve an emphasis on the experience of Christ, yet also to retain their investment in a modern critical perspective. In different ways, they also began to posit a modern apocalypticism which identified God as transcendent moreso than immanent, and which emphasized God's judgement and transformation of human society through the entry of a transcendent, supernatural Christ into experience. Though tentative, this renewed emphasis on the transcendent reality of God and an Augustinian tension between God and the world offered a modern reclamation of both divine grace and human freedom in a world that according to modern science now seemed to be governed by deterministic law.

The shift of modern Protestants to this new distinction between God and nature was reinforced during the late 1920's, especially in response to the pivotal events of 1928. By 1928, young preachers like Line, Dow, and Bryden were new appointees to central seminary positions, while Richard Roberts had moved to Toronto the previous year. Internationally, the ecumenical Jerusalem Conference challenged western Protestants with the pleas of non-western Christians to divest Christianity of its commitments to western ideologies and structures of world domination. 1928 also was the year that John Baillie's neo-Kantian apologetic went into publication, but it quickly was overshadowed by the appearance of works by Karl Barth and other "crisis theologians" translated into English in 1928. Also, while the clerical establishment initiated a joint campaign to "re-establish the authority of God"

⁴⁵Note that the twentieth century "Biblical theology" movement is considerably different from Michael Gauvreau's identification of Biblical theology with the Baconian method used by nineteenth century scholars like William Caven to derive "facts" from the Bible. See Gauvreau, 148, and compare Greidanus, 67-74.

⁴⁶For a discussion of the moderate character of modern British theological scholarship, and the role of that moderation in transatlantic discussion, see Mark Noll, Between Faith and Criticism; Evangelicals, Scholarship, and the Bible in America, 2nd Ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991 [1986]), 62-85.

in Canadian society through spiritual renewal,⁴⁷ the new generation of Line, Roberts, Bryden, and even John Baillie, began to renounce the mere sentimentality and humanism of Protestant "religion" and its complicity in the crises of the western world. By the 1930's, faced with the depression, the rise of totalitarianism, and the apostasy of the German church to Naziism, they saw campaigns for "spiritual renewal" and "moral rearmament," and the popularity of the Buchmanite Oxford Group, as narrow and optimistic liberal idealism, and as naively allied with the existing social order. In the work of this younger generation of scholars the philosophical and theological departures from the progressive evangelical synthesis were radicalized in an effort to liberate the gospel from captivity to a culture which seemed increasingly alien from God's Kingdom.

Part II examines the different ways that modern mainline Protestants systematically re-interpreted the relationship between God and the world in the wake of the revisions of the 1920's, and in the midst of the deepening despair of the Depression era, the rise of Nazism and Stalinism, and the looming prospect of renewed war. By far the most common resolution was the reconstruction of a liberal evangelical emphasis on personal pietism, advocated by an older generation like George Pidgeon as well as by Richard Roberts and John Dow. This resolution combined the neo-Kantian apologetic based on personal values with a new emphasis on the personal experience of a super-natural Christ. While distinguishing between religion and structured reality, advocates of this renewed liberal-evangelicalism saw the two as complementary, and likewise viewed church and state as complementary authorities. While the state's role was that of expert scientific manager of complex modern social relations, the church's role was that of spiritual evangelism and the renewal of personal morality.

In contrast to this modern pietism was the development of a more revolutionary criticism of

⁴⁷Ernest Thomas, "Shall We Recover a Lost God?" *New Outlook*, Feb. 8, 1933, 1. The four main denominations participating in this campaign were the Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian, and United Churches.

Canadian social structures, led by members of the newly founded Fellowship for a Christian Social Order. John Line, who would also have close ties with the League for Social Reconstruction and the Canadian Commonwealth Federation, was one of the main leaders of this movement. Most studies of this movement have emphasized its Christian social philosophy, and its significance for the renewal of a "social gospel."⁴⁸ But like the "ethical" neo-orthodoxy of the Niebuhrs and Karl Barth's proclamation of God's radical judgment on modern culture and liberal Christianity, members of the FCSO departed from the idealist synthesis of gospel and history of the earlier social gospel movement, as well as from the narrowing of modernist piety to "religion" and morality.⁴⁹ Borrowing eclectically from Barth, Alfred North Whitehead, Harry Ward, and John Macmurray, they adopted a new socialist critique of western society, and called Protestants to make their consciousness of the spirit of Christ concrete in the material relations of contemporary structures, in the hope of a revolutionary, eschatological coming of God's Kingdom. While attempting to recover the meaning of the gospel for the whole structural context of life, this was a social Christianity which rejected the identity of the gospel, and the destiny of the Kingdom, with western historical traditions. Indeed, FCSO members like Line called Protestants to choose sides between a revolutionary Christian community and the secular world of western tradition.

A third revision was the further development of Biblical theology and dogmatics, concentrated in the Presbyterian church and led by Walter Bryden. From his training in the Biblical theology of

⁴⁸See, for example, Michiel Horn, The League for Social Reconstruction: Intellectual Origins of the Democratic Left in Canada, 1930-1942 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980); Harold Wells and Roger Hutchinson, eds., A Long and Faithful March: 'Towards the Christian Revolution' 1930's / 1980's (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1989). See also Richard Allen's suggestion that the "radical Christianity" of the 1930's was a renewal of the social gospel movement, in The Social Passion, 346.

⁴⁹As Donald Meyer writes, "Every step in the search for practical translation brought a deepening of self-consciousness about the nature of the original idealism.... Beginning as a criticism of society, the Protestant social concern ended as a criticism of religion." The Protestant Search for Political Realism, 1919-1941, 2nd ed. (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1988 [1960]), 2-3.

William Manson and James Denney, Bryden also adopted Karl Barth's radical denunciation of secular western civilization, his emphasis on the transcendent sovereignty of God, and his attempt to give priority to the exclusive Word of God. Bryden's own motto of "separation unto the gospel" repudiated all human efforts to save society, and emphasized God's transcendent word of judgement and grace for the world. Like Barth, Bryden located the antithetical crisis, not between different relative historical communities, but between God and history. Hence Bryden's focus on "dogmatics", for such an absolute Word of God could only be revealed through the testimony of God's spirit to the church, and witnessed to in history by the relative confession of the church.

Thus study concludes, in Part III with an examination of how these contrasting views were worked out in the post-World War II period as Protestants, faced with the challenge of reconstruction, envisioned and institutionalized a new relationship between Christianity and modern Canadian culture. Two general features of that reconstruction stand out. First, in contrast to their millennial hope at the start of World War I, Protestants regarded the outbreak of renewed war as a sign of God's judgement on the descent of western civilization into barbarism. The realization that Christendom had ended threw mainline Protestants back to the predicament of Christianity in the classical world. And like Augustine, Canadian mainline Protestants now emphasized the tension between the two cities of God and man, between gospel and history, and between Christianity and Canadian culture. Their emphasis on this tension suggests what David Lyon describes as a strategic secularization. By World War II, mainline Protestants had attempted to reach beyond what seemed to be the deterministic matrix of historical-structural reality in order to reclaim the transcendent judgment and grace of God. After the war, in turn, they attempted to bring a renewed and transforming "theological" criticism to bear on modern Canadian culture.

Secondly, they shared a general Augustinian interpretation of the relationship between God's Kingdom and contemporary culture. Their variations on that tension differed significantly, as was

evident in the debate between Charles Norris Cochrane and Walter Bryden about the relationship between Christianity and culture, and in the different visions of reconstruction offered by the Presbyterian and United churches. During the 1930's and through the 1940's, as they attempted to disentangle Christianity from culture, both wings of this modern Augustinian Protestantism had come to define Christianity in terms of theology and the church, leaving a hiatus between the realms of grace and nature, sacred and secular, church and state, and theology and philosophy. The absence of integration of their theology with a comprehensive Protestant philosophy, however, left their efforts to relate transcendent grace to contemporary culture tenuous and fragmented. Cochrane, R. C. Chalmers, and others demonstrated the enduring legacy of neo-Kantian idealism in their identification of God's grace with the spirit of freedom and creativity in human personality, and thus they reclaimed the western liberal tradition as the relative expression of God's grace in history over against natural structures. Barthians like Bryden, meanwhile, interpreted all traditions and structures as relative and claimed an existential encounter with Christ in the midst of history as the basis for free and radical transformation apart from structures.

These modern variations of Augustinianism were constructed in the shadow of the Enlightenment, and their search for transcendent divine authority was undertaken from a post-Kantian critical consciousness that had eclipsed the doctrine of creation which Augustine had assumed.⁵⁰ Having abstracted Christ from the structured order of creation, the turn of mainline Protestants to modern forms of Augustinianism was ambiguous. While it claimed the transcendent grace of God's Word and the divine spirit, and thus a corner for theology, the church, and the freedom of human personality, mainline Protestants' "strategic secularization" also conceded the secularization of "natural" structures and the sciences. Consequently, Protestants struggled to live in two worlds: the Protestant church directed to a transcendent world, and the secularized structures of Canadian society.

⁵⁰Spykman, 176.

PART I:

MODERN CHRISTENDOM IN CRISIS

Chapter 1:

The Modern Hope of Christendom

Both the modern hope of Christendom and its twentieth-century crisis were rooted in the nineteenth-century evangelical development of a moral, progressive vision of history. The rise of evangelical Protestantism and its influence in shaping nineteenth-century Anglo-Canadian culture is by now a familiar story. As Michael Gauvreau notes, Canada's nineteenth century was "the evangelical century."¹ In the process of developing their cultural leadership, evangelicals came to see Canada, as John Webster Grant suggests, as part of a "Christian" civilization that was heir to "Christendom."² Like the fourth-century church fathers who hailed Constantinian Rome as favoured of God, evangelical Protestants came to identify Anglo-Protestant ideals and institutions, such as the British empire, with the coming of God's Kingdom. And as they grappled with the profound intellectual and social challenges of the late nineteenth century, they urged upon Canadians a modern evangelical Christianity as the key to preserving civilization and progressively building God's Kingdom on earth. This chapter surveys the emergence of that modern evangelical hope of Christendom in Canada, and the specific contours of nineteenth-century evangelicals' moral interpretation of history that culminated in the twentieth-century crisis of modern Christendom. That moral interpretation of history was woven out of two main strands, namely a revivalist and largely Arminian theology, and Scottish Common Sense philosophy. Evangelical Protestant faith had grown up together with Enlightenment in the post-Reformation world -- a world which evangelicals assumed was divided into "spiritual" and "natural," or "sacred" and "secular" realities. Built into their insistence on spiritual regeneration was

¹Michael Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century: College and Creed in English Canada from the Great Revival to the Great Depression (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).

²John W. Grant, The Church in the Canadian Era (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1972), 213-215.

an assumed ontological distinction between spirit and nature and an anthropocentric "experiential" point of departure that complemented and partook of critical Enlightenment thought. As they lived in both spiritual and natural worlds, and sought some way to comprehend the relationship between them, the founders of evangelical Protestantism wove together versions of both evangelical faith and moderate Enlightenment modern thought.

As Maurice Mandelbaum has argued, therefore, the central problematic for nineteenth century evangelical Protestants was how to understand and live the relationship between spiritual and natural reality, and between God and history.³ In their attempt to resolve that problematic, nineteenth-century Canadian evangelicals developed several different interpretations of how spiritual reality was related to the realm of nature, particularly in the wake of the challenging results of nineteenth century science and the social transformation brought by industrialization and urbanization. By the late nineteenth century, most Canadian evangelicals, employing variations of Kantian idealism, developed an historical interpretation of spiritual reality that located God's spiritual Kingdom within the natural structures and processes of history, and particularly in human consciousness itself. In doing so, they embraced modern critical science and liberal social theory, and identified with the "mainstream" currents of Canadian urban industrial society, while assuming the task of claiming and shaping them for "Christendom" and God's Kingdom. In contrast to this "modern," mainstream evangelicalism, a minority of "proto-fundamentalists" began to emphasize the supernatural work of God that transcended history and natural structures.

Despite the apparent triumph of progressive evangelicalism by the early twentieth century, and an outpouring of progressive social reform efforts devoted to realizing the Kingdom of God on earth, the optimistic progressive consensus showed signs of both strain and urgency already before World

³Maurice Mandelbaum, History, Man, and Reason: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Thought (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), 7, 29.

War I. At its outbreak, Canadian Protestant clergy greeted the war effort as a millennial moment and a sacred cause in the progress of God's Kingdom. By then, however, their confidence that a divine spiritual reality was being realized in history already was shaken, and the facade of a modern evangelical consensus already was disintegrating. Notably, it was not their engagement with "culture" as such, nor a late strategic blunder, but the very way that evangelicals had come to understand the relationship between God and history in terms of a duality of spirit and nature, and their anthropocentric experientialism that shared the Enlightenment outlook of critical modernism, that laid the foundations of crisis in the early twentieth century.⁴

I. Evangelicalism and the Moral Vision of History

By the mid-nineteenth century evangelical Protestants were firmly established in Canadian society. Their immigration to the relatively fluid context of British North America during the previous century gave them an unusual opportunity to shape the newly emerging Anglo-Canadian culture. Their development of diverse voluntary church denominations, colleges, political reform movements, and non-sectarian but generically Protestant school systems like that organized by Egerton Ryerson in Ontario, all testify to the success of evangelicals in challenging the established hierarchical structures of early nineteenth-century Canada, and institutionalizing their evangelical faith in a liberal, scientific, and capitalist Anglo-Protestant culture.⁵

Evangelicals undertook that nation-building cultural engagement in the light of what was by

⁴For different interpretations that locate the crisis of progressive evangelicalism in progressives' engagement in culture, see especially Ramsay Cook, The Regenerators; Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 4-5; Marguerite Van Die, An Evangelical Mind: Nathanael Burwash and the Methodist Tradition in Canada, 1839-1918 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 12-13; Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century, 230.

⁵For a survey of recent scholarship on this topic, see Burkhard Kiesekamp, "Christendom, Nationalism and the Fate of the Nineteenth Century Evangelical Consensus," Acadiensis, XXV, 1 (Autumn 1995), especially 125-6.

then a well-established cross-Atlantic exchange of ideas among English-speaking evangelical Protestants, especially from the Scottish and American Presbyterian evangelical schools represented by such nineteenth century figures as Thomas Chalmers and Nathaniel Taylor.⁶ That exchange had generated among mid-nineteenth century Canadian evangelicals a common view of the relationship between God and the world that was centered on a moral vision of history. Some years ago, Goldwin French described that vision as

an overwhelming conviction of the existence, the presence and the power of God in human affairs. Christians might differ about the manner in which God worked, but they were persuaded that He was continuously active, guiding the course of events, rewarding and protecting His supporters, admonishing and punishing those who deviated from His path.⁷

As A. B. McKillop has shown, this vision of God's moral governance of the world was a powerful impulse among evangelical Protestants to shape the emerging culture of the new Canadian nation.⁸

That moral vision of history was woven out of two central strands in evangelical thought, namely Arminian or revivalist theology and Scottish Common Sense philosophy. As David Bebbington notes, Anglo-Protestant evangelicalism grew out of both a reaction to Enlightenment skepticism, and a departure from the post-Reformation scholastic Protestant understanding of the order and assurance of salvation.⁹ In their claim to an "experimental Christianity," evangelicals of the 1700's like John Wesley gave primacy to the inward experience of regeneration and to personal

⁶See, for example, the extensive relations between Scottish evangelicals and the American school of Jonathan Edwards, in John MacLeod, Scottish Theology (Philadelphia: Banner of Truth Trust, 1943).

⁷Goldwin French, "The Evangelical Creed in Canada," The Shield of Achilles; Aspects of Canada in the Victorian Age, W. L. Morton, ed. (Toronto / Montreal: McLelland and Stewart, 1968), 18.

⁸A. B. McKillop, A Disciplined Intelligence: Critical Inquiry and Canadian Thought in the Victorian Era (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979).

⁹David Bebbington, Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730's to the 1980's (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1992 [1989]), 35-42.

holiness.¹⁰ Wesley's Arminian theology emphasized that humans were responsible for accepting or rejecting salvation, and that individual regeneration should issue in sanctified moral perfection.¹¹ These expectations assumed a universal offer of salvation through the atonement of Christ, and a semi-Pelagian revision of the doctrine of original sin which viewed human sin as a matter of individual, intentional acts of an afflicted will. This revision also implied an optimistic anthropology since humans could be responsible only on the premise of an intelligent, competent, and free will. Though blighted by sin, humans were able by God's universal "prevenient" grace and the presumed urging of the Holy Spirit to accept redemption in Christ and a new life of perfection. Though he upheld Scripture and the work of Christ as the objective validation of justification, then, Wesley located the process of salvation primarily in the experience of spiritual regeneration in the human soul. As his revivalism swept the Anglo-Protestant world, his Arminian theology became the orthodoxy of nineteenth century evangelical Protestants, including of Canadians like Nathanael Burwash.¹²

Despite their Calvinist roots, Scottish Presbyterians like Thomas McCulloch, head of Pictou Academy in Nova Scotia during the early 1800's, adopted a similar revision of the order of salvation. Though he and other evangelical Calvinists still professed traditional Calvinist views on original sin and God's sovereignty, and suspected Arminianism as an optimistic doctrine of human works, McCulloch also attempted to reconcile predestination with free grace. As Gauvreau puts it:

[h]umanity's general tendency was toward moral evil, he stoutly maintained (in contrast to the benevolent optimism of the Enlightenment), an evil remedied only by God's grace, which awakened faith in Christ and brought salvation. Such views, he believed, were sanctioned by both revelation and reason, and marked the point of

¹⁰John Wesley, The Works of John Wesley, Vol. 5, ed. by Thomas Jackson, 4th Ed. (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1840). 333, quoted in Van Dic, 9-10.

¹¹Sydney Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People, Vol. 1 (Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1975), 339.

¹²Ahlstrom, 297-8.

departure of the human search for redemption.¹³

McCulloch's location of the work of grace in the internal experience of faith rather than in the historic work of Christ, his emphasis on the human search for redemption, and his distinction between revelation and reason, all reflect his affinity with Wesley's evangelical Arminianism. Since the early 1700's, Scottish evangelicals like Thomas Halyburton, and later John Brown of McCulloch's own secessionist Burgher denomination, had repudiated scholastic Calvinist determinism by emphasizing the moral justice of God's punishment of human sin, the free grace offered through Christ's blood and the Holy Spirit's urging to repentance, and human responsibility for their sin and their acceptance of God's grace and obedience to his law. According to Scottish church historians Andrew Drummond and James Bulloch, even in its Scottish strongholds, an older Calvinism was on the defensive against the new evangelical Presbyterianism.¹⁴

In fact, McCulloch's view of God as a "moral governor,"¹⁵ suggests that Canadian evangelical Presbyterians had adopted a view of the relationship between God and humanity similar to the "Arminianized Calvinism" of the New England successors of Jonathan Edwards, especially Nathaniel Taylor.¹⁶ Taylor's "moral government" apologetic argued that God's governance of the world was rational and moral: God rightly judged humans for their sin, and blessed their obedience, but that judgement was executed only for free acts of disobedience, and not for an "original sin"

¹³Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century, 20.

¹⁴On Halyburton, see MacLeod throughout. On Brown, see Andrew Drummond and James Bulloch, The Scottish Church, 1688-1843 (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1975), 111.

¹⁵Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century, 23.

¹⁶William McLoughlin uses the term "Arminianized Calvinism" to describe Taylor's views, in William G. McLoughlin, ed. The American Evangelicals, 1800-1900 (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1976), 10. For a discussion of the development of this New England School, see George Marsden, The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 32-56. On the connection between Scottish evangelicals like Thomas Chalmers, the Edwardsian tradition, and the moderate Enlightenment, see also Bebbington, 57-65.

imputed from Adam. Christ's atoning death, in turn, was not a vicarious legal penalty paid to a wrathful God but the demonstration of God's justice and benevolent care for man. Awareness of that atonement, as testified to conscience by the Bible and the Holy Spirit, convinced individuals to repent, turn their affections once more toward God, and return to moral righteousness. Thus Taylor's theology upheld both God's governance and human free will and responsibility as fundamental to the moral relationship between God and man, and as the focus of redemption.¹⁷

This evangelical Calvinism was not far from Wesley's portrayal of regeneration, nor from the emphasis of Baptists on the believer's conversion experience and conscious acceptance of God's grace.¹⁸ Indeed, nineteenth century evangelicals from diverse denominations moved toward a confluence: as Presbyterians and Baptists adopted elements of Arminian theology, Methodists like the Burwashes and Ryersons were educated in the Westminster Confession and Taylor's theory of moral government.¹⁹

Though intended to refute Enlightenment skepticism, evangelicals' moral interpretation of the relation between God and humans assumed moderate Enlightenment ideas, especially those of Scottish "Common Sense" philosophy.²⁰ Scottish philosophers like Francis Hutcheson, Thomas Reid and Dugald Stewart saw their naturalized view of Providence as an alternative to Enlightenment skepticism, but also to evangelical enthusiasm and scholastic Calvinist fatalism. Nevertheless, eighteenth and nineteenth century evangelicals like Jonathan Witherspoon and Thomas Chalmers regarded parts of the Scottish philosophy as complementary to evangelicalism. Their appropriation

¹⁷McLoughlin, 6-10.

¹⁸French, 23.

¹⁹Van Die, 4, 15-23.

²⁰This is in contrast to Gauvreau's argument for a radical discontinuity between evangelicalism and enlightenment thought. Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century, 25-28.

of the Scottish philosophy occurred at several levels. Intrinsically, evangelicals shared the Scottish philosophers' focus on the primacy of human experience and moral consciousness. More extrinsically, they adopted especially Reid's realist epistemology and Hutcheson's moral philosophy to justify their evangelical faith and to relate internal spiritual regeneration to a broader moral order in the world.

The incipient idealism of Reid's inductive faculty psychology, by which he claimed a "scientific" justification for direct apprehensions of the external world and intuited judgments about beauty, morality, and God, was used by evangelicals to defend their claim to intuited spiritual experience against the radical skepticism of mid-eighteenth century critics like Matthew Tindal and David Hume.²¹ Reid's theory also offered a way to reconcile spiritual experience with the inductive Baconian method of science. Subsequently, in what Gauvreau calls their "historical theology," evangelicals claimed the "scientific" study of the data of experience, and especially of the Bible, to discover the simple, objective "facts" of salvation.²² With Reid's epistemology, evangelicals could advocate free scientific inquiry in the belief that the data of natural experience would correlate with Biblical data and would yield consistent truth about God's law, yet they could insist that science was bound to the limits of induction and to the interpretive lens of special revelation.

Evangelicals also shared central features of Francis Hutcheson's idea of the moral constitution of human nature. Like his seventeenth-century contemporary David Hume, Hutcheson advocated a "philosophical history" which attempted to apply Bacon's empiricism to human affairs to discover, beneath the flux of events, universal laws for human relations.²³ With a Deist view of God's

²¹For helpful summaries of Scottish Common Sense philosophy, see McKillop, *A Disciplined Intelligence*, 26-28, and Marsden, 47-48. More extensive treatment is given in S. A. Graves, *The Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960). On evangelicals' apologetic use of Reid, see Drummond and Bulloch, 47, 90-98, 163-169.

²²Gauvreau, *The Evangelical Century*, 30, 54-62, 148.

²³D. W. Bebbington, *Patterns in History* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1979), 65-81.

constant providence, and an anthropology borrowed from early Scottish Arminians like John Cameron and from Cambridge neo-Platonists like the Earl of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson argued that conscience was an inherent sense by which humans could discover and adhere to God's moral law.²⁴ This anthropology assumed the neo-Platonic analogia entis, namely that as image-bearers of God, humans bore a spark of the divine mind, and by virtue of such faculties as conscience, reason, and free will they could read God's law through their natural reason unaided by revelation. This moral capacity also suggested a realm of moral law that was raised above the order of nature, since it was uniquely based on free, intelligent moral responsibility rather than deterministic necessity. Through the rational exercise of his moral affections in conscience, man would freely turn from primitive self-love to recognize his duties to God and others for the better attainment of human happiness and the progress of civilization. Man's capacity for intelligent freedom was thus the bedrock of his responsibility before a God conceived as moral governor of the universe.

The relationship between evangelicals' ideas and Hutcheson's moral philosophy was equivocal, but nonetheless significant. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, evangelicals opposed Hutcheson's confidence in natural morality and insisted that the moral realm was characterized by the relationship of sin and regeneration.²⁵ Nevertheless, their premise of free will and their belief that man's relation with God was uniquely moral concurred with Hutcheson's idea that humans were essentially moral beings characterized by conscience, free will, and intelligence. While holding that God was sovereign over all creation, evangelicals like William Lyall, professor of classics and mental philosophy at Free Church College, Halifax during the 1850's, elevated the realm of internal, moral

²⁴Drummond and Bulloch, 47, 86; Richard Sher, "Professors of Virtue: The Social History of the Edinburgh Moral Philosophy Chair in the Eighteenth Century," in Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment, M. A. Stewart, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 95. See also C. A. Patrides, ed., The Cambridge Platonists (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 13-29, 39-41.

²⁵Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century, 60-65.

relations as "the highest part of man's nature" and the metaphysical and sacred realm of direct spiritual communication between God and humans.²⁶ Like Nathaniel Taylor, Lyall's anthropology implicitly accepted Hutcheson's analogia entis which identified divine or spiritual reality with an aspect of human nature itself. As Marsden claims in reference to Taylor, though they insisted on the need of divine grace, evangelicals shared Hutcheson's confidence in conscience and its reliability for conveying the will of God internally, as the Bible did objectively.²⁷

The mid-century moral government theory, then, allied Arminian theology and moderate Common Sense philosophy to provide a moral interpretation of the relationship between a sovereign and gracious God and free human agents. This moral vision of history assumed that God intervened actively in experience and that his judgments were perspicuous in the present age. It also assumed a unique spiritual relationship between God and humans which focused on practical morality rather than abstract and divisive doctrine, and reconciled the objective reality of Christ's atonement with human free responsibility in history within the order of Providence. In short, the doctrine of moral government was the theological and philosophical linchpin, assumed by Methodists like Burwash, Presbyterians like McCulloch, and even Anglicans like Archbishop Strachan, of a common moral view of history that called evangelicals to a mission of moral improvement.²⁸

In turn, this moral interpretation of history, with its hierarchical duality of spirit and nature, provided the intellectual framework by which nineteenth-century evangelicals allied their experiential revivalism to a liberal-democratic, capitalist, and science-based culture so as to translate their faith into

²⁶Quoted in Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century, 35.

²⁷Marsden, 45-50.

²⁸See John W. Grant, The Church in the Canadian Era, 77-78, on the preference of Canadian Anglicans for evangelicalism rather than Oxford high-church Anglicanism.

an objective cultural order, and to subordinate the structured world of nature to moral ends.²⁹ In their establishment of educational institutions like Victoria College and Knox College, for example, and of non-sectarian public school systems like that advocated by Egerton Ryerson in Upper Canada, evangelicals attempted to direct education to moral ends.³⁰ As Ryerson put it, education was to develop moral character -- the knowledge and practice of moral duty and reverence to others and to God -- so as to deepen evangelical faith and "apply the cardinal principles of the Scriptures to the various relations and circumstances of human life."³¹ For Ryerson, theology was the queen of the sciences, for it offered the purest knowledge of spiritual truth to which all other sciences must lead, while moral philosophy was the central instrument for relating the implications of evangelical faith to the structured world of human life.³²

This same moral "discipline" directed evangelicals' treatment of the natural world and the natural sciences as objective revelations of God's Providential law.³³ Like Sir Francis Bacon himself, evangelical Canadian scholars such as John William Dawson, a leading Canadian biologist and principal of McGill University from 1855 to 1893, regarded the natural sciences as important for the practical tasks that Canadians had in the new world, and for "'liberalizing truth'" through the empirical discovery and classification of the natural order.³⁴ For Dawson, as for Ryerson, the scientific study

²⁹Burkhard Kiesekamp, "Christendom, Nationalism and the Fate of the Nineteenth Century Evangelical Consensus," 125-6.

³⁰Michael Gauvreau, "Protestantism Transformed: Personal Piety and the Evangelical Social Vision, 1815-1867," The Canadian Protestant Experience, 1760-1990, George A. Rawlyk, ed. (Burlington: Welch, 1990) 91-92.

³¹Rev. Egerton Ryerson, Inaugural Address on the Nature and Advantages of an English and Liberal Education ... June 21, 1842 (Toronto, 1842), 17, quoted in McKillop, A Disciplined Intelligence, 19.

³²McKillop, A Disciplined Intelligence, 20.

³³McKillop, A Disciplined Intelligence, 28-29. Carl Berger, Science, God, and Nature in Victorian Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), 32-33.

³⁴Marlene Shore, The Science of Social Redemption: McGill, the Chicago School, and the Origins of Social Research in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 4-5.

of nature was to serve revealed faith and moral ends, and so was subordinate to moral philosophy and theology.

Evangelicals interpreted history and social relations in similarly moral, or what has come to be known as "whiggish," terms. Civilization, according to Queen's College moral philosopher James George, rested on moral foundations, for human history was the unique realm of the moral relationship between God and humans.³⁵ Despite sectarian differences between Anglicans and Methodists, and between Tories and Reformers, over who should wield temporal authority, all agreed with Ryerson that there existed, evident to all, "a wide common ground of principles and morals,"³⁶ and that the welfare of civilizations depended on adherence to this God-given moral order. In turn, Ryerson's readiness to use the powers of the state, and the efforts of Wesleyan Methodists in the Atlantic colonies and Free Church Presbyterians to eliminate the Clergy Reserves for the Anglican and Catholic establishment and reforms like temperance, reflected a new political activism to submit the objective social order to moral ends.³⁷

Ultimately, this moral vision of society and history, as French suggested, located God's millennial agency and judgment in history. Seen through the lens of Scripture, history displayed God's hand of judgement and blessing. Those who repudiated their duty to God, as in the French revolution, suffered the chaos which signalled divine judgement, while the blessings of prosperity and progress were bestowed on the righteous.³⁸ This didactic use of history as "philosophy teaching by

³⁵Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century, 46.

³⁶McKillop, A Disciplined Intelligence, 13.

³⁷Burkhard Kiesekamp, "Christendom, Nationalism and the Fate of the Nineteenth Century Evangelical Consensus," 131-3.

³⁸S. F. Wise, "Sermon Literature and Canadian Intellectual History," in Readings in Canadian Social History, Vol. 2; Pre-Industrial Canada, 1760-1849, Michael S. Cross and Gregory S. Kealey, eds. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982 [1965]), 90-91.

example" not only offered objective verification of evangelical faith, but also portrayed the established order as divinely sanctioned. While church historians like Robert Burns of Knox College celebrated the growth of the church, its doctrines, and the impact of religion in modern western society,³⁹ others affirmed the British constitution as the closest approximation, especially compared to the French revolution, to perfection in social morality. With its balance of representative government and strong executive authority, the British order ensured moral freedom while upholding man's duty to a God-given communal order.⁴⁰

In shaping culture to verify their experiential faith in the objective social order, Canadian evangelical Protestants displayed a blossoming confidence in human ability and the efficacy of human action, as well as a growing post-millennialism in which, like the fourth-century Constantinian church fathers, they assumed that the emerging Anglo-Protestant order, especially in the liberal nation-state, the British constitution, and the progress brought by industrial-capitalism, displayed the providential favor of God.⁴¹ Indeed, as John Webster Grant suggested, they began to interpret Canada as part of a "Christian" civilization that was heir to "Christendom."⁴²

Though the mid-nineteenth century moral vision of history was a powerful impulse among evangelical Protestants to shape the emerging culture of the new Canadian nation, their particular synthesis of evangelical faith and moderate Enlightenment ideas left them with two main conceptual problems. First, their ontological dualism identified the basic distinction in reality in terms of

³⁹Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century, 92-98.

⁴⁰McKillop, A Disciplined Intelligence, 16, 37-39.

⁴¹Burkhard Kieseckamp, "Christendom, Nationalism and the Fate of the Nineteenth Century Evangelical Consensus," 131-3.

⁴²Grant, The Church in the Canadian Era, 213-215.

spiritual and natural reality, both of which were present within the world.⁴³ This definition of the redemptive relation between God and creation primarily in terms of this spiritual realm, as Mark Noll has recently suggested, focused the impact of salvation on an abstract spiritual and moral realm.⁴⁴ Though evangelicals attempted to subordinate natural structures to spiritual reality by moralizing social relations, their approach assumed the primacy of individual moral freedom and responsibility, while at the same time they neglected to examine the structures of society in the light of redemptive judgement. Like American evangelicals who sanctified the essentially "natural" moral philosophy of the American Revolution,⁴⁵ therefore, mid-century Canadian evangelicals allied Christianity to a social structure which was based on the liberal, natural law theories of Hutcheson, Locke, and Smith, and which was susceptible to interpretation entirely in terms of secular natural law.

Meanwhile, secondly, evangelicals' location of spiritual reality within humanity shared the experimental method and the anthropocentric perspective of the moderate Enlightenment. Reflecting on his father's scholarship, the son of Nathanael Burwash indicated this correlation:

It was surely not accidental in an age when experimental science held the field intellectually, that an experimental or experiential [*sic*] form of religion should make its appearance.⁴⁶

Indeed, John Wesley, whose views the younger Burwash had echoed, considered "experimental" Christianity to be the complement of modern scientific thought:

It is a fundamental principle with us that to renounce reason is to renounce religion, that religion and reason go hand in hand, and that all irrational religion is false

⁴³Contrast this with Sydney Ahlstrom, who claims that the evangelicals identified the basic ontological distinction as existing between creator and creation. See S. E. Ahlstrom, "The Scottish Philosophy and American Theology," Church History 24 (1955), 267, quoted in McKillop, A Disciplined Intelligence, 28-29.

⁴⁴Mark Noll, The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1994), 34-35, 48-49, 87.

⁴⁵Mark A. Noll, Nathan O. Hatch, George M. Marsden, The Search For Christian America (Westchester, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1983), 88-93.

⁴⁶Quoted in Van Die, 100.

religion.⁴⁷

Despite claiming to subordinate scientific inquiry and the structured world to Christian faith and Biblical revelation, evangelicals had accepted the critical epistemology of the Enlightenment, and had answered Enlightenment skeptics in a manner that affirmed the subject's experience as the measure of truth.

This identification of spiritual reality simultaneously assumed an optimistic view of human nature, freedom, and ability, and also asserted the primacy of the human subject in its relation to God. According to Claus Westermann, evangelicals' assumption of the analogia entis and their apologetic for spiritual truth on the grounds of subjective experience led evangelical theology gradually to become "anthropology," and ultimately left evangelical Protestantism with little defense against the rise of entirely naturalized and relativized explanations of human life and the world in the late nineteenth century.⁴⁸ Indeed, as church historian Jaroslav Pelikan notes, the anthropocentric focus of experimental evangelicalism meant that evangelical faith was intrinsically modern and critical. Since it was experimental, evangelical faith seemed to hang on demonstrable proof of the presence of God in the world, and on the moral sanctification and growing perfection of believers. As such, evangelicalism was potentially always in crisis, for evangelicals had effectively placed God in question before the authority of human apprehension and objective, present perfection.⁴⁹

Thus evangelicalism and Enlightenment thought were not simply antithetical movements, nor did evangelical Protestants adopt a critical method only at the turn of the century. Despite the considerable tensions between them, evangelicalism and Enlightenment thought were developed

⁴⁷R. W. Burtner and R. E. Chiles, eds., A Compend of Wesley's Theology (New York, 1954), 26, cited in French, 25.

⁴⁸Claus Westermann, Creation, John J. Scullion, trans. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 3.

⁴⁹Jaroslav Pelikan, The Christian Tradition, Vol. 5: Christian Doctrine and Modern Culture (Since 1700) (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989), 6, 119. See also Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century, 33.

together as different sides of a common problematic, and were synthesized in the moral vision of history adopted by mid-nineteenth century evangelicals. Whatever contributions Canadian evangelical culture contributed to the origins of secularization, then, lay not in evangelical engagement with culture as such, but in the way that evangelicals transformed and limited the Protestant understanding of the relationship between the redemptive Kingdom of God and human freedom and responsibility in the world.

II. The Rise of Progressive Evangelicalism

A further development of the modern hope of Christendom emerged during the last half of the nineteenth century, when the difficulties of embodying evangelical faith in contemporary thought and society were compounded by the rapid growth in complexity of urban-industrial social structures and the rise of historical consciousness and the critical social sciences. Though evangelical support had contributed to these developments, the new sciences challenged the individualist, realist anthropology and apologetic of the Common Sense tradition and threatened to submerge "spiritual" reality under the "natural" structures and processes of history. Those challenges made the problem of relating spiritual and natural realities, or God's Kingdom and history, the central and urgent issue of late nineteenth century debates.⁵⁰ And eventually, they struck at the heart of evangelical confidence that God was present and knowable in experience.

While stalwarts like Nathanael Burwash defended traditional evangelical orthodoxy, other Canadian Protestants developed two major responses to such challenges. The most prominent of these was the historical, or "progressive," evangelicalism promoted by clergymen like Henry Flesher Bland and George M. Grant. Drawing on romanticism, which Bebbington describes as "supernatural

⁵⁰Mandelbaum, 29-32.

naturalism,"⁵¹ and especially on Immanuel Kant's idealism, progressives defended and even extended their claims to God's rule in the world by asserting that God was immanent in the evolutionary process and especially in human consciousness, and that God's Kingdom was progressively realized in the processes and structures of the emerging new order. In doing so, they embraced the main features of Canadian thought and society, while assuming the responsibility of more fully claiming them for "Christendom" and God's Kingdom. The appearance of a contrasting proto-fundamentalist movement, which began to advocate a sharp distinction between history and a supernatural divine reality, in turn, further convinced especially a new generation of evangelicals to give preference to progressivism rather than fundamentalism.

As early as the 1830's, evangelicals' moral interpretation of history became increasingly strained in the more industrialized and cosmopolitan centers of Britain and America. In Britain, evangelicals like Thomas Chalmers of Glasgow viewed the growth of industrial towns and alienated working classes as a threat to the moral order of civilization. His promotion of urban reform through evangelism and moral regeneration, however, tended to reduce the plight of the working class and the structural problems of industrial society to matters of personal morality.⁵² As Bebbington notes, evangelical conceptions of moral perfection were individualist, voluntarist, and in essential agreement with the liberal political economy of Adam Smith and Thomas Malthus.⁵³ Not until they were faced with complex structural problems did evangelicals begin to seek a fuller understanding of the relation between social structures and spiritual transformation, and attempt to relate their moral concern to corporate social structures and historical processes.

Also in the 1830's, however, the scientific study of the historical-structural world presented

⁵¹Bebbington, Evangelicalism in Modern Britain, 81.

⁵²Drummond and Bulloch, 127-145.

⁵³Bebbington, Evangelicalism in Modern Britain, 117-121.

new challenges to the primary authority of Scripture, and seemed to exclude a unique spiritual reality from the natural and historical world. Charles Lyell's Principles of Geology (1830-33) portrayed geological development as occurring over millions of years, thereby contradicting a Baconian, literal reading of Genesis. In turn, Lyell prepared the way for Charles Darwin's thoroughly naturalized evolutionary theory in The Origin of Species (1859), and later in The Descent of Man (1870). As John Passmore notes, Darwin's positivist evolutionary theories challenged Christian apologetics that were based on design in nature, as well as evangelical moral assumptions "that Man stands over and against Nature as a potentially supernatural being."⁵⁴ Meanwhile, the historical-critical method applied to the Bible by German scholars like H. S. Reimarus and F. C. Bauer to distill spiritual principles from Biblical history threatened to eclipse the supernatural elements in the Bible, while D. F. Strauss's Hegelian interpretation of the Life of Jesus (1833-36) attempted to sift through what he considered the mythological gospel stories to interpret the historical Jesus as the idea of the incarnation of divine manhood.⁵⁵ Thus, by the mid-1800's, the critical perspective that evangelicals shared with Enlightenment science was being pushed to new forms of positivism and historicism that threatened to foreclose on evangelical claims to a unique divine spirit and a moral order that were objectively verifiable in experience.

In response to these new social and intellectual challenges, which appeared in Canada increasingly especially after 1870, Canadian evangelicals struggled both to relate spiritual experience more fully to historical-structural realities, and at the same time to resist the criticism of positivist skepticism. As they did so, building on their previous efforts to shape Canadian culture, they turned increasingly to millennial and Romantic interpretations of Christianity that explicitly located spiritual

⁵⁴John Passmore, A Hundred Years of Philosophy, Rev. Ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1966), 37.

⁵⁵Carl E. Braaten, New Directions in Theology Today, Volume II; History and Hermeneutics (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), 56-57.

reality not only in miraculous regeneration, but also in historical processes, natural structures, and human consciousness.

Though such developments were hardly visible among Canadian evangelicals prior to the 1870's, growing concern for the historical-structural dimensions of the Kingdom of God was evident already during the 1850's and 1860's, especially in the rapidly growing Methodist Church. As part of his promotion of education, for example, Egerton Ryerson suggested in 1854 that baptized children of believers be accepted as full members of the Methodist church after instruction in the faith, apart from an identifiable conversion experience. Ryerson's confidence that instruction might lead the conscience to acknowledge God was similar to the Romantic Calvinism of American Presbyterian Horace Bushnell, who argued that God's spirit might work not only immediately in conversion but also mediately through social relations, giving family and church the responsibility to nurture children in the faith so that they might "grow up a Christian."⁵⁶

In another example of growing social and historical consciousness, Henry Flesher Bland's millennial preaching in the Montreal region during the 1860's called evangelicals to act on their commitments to moral perfection and spreading the gospel by converting the world to Christ and transforming social morality.⁵⁷ Bland's efforts were one sign of the beginning of the nineteenth century age of missions and a broad application of moral regeneration to social evils in Canada, and also of a progressive millennialism which emphasized human responsibility to work for the coming of God's Kingdom in history.

As Marguerite Van Die and Neil Semple have shown, Methodist debates about church membership and the nurture of children, and issues like the nature of regeneration and atonement, were part of a larger problem of institutionalizing revivalist evangelicalism for a new generation of

⁵⁶On Bushnell, see McLoughlin, 16-17.

⁵⁷Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century, 120-123.

believers.⁵⁸ Like Bushnell, Bland and Ryerson attempted to relate experiential regeneration to a broader historical community of faith. To more orthodox evangelicals like Nathanael Burwash, their suggestions that God worked through "natural" social structures smacked of a romanticized Calvinism that surrendered human moral responsibility and the direct supernatural work of God in regeneration. Initially, Burwash succeeded in convincing the Methodist Church to require a conversion experience for church membership for the period 1864-1874.⁵⁹

Controversy about the nature of regeneration resumed, however, in the late 1870's when Bland, like Ryerson, argued that the unconditional and universal benefits of Christ's atonement, and the importance of human free choice, meant that children began life in innocence, and needed only to be nurtured in the faith to be made fit for God's Kingdom.⁶⁰ Once more, Burwash reaffirmed original sin even in children, and warned against minimizing either supernatural regeneration or personal responsibility. Reiterating Wesley's Arminianism, he argued that salvation was indeed available to "all who repented and believed," but that offer of salvation was "dependent on individual repentance and faith."⁶¹ For Burwash, the "orthodox" Arminian view of supernatural regeneration was essential for preserving both divine grace and human moral freedom and responsibility.

While Methodists struggled to clarify the relationship between spiritual regeneration and historical-structural life, Presbyterians like Nova Scotia-born George M. Grant, and Scottish-born philosophers like John Clarke Murray and John Watson, turned to Romanticism and Kantian idealism to suggest an organic relationship between God's spiritual Kingdom and the historical-structural world.

⁵⁸See Van Die, 25-30, and especially Neil Semple, "'The Nurture and Admonition of the Lord': Nineteenth-Century Canadian Methodism's Response to 'Childhood,'" Social History, Vol. 14, No. 27 (May 1981).

⁵⁹Henry Flesher Bland, "Universal Childhood Drawn to Christ," Sunday School Banner (1876), 226-8, 257-9.

⁶⁰Henry Flesher Bland, "Universal Childhood Drawn to Christ," Sunday School Banner (1876), 226-8, 257-9.

⁶¹Nathanael Burwash, "The Moral Condition of Childhood," Christian Guardian (May 25, 1881), quoted in Van Die, 30.

Grant encountered both the industrial slums of Glasgow and the Romantic idealism of S. T. Coleridge, Edward Irving, and Edward and John Caird while serving as an assistant to Norman McLeod during his graduate studies in theology and philosophy at the University of Glasgow in the 1850's.⁶² After his return to Canada in 1860, Grant began to warn the Canadian churches of the "new social problems, new phases of doubt, new combinations of the old forces of evil" that he anticipated would also come to Canada, and proclaimed Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Carlyle to be prophets, and MacLeod, Irving, Robertson, Caird and Maurice their modern voices, for solving the new social problems and doubts that now threatened Christian faith and morality.⁶³

In Grant's popularization of Romanticism, in the criticism of Common Sense philosophy by John Clarke Murray at Queen's College and then McGill University and George Paxton Young at the University of Toronto, and most fully in the work of Edward Caird's leading pupil, John Watson, can be seen the shift of leading Canadian Presbyterians from the incipient idealism of Scottish Common Sense philosophy to an explicit Kantian idealism during the 1860's.⁶⁴ Especially in the populist work of clergy like Grant, that Kantian idealism would revitalize evangelicals' claims to the presence of the divine spirit in experience and their moral interpretation of history. In 1875 Grant engaged W. D. LeSueur, Canada's foremost positivist, in debate on modern thought and Christianity in the pages of the Canadian Monthly and National Review. Under his principalship from 1877 to 1902, Queen's College became a bastion of Kantian idealism and the home of John Watson, Canada's leading idealist

⁶²William Grant and Frederick Hamilton, Principal Grant 32-33. See also National Archives of Canada, G. M. Grant Papers, Vol. 12, Untitled speech manuscript (n.d.). On Scottish idealists, see also Bernard Reardon, Religious Thought in the Victorian Age (London: Longman, 1980), 398-411.

⁶³George M. Grant, Sermon Preached Before the Synod of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island in connection with the Church of Scotland on June 26th, 1866 (Halifax, 1866), 16. George M. Grant, Reformers of the Nineteenth Century, a lecture delivered before the Young Men's Christian Association of Halifax, N. S. on Tuesday evening, Jan. 29, 1867 (Halifax, 1867), 23-30.

⁶⁴On Young, Murray, and Watson, see McKillop, A Disciplined Intelligence, 56-8, 176-81, 182-6.

philosopher. And as a Presbyterian churchman, Grant continuously called for a revitalized, practical apologetic that would meet the threats to Christianity from "serious and scientific" attack and the strains of urban and industrial society to the moral fabric of society.⁶⁵ "[M]odern society," he wrote in arguing for Methodist and Presbyterian church union, "demands a new demonstration that Christ is living, and that his church is able to discern the signs of the times."⁶⁶

Although Watson would move from Kant's ideas to a more thoroughly Hegelian rationalism that ultimately vitiated evangelicalism,⁶⁷ Grant saw in Kant's ideas a way to defend evangelical faith and extend the moral vision of history against late nineteenth-century intellectual and social challenges.⁶⁸ Kant's "Copernican Revolution" began from the active mind and epistemological concerns, and thereby deepened the anthropocentrism of modern "critical" thought. Nevertheless, his view of God as the necessary postulate of practical reason seemed to strengthen Scottish and evangelical claims to the intuition of spiritual truth in conscience, and at the same time drew these more clearly into the orbit of reason. In his Apologetic lectures during the 1880's, Grant hailed Kant as having "saved religion" by showing that "the fundamental truths of theistic Religion, viz., God, Freedom, and Immortality, are in accord with the constitution of our rational natures."⁶⁹ Indeed, Kant's understanding of religion as the inherent consciousness of God seemed to restate the evangelical tradition of internal spiritual experience and the analogia entis. As Grant put it,

⁶⁵George M. Grant, "Christianity Today," The Globe (Feb. 6, 1883), 8-9.

⁶⁶George M. Grant, "Organic Union of the Churches: How far Should it Go?" Canadian Methodist Magazine 20 (September, 1884), 254.

⁶⁷McKillop, A Disciplined Intelligence, 206-216.

⁶⁸The description of Kant's work in this paragraph is summarized from George Elder Davie, The Democratic Intellect: Scotland and Her Universities in the Nineteenth Century (Edinburgh: The University Press, 1961), 263-298; and Roland Stromberg, European Intellectual History Since 1789, 3rd Ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1981), 29-31.

⁶⁹NAC, Grant Papers, Vol. 13, File 2, "Apologetics," lecture notes (1884-85 session), 6.

humanity's status as image bearer implied the identity of human consciousness with divine Reason -
 - "with the difference of the finite and the Infinite."⁷⁰ In fact, Grant used the principle of the analogia entis to resolve the tension between human freedom and God's redemptive initiative: since man was a spiritual intelligence, submission to God's spirit in man was also the highest fulfillment of his own consciousness and the divine "law of life."

Kant's ontological theory of the correlation of spiritual-rational noumena and phenomenal reality also seemed to reconcile empirical science with claims to the presence of spiritual reality in the world and the necessity of faith for understanding divine truth. Scientific knowledge, Grant claimed in keeping with the Baconian tradition, was derived from experience, but experience included the presence of God's immanent spirit and "the manifestations in the finite of the Infinite and eternal."⁷¹ While God was a distinct, transcendent being, he was also "a cause ever present and operative in the world."⁷² On the basis of divine immanence, natural structures and historical processes, including evolution, could be seen as the progressive and rationally ordered work of God's power within the world. Indeed, history itself could now be seen as the sanctified process by which God's spiritual purpose was being realized in and through the structures of natural reality. At its core, according to Grant, the meaning of history was the process of man's growth into spiritual union with God and into service as God's agents in the world.⁷³

Throughout his lectures and writings, Grant reiterated the themes of Kant's organic dualism

⁷⁰Ibid., 8.

⁷¹NAC, Grant Papers, Vol. 16, File 1, "The Relations of Critical, Systematic and Historical Theology," essay manuscript (Pictou, N. S., May 1, 1860), 3-4, 26.

⁷²Grant Papers, "Apologetics," 17.

⁷³George M. Grant, "How to Read the Bible, No. 3" in Sunday Afternoon Addresses (Queen's University, Kingston, 1890-91), 16. See also George M. Grant, "The Relation of Religion to Secular Life," a paper read before the Council of the Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System at its session in Philadelphia, September 23, 1880, Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly and National Review, Vol. 5 (Dec., 1880).

to defend evangelical claims to God's presence in the world against the threats of both positivist skepticism and Hegelian monism, and in doing so he offered a romanticized answer to several central evangelical concerns in the late nineteenth-century.⁷⁴ Following especially John McLeod Campbell's romantic theory of the atonement, Grant claimed to resolve the apparent tension between immediate and mediated redemption, and coincidentally to reconcile Methodist Arminianism and Presbyterian Calvinism.⁷⁵ In a development upon Nathaniel Taylor's moral interpretation, Grant rejected a legal view of the atonement as the satisfaction of God's wrath. For Grant, however, Christ was the Incarnation and historical revelation of God's nature as love and his will that man should be "partakers of the Divine Nature through the indwelling of the Holy Ghost," and that the ideal of God's Kingdom should be established on earth.⁷⁶ For Grant, Christ's atoning work functioned primarily as a revelation of what was already a potential spiritual reality, and that only needed human acceptance. Although he affirmed the doctrine of original sin, he interpreted sin as an "ethical defect" in which the will acted against the promptings of one's own conscience.⁷⁷ Human conscience remained the bridge through which the Spirit might direct the natural longing of man to return to God, while in yielding to the Spirit man did not yield to external, miraculous compulsion, but to his own inherent divine consciousness.⁷⁸ Hence, man was not saved simply because of the historical event of Christ's death, but insofar as he "yields himself to the law of the Spirit of life" that was in Jesus, and that also

⁷⁴The wide appeal of various forms of Kantian idealism, particularly among Presbyterian clergy-scholars, is demonstrated further by Brian Fraser, "Theology and the social gospel among Canadian Presbyterians: A Case Study," Studies in Religion, 8 / 1 (Winter, 1979).

⁷⁵Drummond and Bulloch, 250-55. See also Bernard Reardon, Religious Thought in the Victorian Age (London: Longman, 1980), 399-411.

⁷⁶Grant Papers, "Inspiration," 9, 23.

⁷⁷Grant Papers, "The Relations of...Theology," 40.

⁷⁸NAC, Grant Papers, Vol. 16, File 3, "Questions to Show that the Antinomies of Divine and human activity can be reconciled in the higher truth of their essential unity," lecture notes (n.d.), 39.

was in human conscience.⁷⁹

Though centered on the subjective divine consciousness, Grant's view of the atonement also emphasized the historical Jesus to provide a reliable historical revelation of spiritual truth. On the basis of his Kantian organic idealism, Grant, like modern Scottish evangelicals such as A. B. Davidson and Robertson Smith, also developed a "reverent criticism" of the Bible that was intended to confirm its historical veracity against positivist critics like W. D. LeSueur, and to discern in its historical accounts essential spiritual truths.⁸⁰ Consistent with Baconianism, they claimed that the main points of the Bible were historical fact and therefore could be verified scientifically by the methods applied to all historical sources. In fact, for Grant all history was revelatory, for it was "God's will revealed in facts," while the Bible was a revelation "given in the form of a history" in which God progressively revealed Himself.⁸¹ The Bible, then, was a special "condensed mirror of universal history" that complemented and illumined revelation from nature, history, and intuition by disclosing the principles of all human development. Though most of its miraculous elements might be discounted as mythical interpretations of divine truth, Grant believed that the Bible, especially the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament accounts of the historical Jesus, could be verified scientifically, and that reverent criticism would be able to disclose in its historical facts essential spiritual truth.⁸² The pivot

⁷⁹George M. Grant, The Religions of the World, Rev. Ed. (London, 1895), 198.

⁸⁰George M. Grant, "Revelations and Interpretations," Sunday Afternoon Addresses (Queen's University, Kingston, 1892), 31-32. See also Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century, 140-141, and Mark A. Noll, Between Faith and Criticism 2nd Ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986), 67-70.

⁸¹NAC, Grant Papers, Vol. 19, File 1, "Ps. 147: 20," sermon manuscript (n.d.); Grant Papers, Vol. 13, File 4, "Subjects Treated in the Class of Theology," lecture notes (1889-90), 3; Grant Papers, Vol. 23, File 7, "Inspiration," lecture notes (n.d.), 4.

⁸²See George M. Grant, "How to Read the Bible, No. 2," Sunday Afternoon Addresses (Queen's University, Kingston, 1890-91), 9; George M. Grant, "The Old Testament and the New Criticism," Sunday Afternoon Addresses (Queen's University, Kingston, 1892), 12-15; and George M. Grant, "The Old Testament and the New Criticism," and "Revelations and Interpretations," Sunday Afternoon Addresses (Kingston: Queen's University, 1892), 12-15, 26.

of his confidence in reverent criticism was the historical person of Jesus. Though Grant and more traditional colleagues like William Caven, principal of Knox College, and John Mark King of Manitoba College might disagree over how much of the Biblical story could be discounted, their common sympathy for reverent criticism rested on their confidence that Jesus was the unique guarantee of the supernatural presence of God in history, of God's intent to reconcile humanity with himself, and of the reliability of the Bible in witnessing to that spiritual truth.⁸³

Grant's use of reverent criticism assumed an "organic dualism" that was similar to the Kantian historian Leopold von Ranke's insistence on carefully balancing empirical historical data with the discovery of a distinct spiritual reality in the historical particular.⁸⁴ It also paralleled the development of Albrecht Ritschl's neo-Kantian argument in the 1870's that though revelation must come in historical facts, particularly in the historical Jesus, the historical fact revealed the spiritual truth of a Kingdom of moral relations that ultimately could only be apprehended by personal moral judgement, and from within the community of believers.⁸⁵ Scottish scholars like the philosopher A. S. Pringle-Pattison also developed a neo-Kantian personal idealism in protest against Edward Caird's Hegelian monism which threatened the distinct personality of both God and humans, and his evolutionary treatment of the progress of religion from primitive animism to modern rational consciousness. Scientific knowledge, Pringle-Pattison claimed in Hegelianism and Personality (1887), may grasp nature, but it could never grasp the essential being of distinct persons.⁸⁶ From this personal idealism, Scottish theologians like A. M. Fairbairn and H. R. Mackintosh argued that the New Testament

⁸³Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century, 151.

⁸⁴On Ranke, see Bebbington, Patterns in History, 105-107.

⁸⁵Claude Welch, Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century, Vol. 2, 1870-1914 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 3-18.

⁸⁶Passmore, 71-72.

offered a reliable historical picture of Jesus which revealed to faith, beyond the reach of mere science, that the earthly person of Jesus was the exalted Christ.⁸⁷

Grant was prepared to part with much of the miracles in Scripture, and with traditional doctrine, in part because he interpreted the spiritual truth of Christianity in terms of practical moral law, or what Kant called the "categorical imperative." To answer the demand for a new demonstration of the living Christ, Grant urged the Church to set aside outmoded creeds about abstract ideas and otherworldly reality, and to work for implementing the Kingdom ideal in concrete society through "practical preaching":

preaching which deals with this, instead of another world; with actual life instead of metaphysical abstractions called doctrines, and with man as a member of the organism of humanity, which mediates its life through the manifold agencies and activities of the family, the city, the nation, the church, and our industry.⁸⁸

Christianity must be concerned with the actual problems of society, he pleaded, for Christ's moral ideal of self-sacrificing service could only be learned and lived in society, and the Kingdom of God could only be realized in the structures of society.

Grant's main concern, and that of other progressives like Henry Flesher Bland, was to locate the spiritual relations of sin and atonement in the context of social structures and historical processes, and in doing so, they began to suggest a social gospel. Thus original sin, according to Grant, must be understood in corporate terms as the result of the organic unity of race and the impact of the social environment on individuals.⁸⁹ Likewise redemption and the Kingdom of God were not only internal, but "on earth." Like Horace Bushnell, Grant argued that the process of regeneration was worked out through society and the historical process: love of God was learned and manifested through social relationships and the

⁸⁷Welch, 151-169.

⁸⁸NAC, Grant Papers, Vol. 12, "Practical Preaching," essay typescript (n.d.), 23.

⁸⁹NAC, Grant Papers, Vol. 20, File 10, "Matt. 5:13-16," sermon manuscript (n.d.). See also Grant Papers, Vol. 13, File 4, "Subjects Treated in the Class of Theology," lecture notes (1889-90 session), 17.

process of education in the life of the community. The gospel, Grant therefore declared, "is not individualism, but societism."⁹⁰ Grant and like-minded progressive evangelicals thus translated evangelical moral perfectionism and post-millennialism into a broader historical and social vision of Christendom and the coming Kingdom of God on earth.⁹¹

Grant was confident that the agencies for moral perfection and social transformation were already present in the world in the immediate presence of God's spirit. "We are in eternity now," he taught, and the Kingdom of God was "God's will done in earth ... by every man."⁹² The ability of Christianity to solve the problems of the world through practical social reform, and thereby manifest God's Kingdom in historical society, was finally its only justification. At the same time, however, Grant maintained that it was only through distinct spiritual ideals that the social order could be transformed and sustained. Though sympathetic to Christian socialism, and to labour demands for improved conditions and wages, he rejected legislative "panaceas" like Henry George's single tax, as well as prohibition, to impose merely legal or formal changes.⁹³ Social change must be rooted in spiritual transformation of the individual will and mind, and therefore must be voluntary. To that end, church and state were partners: while the church's task was "the spiritual education of humanity" and making God's spiritual Kingdom "co-extensive with the noblest thought and life of the nation," the state was the highest social embodiment of Christianity.⁹⁴

⁹⁰NAC, Grant Papers, Vol. 20, File 2, "Gal. 3:8," sermon manuscript (n.d.).

⁹¹This combination of evangelical millennialism, idealism, and social reform is discussed further in N. K. Clifford, "His Dominion: a vision in crisis," Studies in Religion, II, 4 (1973); and in Burkhard Kieseckamp, "Presbyterian and Methodist divines: their case for a national church in Canada, 1875-1900," Studies in Religion, II, 3 (1973).

⁹²NAC, Grant Papers, Vol. 13, File 6, "Eschatology," lecture notes (n.d.), 4-18; Grant Papers, Vol. 21, File 3, "Luke 17:20-21," sermon manuscript (n.d.).

⁹³Grant Papers, "Practical Preaching," 22-23. See also George M. Grant, "Baccalaureate Address," The Kingston News, (April 24, 1899), 2.

⁹⁴PAC, Grant Papers, Vol. 27, File 2, Clipping of sermon entitled "The Kingdom that Cannot be Moved," Moderator's Sermon to the General Assembly, Ottawa, June 11, n.y.

As Doug Frank notes regarding American progressives, the romantic attempt to balance spiritual and natural realities optimistically expected that moral regeneration could reach through human action to transform social structures into God's Kingdom on earth.⁹⁵ For Grant, God's Kingdom was a moral reality to be realized historically in social relations and in the progress of civilization by sanctified human agents. This progressive vision revitalized late nineteenth-century evangelical efforts to realize the hope of Christendom by building the millennium in historical society.

The growing preference of Canadian evangelicals for this progressive evangelicalism was partly in reaction to a very different alternative that began to appear in Canada in Plymouth Brethren premillennialist and Keswick holiness movements during the 1870's and 1880's. These movements, along with the rise of a Princetonian school of theology based on claims to Biblical inerrancy, provided the loosely-allied "proto-fundamentalist" movements which would gravitate together into a fundamentalist movement during the early 1900's. As George Marsden suggests, these diverse fragments shared a reaction against modern naturalism and an insistence on the supernatural control of God over history.⁹⁶ Contrary to progressivism, proto-fundamentalists' "anti-natural supernaturalism" emphasized the disjunction between a supernatural spiritual reality and nature to claim a distinctly transcendent authority and source of redemption.

Ironically, the roots of the Plymouth Brethren lay in the millenarianism developed in Britain by one of Grant's romantic "modern prophets," Edward Irving.⁹⁷ While at London's Caledonian Chapel during the 1820's, Irving was the charismatic leader of a group which emphasized the mysterious and

⁹⁵Douglas Frank, Less Than Conquerors: How Evangelicals Entered the Twentieth Century (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 33-36.

⁹⁶George Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 4-5.

⁹⁷Bebbington, Evangelicalism in Modern Britain, 83; Ernest Sandeen, The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800-1930 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1980 [1970]), xix.

supernatural presence of God in the world, but identified that presence with miraculous, providential interventions in history, in charismata like speaking in tongues, and with an anticipated new era of God's Kingdom to be instituted by God's sovereign judgement. These ideas were adopted by a group at Oxford, including John Nelson Darby, who would later form the Plymouth Brethren.⁹⁸

Despite their romantic roots, Irving and the Plymouth Brethren held a pessimistic view of history. Both Irving and Darby criticized what they saw as the worldliness and rationalism of the church, and they rejected optimistic claims that the Kingdom of God was being worked out within the present social order.⁹⁹ The Kingdom had not yet arrived, they argued, nor were the agencies for building that Kingdom to be found within the world. Instead, they looked forward to the coming of God's Kingdom in the future through the supernatural intervention of God. In the mean-time, the true church was a hidden spiritual society united in Christ and possessing, in the spiritual experience of faith, apostolic gifts, and Biblical revelation, a present vouchsafe of eternal reality.

Within this broader context of supernaturalism, Darby began in the late 1830's to push the Plymouth Brethren away from a contemporary "historicist" application of Biblical prophecy and toward a futurist, apocalyptic treatment of Biblical prophecy with his unique theories of dispensational premillennialism.¹⁰⁰ Darby's dispensationalism attempted to decode a Biblical view of history and the signs of a coming apocalypse through selective literal and metaphorical interpretations of the books of Daniel and Revelation. By this method, he divided history into seven major "dispensations." Darby claimed that his method of "rightly dividing the word of truth" by fitting Scripture into his dispensations was in accord with the Baconian standards of "modern science," and provided a way to discern in the

⁹⁸Sandeen, 14-16, 30-33.

⁹⁹Sandeen, 4-13.

¹⁰⁰Sandeen, 35, 60-68. For a good summary of dispensational premillennialism, see Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, 50-62.

objective data of Scripture the eternal, supernatural mind of God.¹⁰¹ Despite his highly selective use of it, Darby claimed to preserve the older Baconian method, and attempted to avoid the problems of historical criticism and hermeneutics by assuming that the divine word came to humanity unmediated by human or historical contextuality.

Most notably, Darby's dispensational premillennialism strictly distinguished between supernatural spiritual reality and history. The experience of the New Testament church, he argued, was parenthetical to the Old Testament and the earthly restoration of Israel. Similarly, he distinguished the present church from the increasingly corrupt world. The true church was a hidden heavenly fellowship unrelated to the earthly course of events, and would be raptured and sheltered from the tribulation that marked the onset of the final dispensation of history. Following the second coming of Christ and an apocalyptic battle, the church would reign with Christ for the millennium. Likewise, there were two "texts" in Biblical prophecy, one relating to earthly events involving Israel, and another relating to the "present hope" of true believers that might be realized at any moment in the rapture. And there were in effect two advents of Christ: one for earthly battle, and one for the final heavenly reign. According to Ernest Sandeen, Darby's attempt to separate Christianity and the church from the corruption of history "advocated a church so spiritual that it existed outside of history."¹⁰²

The Plymouth Brethren began to spread to North America during the 1860's and 1870's. Darby's own first North American tour in 1862 began in Canada and focused on the London-Toronto region with brief missions in Montreal, Ottawa, Halifax. Other efforts to spread the Plymouth Brethren movement in Canada were led by R. Evans, who organized annual summer conferences in Guelph, such as one in 1870 which attracted 400 attendees.¹⁰³ Initially, Darby's exclusiveness did not capture or impede the

¹⁰¹Bebbington, Evangelicalism in Modern Britain, 85-93; Sandeen, 66, 108-111.

¹⁰²Sandeen, 67.

¹⁰³Sandeen, 68-71.

movement prior to the twentieth century. In the absence of sharp exclusiveness, the Brethren became allied with other groups which emphasized God's supernatural sovereignty and a Baconian, literalist interpretation of the Bible, especially with the Keswick holiness movement and the Princetonian treatment of Scripture.

Led by American Presbyterians Robert and Hannah Whitall Smith, the Keswick movement began with revival conferences in Keswick, England during the 1870's. In contrast to the traditional evangelical concern with personal striving to eradicate sin, Keswick emphasized passive reliance on God's supernatural grace in the Holy Spirit to lead the believer away from evil to righteousness.¹⁰⁴ Through a program of specific steps, Keswick followers practiced self-surrender to the exclusive work of a sovereign God in justifying humanity, releasing the soul from sin, and empowering the believer to a life of purely "spiritual" perfection.¹⁰⁵ Like the Plymouth Brethren, then, the Keswick movement emphasized an exclusive supernaturalism.

The emphasis of the Plymouth Brethren and Keswick movements on human corruption and God's sovereignty held greatest attraction for conservatives in the Calvinist tradition, particularly Presbyterians and Baptists.¹⁰⁶ Their assertion of Biblical authority, and their Baconian method of Biblical interpretation, also brought them into an uneasy alliance with Princetonian theologians like Charles and Alexander Archibald Hodge. Employing Scottish Common Sense epistemology and the Baconian method, the Princetonians claimed a scientific theology which rested on the inerrant data of Scripture and revealed the supernatural and eternal mind of God.¹⁰⁷ As Sandeen put it, ".. the Princeton scholars thought of theology from above, from God's point of view, and used the past as though it shared God's attributes

¹⁰⁴Sandeen, 178-180.

¹⁰⁵For a more extensive treatment, see Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, 72-80.

¹⁰⁶See, for example, Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, 46, 60, 72-74.

¹⁰⁷Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, 98-118.

and was in no way tarnished by time or fashioned by the cosmos...."¹⁰⁸ For the Princetonians, the Bible and theology were forms of the supernatural intervention into the world of a sovereign God.

The cross-currents of these proto-fundamentalist movements were most effectively joined in the work of evangelists like the American Presbyterian Dwight L. Moody, who during the 1880's sponsored such organizations as the Northfield Bible Conferences, the Student Volunteer Movement, and the China Mission. Though Moody's commitment to evangelistic missions rejected Darby's exclusivism, his promotion of millennial and Keswick ideas and Biblical prophecy reflected his pessimism about modern industrial society.¹⁰⁹ In his missions to the urban masses, Moody focused on evangelizing individuals, calling believers out from a corrupt world and rescuing lost souls to a heavenly destiny. As he declared in his most famous revivalist speech, the world was a wrecked vessel and the gospel was a life-raft for saving from that world as many souls as possible until the second advent of Christ and God's final destruction of the world in judgement.¹¹⁰

By the 1890's these forms of proto-fundamentalism seemed to offer a realistic, coherent defense of evangelicalism against critical science and the seemingly demoralizing structures of urban-industrial society. Institutions such as Moody's Northfield Conferences and the Niagara Bible Conferences, held annually from 1883 to 1897 at Niagara-on-the-Lake, brought together both American and Canadian conservative evangelicals. Canadian Presbyterians and Baptists were especially active in the latter, with the brothers James and David Inglis, from Ottawa and Galt, and Robert Cameron, a Baptist from Brantford, serving as members of the Niagara Conference executive. Other Canadian participants included Henry M. Parsons, who moved from the Presbyterian ministry in Buffalo to Knox Presbyterian Church in Toronto during the 1880's; Thomas Wardrope, a Presbyterian clergyman; William Stewart, principal

¹⁰⁸Sandeen, 125.

¹⁰⁹Sandeen, 75.

¹¹⁰Dwight L. Moody, "The Return of Our Lord," in McLoughlin, 180-185. Also Sandeen, 162-171.

of the Toronto Bible Training School; Maurice S. Baldwin, the evangelical Anglican bishop of Huron; and Elmore Harris of Walmer Road Baptist Church in Toronto.¹¹¹ As Sandeen notes, proto-fundamentalist conferences, Bible institutes, and the informal creeds which grew out of them provided a transdenominational home for those who shared a belief in human depravity and God's sovereignty, a Baconian and literal reading of Bible, and premillennial views of history.

Though in many ways conservative, the proto-fundamentalist movement was a distinctly modern response to the problem of the relationship between spiritual and natural reality, or between God's Kingdom and history, for it was defined especially by its reaction against progressive modernism.¹¹² According to Doug Frank, though proto-fundamentalists emphasized divine initiative in judgement and grace, their understanding of the relations between God and the world retained the long-established evangelical duality of spirit and nature. In abstracting spiritual life from the structured context of the world, Frank argues, they also reduced God's sovereignty and redemption from cosmic to merely occasional significance.¹¹³ Meanwhile, their understanding of spirituality was similar to Romantic views of Christ and salvation: if Christ's work was the expression of God's eternal mind, then the real change of redemption occurred not in Christ's historic atonement, but in the knowledge and mind of believers.¹¹⁴ Finally, while their emphasis on supernaturalism assured proto-fundamentalists that God's transcendent control of history was on their side, it also absolved evangelicals from the difficult responsibility of transforming the modern critical sciences and the complex structures of urban-industrial society.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹Sandeen, 135-142.

¹¹²Marsden defines the fundamentalist movement primarily in terms of its militant reaction against modernism. Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, 5-6.

¹¹³Frank, 130.

¹¹⁴Bebbington, Evangelicalism in Modern Britain, 93.

¹¹⁵Frank, 115-123.

Proto-fundamentalists thus began to answer the problem of history by separating spiritual and natural realities, and by surrendering, at least temporarily, the Protestant assumption of responsibility for shaping Canadian culture.

Because they both sought to defend evangelical claims to spiritual reality, and also to a scientific apologetic, and a millennial concern with God's Kingdom, the differences between progressives and proto-fundamentalists were seldom explicit during the nineteenth century. Consequently, as Phyllis Airhart argues, the differences in their responses to the new order of urban-industrial society and modern critical thought would not lead to a decisive parting of ways between progressive and proto-fundamentalist conceptions of the Kingdom of God until the twentieth century.¹¹⁶ When differences did appear, however, most leading Canadian evangelicals preferred progressive evangelicalism rather than proto-fundamentalism. Already in the 1870's clergymen-scholars like E. H. Dewart and Nathanael Burwash began to warn Methodists against the evangelistic innovations of Plymouth Brethren missionaries that began to appear in southern Ontario. As Airhart argues, though Burwash was suspicious of the romantic Calvinism of progressives, he was even more wary of what he saw as the Calvinistic determinism in the Keswick and Plymouth Brethren emphases on passive reliance on God's electing initiative in regeneration.¹¹⁷ Indeed, proto-fundamentalists and progressives differed profoundly on the relation of spiritual and temporal-structural reality: Moody's emphasis on saving souls and his repudiation of efforts to "Christianize" society was in striking contrast to Wesley's emphasis on striving for perfection, and to Grant's call to practical preaching and implementing the Kingdom of God on earth.

Faced with the proto-fundamentalist alternative, most Canadian evangelicals, including traditionalist Methodists like Burwash, turned with greater sympathy to reverent criticism and a progressive

¹¹⁶Phyllis D. Airhart, Serving the Present Age: Revivalism, Progressivism, and the Methodist Tradition in Canada (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 118-127.

¹¹⁷See especially Phyllis D. Airhart, "'What Must I Do To Be Saved?' Two Paths to Evangelical Conversion in Late Victorian Canada," Church History, September 1990, 372-85.

agenda of social action and reform.¹¹⁸ As Airhart shows, progressivism was consistent with the traditional evangelical emphasis on sanctified and activist perfection, and was suggested already in the late nineteenth century call by revivalists like James Flesher Bland and James Henderson to spiritual conversion and active obedience.¹¹⁹ By the turn of the century a new generation of young, educated Methodists like Salem Bland and Samuel Dwight Chown came to share the progressive moral vision of history. Meanwhile, the rising generation of Presbyterians also turned to progressive forms of evangelicalism. Similar to George M. Grant, clergymen-scholars like Thomas B. Kilpatrick, John G. Shearer, George Pidgeon, Alfred Gandier, Robert A. Falconer, and James A. Macdonald were trained in the idealism of John and Edward Caird, John Watson, or George Paxton Young, and in the moderate historical criticism of George Adam Smith or the liberal theology of Adolf von Harnack. As Brian Fraser notes, they identified the essential truth of Christ as a moral spirit to be worked out progressively by infusing morality into social relations, and to that end they became leading Presbyterian advocates of urban settlement houses, social reform, and corporate liberalism during the early 1900's.¹²⁰

Despite this apparent triumph among Canadian evangelicals by the turn of the century, progressive evangelicalism carried with it a nagging crisis of certainty. On the strength of personal idealism and Scottish "reverent critical" theology, Grant had claimed by the 1890's that the views of Strauss and Bauer had been defeated, that reverent criticism had triumphed and the historicity of Jesus had been assured, and that theology had entered an age of reconstruction on the basis of historical facts.¹²¹ Nevertheless, his

¹¹⁸Airhart, Serving the Present Age, 132-6.

¹¹⁹Airhart, "What Must I Do To Be Saved?" 377; Serving the Present Age, 117-119.

¹²⁰Brian J. Fraser, The Social Uplifters: Presbyterian Progressives and the Social Gospel in Canada, 1875-1915 (Waterloo: Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion/Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1988). See also Fraser's article, "Theology and the social gospel among Canadian Presbyterians: A case study," Studies in Religion, 8/1 (Winter 1979), 35-46. On Falconer, see particularly James G. Greenlee, Sir Robert Falconer: A Biography (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 37-47, 86-7.

¹²¹NAC, Grant Papers, "Inspiration," 56. See also Grant's conclusions in "How to Read the Bible, No. 2," 11-14, and in "The Old Testament and the New Criticism," 14-15.

work also hinted at the emergence of the modern historicist dilemma. When one critic warned that Grant had surrendered too much of the Bible's authority, Grant responded that inspiration was not so much a matter of formal propositions or imperfect temporal forms, but a subjective experience of spiritual light conveyed through the medium of the Bible.¹²² In an example of modern historical self-consciousness, he stated elsewhere that man had no access to a non-historical or transcendent standard by which to measure spiritual truth; the only available standard was the reverent use of modern experience and scientific methods, which could be taken as the gift of God to the modern world for the progress of man's spiritual education.¹²³ Grant's response to the question of certainty thus confirmed the primacy of subjective spiritual experience and modern consciousness, and took the modern "canons of universal judgement" as the standard of divine truth.¹²⁴ Ultimately, that method relativized historical events as mere forms which were reducible to spiritual principles, while at the same he asserted a modernist confidence in contemporary consciousness.¹²⁵ By this subjective standard, the distinction between myth and event was a blurry one indeed.

III. The Triumph and Tensions of Progressive Evangelicalism

By the early 1900's progressive evangelicals vigorously assumed responsibility for shaping an historical "Christendom" by launching a host of campaigns to reform Canadian society, with the result that they had considerably greater impact on Canadian society than did proto-fundamentalists. Those efforts were immediately evident in the development of new church programs in the early 1900's, such as the shift

¹²²NAC, Grant Papers, Vol. 5, S. Macdonald to G. M. Grant, May 7, 1879, quoted in Cook, 18. See also Grant Papers, "Inspiration," 40.

¹²³George M. Grant, "Christ is Divided," Sunday Afternoon Addresses (Queen's University, Kingston, 1893), 92.

¹²⁴Grant, "Christ is Divided," 92.

¹²⁵According to Braaten, this was an essentially Platonic conception of revelation that minimized the historical eventfulness of the Biblical story. Braaten, 15.

among Methodists from class meetings aimed at evoking conversion experiences to "religious education" programs aimed at nurturing children to "grow up a Christian," and the organization of church committees like the Methodist Church's Board of Moral Reform in 1902.¹²⁶ Such committees were pressed into organization by local and lay movements, like the Women's Christian Temperance Union, that advocated a variety of moral reforms, including temperance, sabbatarianism, settlement houses, urban missions, Mechanics Institutes, public hygiene and sanitation, and child welfare.

These efforts at practical reform to shape the social order were reinforced by developments in the church-established colleges. Building on their prior commitment to the sciences in the service of moral improvement, the colleges began to develop departments in the social sciences and professional technical programs, and at the same time increasingly took on the German ideal of the research university. Under Grant's tenure as principal from 1877 to 1902, for example, Queen's College developed technical professional programs like the School of Mining and Engineering, and social science departments such as a Political Economy department separated from Moral Philosophy and headed by Adam Shortt.¹²⁷

These curricular changes coincided with broader changes in the organization of the college and university system. Beginning in 1890, church related colleges like Victoria, Knox, and Wycliffe were affiliated with the University of Toronto. Also, those colleges were separated from direct control by the churches, while church-related seminaries remained affiliated with the "secularized" universities.¹²⁸ Though in different ways, these developments had similar aims and assumptions, namely the pursuit of objective and free scientific inquiry, yet under the spiritual influence of theology and moral philosophy. As A. B. McKillop notes, until the turn of the century the colleges and their increasingly specialized

¹²⁶Airhart, Serving the Present Age, 121; Allen, 11-12; and Kiesekamp, 295.

¹²⁷On the development of Queen's College under Grant's tenure, see especially Hilda Neatby, Queen's University Vol. I, 1841-1917 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978), 182, 214-16.

¹²⁸Queen's became formally non-denominational in 1892, and created a separate divinity school in 1912. Neatby, 240-44.

disciplines remained under the aegis of idealist philosophy and the classical humanist curriculum, and were expected to serve the purpose of moral education for which Protestants had founded Canadian universities.¹²⁹ In the short-term, these institutional changes, along with conferences like the Queen's Theological Alumni Conference organized by Grant, enabled the idealist and progressive moral philosophy to flourish across denominational boundaries.

In the early twentieth century, the broad vision of building God's Kingdom in society gained momentum as Canadian Protestants of all stripes took up the campaign of social reform. The ultimate symbol of the common reform cause was the first national Social Service Congress held in Ottawa in March 1914. Sponsored by the Presbyterian and Methodist churches and chaired jointly by J. G. Shearer, secretary of the Presbyterian Church's Board of Moral and Social Reform, and T. A. Moore, secretary of the Methodist Church's Department of Moral and Social Reform, the Congress brought together clergymen like A. E. Smith and Charles W. Gordon, agrarian politicians like W. C. Good and E. C. Drury, labor leaders like James Simpson, and medical and social science professionals like J. J. Kelso, in an attempt to respond to social problems and to infuse Christian ideals into social relations.¹³⁰

In their efforts to reform social relations, progressive evangelicals contributed to a significant shift from mid-nineteenth century individualism to a new corporate liberalism that assumed that moral improvement could only be achieved in community by moralizing social relations.¹³¹ Despite this shift in social theory, however, they continued to identify the coming of God's Kingdom with the progress of liberal Anglo-Protestant culture. In their formal scholarship, new political-economists like Adam Shortt assumed a liberal view of society and economics that sought to alleviate the excesses of industrial-

¹²⁹A. B. McKillop, Contours of Canadian Thought (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 86.

¹³⁰Allen, 24-5.

¹³¹Airhart, Serving the Present Age, 62-4, 107-9; Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century, 183-5; Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Churches and Social Welfare in Canada, 1900-1945 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), xi-xii.

capitalism without challenging its basic structures.¹³² More broadly, Anglo-Protestant evangelicals continued to affirm the British constitution as the model reconciliation of universal moral authority and individual moral freedom. D. M. Gordon of Presbyterian College in Halifax, for example, considered that "the British Empire is today the mightiest earthly influence making for the advancement of the Kingdom of God among men."¹³³ And G. M. Grant declared the British Empire to be a world-wide civilizing and Christianizing force, and indeed the most potent manifestation of God's Kingdom on earth.¹³⁴

When progressive evangelicals spoke of Christianizing Canadian society and evangelizing the growing flood of immigrants, then, they implied also that non-Anglo Saxon immigrants were to be converted to citizenship in the British liberal political-economy, and to Anglo-Protestant conceptions of moral purity like temperance and thrift.¹³⁵ In urging support for Christianizing European immigrants, S. D. Chown held up the spectre of barbarization: "Shall the hordes of Southern Europe overrun our country as the Huns and Vandals did the Roman Empire?"¹³⁶ For Chown, Christianizing Canadian society was equivalent to upholding the British social order. Indeed, advocates of church union, initiated formally in 1902, argued for a national church that would institutionalize a common moral order to complement the state and enable a more efficient preservation of a national Christianity.¹³⁷

¹³²S. E. D. Shortt, The Search for an Ideal (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 106-16; Doug Owrarn, The Government Generation: Canadian Intellectuals and the State, 1900-1945 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 5-6, 69.

¹³³Gordon, quoted in Kiesekamp, "Presbyterian and Methodist divines: their case for a national church in Canada, 1875-1900," 295.

¹³⁴George M. Grant, "The British Empire Today and Tomorrow II, What the Empire Implies, so far as Canada is Concerned," The Westminster (Dec.4, 1897), 449. See also Carl Berger, The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914 (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1970), 218.

¹³⁵Clifford, 315-17.

¹³⁶S. D. Chown, "How Shall the Foreigner Govern Us?" Christian Guardian, February 23, 1910, 8; quoted in Clifford, 317.

¹³⁷John W. Grant, The Canadian Experience of Church Union (Toronto: Ryerson, 1967), 23-30.

Chown's reference to the threat of barbarism revealed a striking similarity between progressive evangelicals and fourth century church fathers like Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea, and Jerome, all of whom welcomed the alliance of Christianity and the Constantinian establishment.¹³⁸ The peace of Christian Rome, they had claimed, confirmed the church's ecumenical unity and the universal claims of God's Kingdom, and signalled God's providential favour upon Rome as the earthly vessel of God's eternal and spiritual Kingdom. Similarly, modern evangelical reformers identified the progress of civilization with the history of the British empire and with God's favour. In their Kantian version of organic dualism of spiritual and natural reality that echoed the neo-Platonism of the fourth-century fathers, progressive evangelicals regarded the British empire as the structured embodiment of the moral ideal of God's Kingdom.

For the Constantinians, however, the Kingdom was spiritual and ultimately transcendent; the Empire could not finally be confused with the church and its apocalyptic destiny, and pagan morality still remained subject to the scrutiny of sovereign, divine standards.¹³⁹ In contrast, nineteenth century progressive evangelicals had largely abandoned any eschatological tension except that between past and future. And despite their claim to Biblical principles for social relations, their historical interpretation of the Bible meant that sanctified modern consciousness, more so than the witness of the Bible, was the norm for social relations. Grant, for example, claimed to follow, not the "crude morality" of the Old Testament, but the model of the prophets who "took their stand on the great facts embedded in their history, and appealed to the most deeply-rooted convictions of the nation."¹⁴⁰ Every nation had its own divine mission, the ideals to which its citizens must "on no account be false." Thus Grant's historical method

¹³⁸Jaroslav Pelikan, The Excellent Empire: The Fall of Rome and the Triumph of the Church (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987), 72-74. See also Bebbington, Patterns in History, 53-54; and R. G. Collingwood, The Idea of History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 51.

¹³⁹Pelikan, The Excellent Empire, 21-25, 46-48.

¹⁴⁰Grant, The Religions of the World, 161: "Practical Preaching," 18-19.

appealed to, rather than transformed contemporary consciousness, and affirmed the moral order of historical tradition. Though meant to be a double-edged gospel which declared the presence of God's rule in the world and his judgement against pagan society, practical preaching was a historicized version of the moral government view of history, and was easily reduced to affirming the established beneficence of Anglo-Protestant middle-class civilization rather than proclaiming divine judgement and transformation of consciousness and culture.

Despite the apparent triumph of progressive social reform, however, early twentieth-century progressivism also reflected undercurrents of a growing urgency and tension in its claim to locate and realize a divine reality in history. As David Marshall shows, Protestant clergy in the early 1900's expressed increasing concern about the "secularizing" trends of modern life that threatened evangelicalism and the hope of Christianizing Canada.¹⁴¹ Modern urban society provided a variety of distractions and alternative social networks, such as theatres, sporting clubs, department stores, music halls, and labour organizations, that competed with the church for the attention of mass society. As the pluralism and consumerism of urban life coincided with declining active church membership in the early 1900's, Protestant clergy began to regard the distractions of urban life as signs of secularization and worldliness, and as threats to Christian worship and fellowship. And when court decisions struck down Sabbath legislation in the early 1900's, followed by new legislation in 1906 that professed not to restrict free leisure activities, they feared that the hopes of a Christian social order were being compromised.

In response to these challenges, many progressive evangelical clergy attempted to incorporate the new forms and appeals of urban life into the modern church. Their use of drama and theatre in church worship, auditorium-style church architecture, and the fictional "Christian" novel perfected by Charles W. Gordon (Ralph Connor), all appealed to a modern, urban society. Indeed, it was the urgency of meeting

¹⁴¹David B. Marshall, Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), ch. 5. Unless otherwise noted, this and the following paragraph is summarized from Marshall, ch. 5.

the demands of mass society that reinforced progressives' concern to promote a "social" gospel, to found labour churches, to initiate talks for church union, and to excise "abstract" theological doctrine from their message in favour of a "practical" identification of religion with life.¹⁴² As Marshall emphasizes, this accommodation in form also embodied a modern idealized, liberal interpretation of the meaning of Christianity.¹⁴³ The narrative and dramatic style of novelists like Gordon, for example, portrayed sin, not as "innate depravity," but as the result of immoral behaviour and an unhealthy environment that could be rectified by moral idealism and muscular Christianity. No less so, as we shall see, social gossellers like Salem Bland reduced Christianity to an ethic of brotherhood that minimized personal sin and redemption. The fact that the proposed 1908 Basis of Union for church union abandoned Nathanael Burwash's earlier insistence on the requirement of individual conversion experience highlighted the departure of progressive evangelicalism from early Victorian conceptions of sin and regeneration.¹⁴⁴

Throughout these efforts was an undercurrent of anxiety that Christianity was becoming marginalized from Canadian society. Amid the variety of modern appeals for Christianity, furthermore, some Protestants also began to wonder whether progressivism was itself contributing to a diminished gospel by minimizing sin and the need of redemption through a unique, supernatural Christ. In 1906 one observer criticized young pastors whose preaching seemed preoccupied with psychology and philosophy of religion, but lacked the clear preaching of a gospel of sin and salvation aimed at conversion.¹⁴⁵ And in 1911, William B. Creighton, the progressive editor of the Christian Guardian, warned of growing indifference to the church by "good men" who seemed no longer to believe that participation in the church

¹⁴²See also Christie and Gauvreau, A Full-Orbed Christianity, 4-5.

¹⁴³Marshall, Secularizing the Faith, 144.

¹⁴⁴Marguerite Van Die, An Evangelical Mind: Nathanael Burwash and the Methodist Tradition in Canada, 1839-1918 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 33.

¹⁴⁵E. R. Richards, "A Sermon Taster's Reflections," Christian Guardian (CG) (September 9, 1908), 8-9.

was needed in order to be good.¹⁴⁶ Again in April 1914, Creighton noted declining church and class-meeting participation and concluded that "experimental religion has decidedly decreased."¹⁴⁷

Implicit in these concerns, and woven throughout the urgent appeals to modern society, was a growing crisis of certainty whether progressive evangelicalism and its reverent criticism could effectively disclose a distinct spiritual reality that could support the theological reconstruction and transforming gospel that George M. Grant had anticipated. Already before World War I, different interpretations of the gospel that the times demanded began to polarize evangelicals and fray the strands of organic dualism that were central to the progressive synthesis of spiritual and historical-structural reality.¹⁴⁸

This disintegrating polarization was evident in renewed disputes during 1909 and 1910 about the teaching of historical criticism in Baptist and Methodist colleges. The objection brought by Elmore Harris, pastor of Toronto's Walmer Road Baptist Church, against Isaac G. Matthews of McMaster College for teaching negative criticism of the Old Testament was simply dismissed by the Ontario and Quebec Baptist Convention of 1910.¹⁴⁹ The case of George Jackson of Victoria College, however, was more protracted. Jackson was an English Methodist who came to Toronto's Sherbourne Street Methodist church in 1906, and began lecturing in English Bible at Victoria College in 1908. In a lecture at the YMCA in Toronto, he commended the views of Hermann Gunkel, whose The Legends of Genesis (1901) used literary form-criticism to interpret Genesis as a mythological account comparable to other Babylonian creation myths. Jackson urged Christians to abandon a literal interpretation of Genesis as both inaccurate and harmful to

¹⁴⁶ed. [William B. Creighton], "The Present Indifference to the Church," CG (October 4, 1911), 6.

¹⁴⁷ed. [William B. Creighton], "The Signs of the Times," CG (April 8, 1914), 6. See also editorials "Sunday Morning's Empty Pews," CG (December 10, 1913), 5; "Leaving the Church," CG (December 24, 1913), 5.

¹⁴⁸Marshall, Secularizing the Faith, 145.

¹⁴⁹Clark H. Pinnock, "The Modernist Impulse at McMaster University, 1887-1927," in Baptists in Canada, Search for Identity Amid Diversity, Jarold K. Zeman, ed. (Burlington: Welch, 1980), 197-99.

the cause of Christianity among modern thinkers.¹⁵⁰

Fearing that Jackson's "negative" criticism undermined confidence in the Bible, Albert Carman, the aging co-superintendent general of the Methodist church, brought heresy charges against him first to Victoria College, and ultimately to the 1910 General Conference of the Methodist Church. Through Nathanael Burwash's mediation, the 1910 General Council resolved Jackson's case, like the earlier heresy cases of the Methodist George Workman and the Presbyterian D. J. MacDonnell, by a compromise that confirmed the church's belief in Christ as Savior and the infallibility of God's Word but left policy regarding use of the critical method in the hands of the college.¹⁵¹ Victoria College, in turn, settled on the dismissal of Jackson, and on a resolution which granted professors the right to free pursuit of "true" inquiry, provided that they displayed a vital personal relationship to Christ and adhered to the Bible and the doctrinal standards of the church, and that their public lectures and preaching present only positive critical conclusions that "manifest more fully the spiritual power and the Divine truth of the Holy Scriptures."¹⁵²

Herein lay the crux of the growing dilemma for progressive evangelicalism. Though both Tom Sinclair-Faulkner and Michael Gauvreau argue that the resolution of the Jackson case implied a distinction between critical scholarship and the practical pastoral needs of preaching, and between the academy and the lay membership of the church,¹⁵³ it might better be seen as an attempted compromise between the poles of progressivism and proto-fundamentalism. In fact, the critical scholarship and "up-to-date

¹⁵⁰Tom Sinclair-Faulkner, "Theory divided from practice: The introduction of the higher criticism into Canadian Protestant seminaries," Studies in Religion, 10 / 3 (Summer, 1981), 328-30.

¹⁵¹Sinclair-Faulkner, 321.

¹⁵²Quoted in Sinclair-Faulkner, 335.

¹⁵³Sinclair-Faulkner, 343; Michael Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century, 233-244. Sinclair-Faulkner and Gauvreau give differing versions of this distinction. According to Sinclair-Faulkner, the resolution of Jackson's case indicates that modern evangelicals had subordinated theological reflection to practical piety and morality. According to Gauvreau, by contrast, the case showed that theology had been confined to the academy as a specialized academic discipline apart from the life of the congregation and preaching for conversion.

methods" of Victoria faculty were supported by the leading Protestant laymen like N. W. Rowell, Chester Massey, and Joseph Flavelle, who were Regents of Victoria College.¹⁵⁴ Meanwhile opposition to Jackson came partly from preachers who were the primary articulators of the church's theology. Thus the Jackson controversy was not a conflict between the academy and lay-members of the Methodist. Rather, Jackson had been caught in an increasingly polarized debate between radical progressives and more conservative evangelicals, both of whom had come to question the delicate balance of Kantian reverent criticism.

On the face of it, the attack on Jackson was surprising. As he indicated several years later, Jackson was committed to moderately progressive Christian piety and to preaching that would make Christianity relevant to the "modern mind." His aim in preaching, he claimed, was to commend Christianity to the consciousness of the college-educated, scientific, and practical-minded people -- the new urban professional middle class -- who were interested primarily in the moral significance and the practical consequences of belief.¹⁵⁵ Indeed his own acceptance of Christianity, Jackson confessed, was made possible by a view of the Bible that was liberated from a literal reading of the Old Testament, yet preserved an inspired vision of God in Christ. Citing A. E. Garvie, the leading British advocate of the views of Albrecht Ritschl, Jackson offered a solution to that demand in a liberal theology and reverent critical method in which the truth of Jesus commended itself to conscience, and therefor could not oblige believers to accept primitive beliefs in the Biblical story that offended the conscience. To the contrary, he declared, Christianity was first of all ethical: it was "at bottom a method of goodness; it is God's way of making men good." Moreover, he believed that scientific study of the facts of the Bible would discover the spiritual life of a unique Person who was the very source of "virtue-making power."¹⁵⁶ The task of

¹⁵⁴Sinclair-Faulkner, 322, 341.

¹⁵⁵George Jackson, The Preacher and the Modern Mind (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1912), 42.

¹⁵⁶Jackson, 47, 55.

preaching was to disclose that Person so as to open the world of conscience to the unseen eternal world of divine spirit, and thus to "make the spiritual real to men [and] open for them a window towards the sky, a door into the infinite."¹⁵⁷

Jackson's affirmation of a personal, spiritual relationship between humans and God, and the role of Jesus in manifesting that relationship, suggested that his was a relatively moderate use of "reverent criticism" that was shared, though perhaps more discreetly, by his colleagues at Victoria, as well as by leading Presbyterian theologians like William Jordan and Ernest F. Scott of Queen's Theological College, and Alexander R. Gordon of Presbyterian College in Montreal. All of these incorporated into their early twentieth century scholarship the form-criticism developed by Gunkel and Johannes Weiss, in the belief that it was among the latest "canons of modern science" and could only aid in the discovery of spiritual truth.¹⁵⁸ By 1909, however, the carefully balanced "supernatural naturalism" on which reverent criticism rested had come into question from both radical progressives and militant fundamentalists.

The radically progressive side of this debate included well-known social gospellers like Salem Bland, James S. Woodsworth, and Alfred E. Smith, who advocated what Bland later called a "new Christianity" that interpreted God's Kingdom in terms of the structures and consciousness of historical society. The son of James Fletcher Bland, Salem Bland began his career during the 1880's as a Methodist preacher in the circuit of industrial towns in the Kingston region. Here he promoted moral reforms such as sabbatarianism and temperance, and cultivated a long education in theology and philosophy at Queen's. In 1903 he moved to Winnipeg to become professor of church history and New Testament exegesis at Wesley College until his dismissal in 1917. While there he became deeply involved in the labour and

¹⁵⁷Jackson, 77.

¹⁵⁸Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century, 230-34.

agrarian movements that were centered in Winnipeg.¹⁵⁹ Woodsworth, son of the western Canadian Methodist evangelist James Shaver Woodsworth, spent two years as an ordinand on the Methodist mission circuit in western Canada. Following studies at Wesley College, Victoria College, and Oxford University, and with some uncertainty about his vocation, he helped to found All People's Mission in inner city Winnipeg, and served as its leading pastor from 1907 to 1913.¹⁶⁰ Smith began his career in 1888 as a factory worker and Methodist lay evangelist in Hamilton, and in 1890 was recruited by James Woodsworth for the western Canadian mission fields. After theological studies at Wesley College, Smith returned to the mission fields for five years, and in 1910 became pastor at McDougall Memorial Church in what Cook calls "slum-ridden north Winnipeg."¹⁶¹

In one form or another, all three were trained in the progressive evangelicalism of the late nineteenth century, including the moral perfectionism and optimistic millennialism of Henry Flesher Bland and James Shaver Woodsworth, and the influence of Kantian and Hegelian idealism at Queen's, Victoria, and Wesley colleges.¹⁶² Their emphasis on the coming of God's Kingdom on earth, the organic relation of spiritual and material reality, and the necessity of working out the spirit of Jesus in concrete and practical social relations were stock ideas of the Queen's ethos. Indeed, Bland called himself "a disciple of Grant,"¹⁶³ and William Irvine's description of religion, given in 1920, virtually reiterated the views of Grant:

This kind of religion cannot be kept out of politics. Being inseparable from life it permeates its every department, and extends the domain of the sacred to what have been

¹⁵⁹Richard Allen, "Introduction," in Salem Bland, The New Christianity (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973 [1920]), xvii-xviii.

¹⁶⁰Cook, 215-216. See also Kenneth McNaught, A Prophet in Politics: a Biography of J. S. Woodsworth (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959).

¹⁶¹Cook, 224-25.

¹⁶²Allen, "Introduction," xv.

¹⁶³McKillop, A Disciplined Intelligence, 219.

called material things. The line between the sacred and the secular is being rubbed out. This does not mean that everything is becoming secular; on the contrary, everything is becoming sacred."¹⁶⁴

Likewise, Woodsworth's activities at All People's Mission Church in Winnipeg, were devoted to what Grant would have considered "practical preaching."¹⁶⁵ Instead of teaching traditional Protestant doctrine and fostering a denominational identity, Woodsworth focused on public education, eliminating vice, and advocating the concerns of the working class and immigrants. For Woodsworth and others, these activities were identical with the spiritual reality and meaning of religion.

In many respects, then, their progressive gospel was the application and extension of Grant's practical preaching. But their interpretation of the relationship between Christ and history had also been shaped by their encounter with the late-nineteenth century cross-currents of historicized Hegelian idealism, pragmatism, and positivist social science that were taken up in the early 1900's by prominent Protestant philosophers and social scientists, among them John Watson at Queen's College and George Blewett at Victoria College.

By the turn of the century, Watson and Blewett had developed an Hegelian interpretation of Christianity similar to R. J. Campbell's controversial version of The New Theology (1907).¹⁶⁶ Campbell, the Congregationalist preacher at City Temple in London, England, claimed that Jesus was not uniquely divine, but that Deity and humanity were essentially one. Later, he also argued that Christianity was about furthering the Kingdom of God on earth in a socialist order.¹⁶⁷ Like Campbell, Watson and Blewett had developed an Hegelian synthesis of spiritual and natural reality which interpreted the divine

¹⁶⁴William Irvine, The Farmers in Politics, Reginald Whitaker, ed., (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976 [1920]), 53.

¹⁶⁵McNaught, A Prophet in Politics, 40-44. As McNaught puts it, Woodsworth's activities were more "secular" than "religious."

¹⁶⁶Welch, Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century, Vol. 2: 1870-1914, 226.

¹⁶⁷Bebbington, Evangelicalism in Modern Britain, 198-9.

rational principle of the Kingdom of God as being progressively manifested in concrete social structures through the dialectic process of history. This Hegelian vision, however, also meant that no particular historical event stood out as a unique work of a transcendent divinity. In 1908, Watson criticized even Ritschl's Kantian attempt to distinguish nature and spirit, and to isolate an essential kernel of Christianity.¹⁶⁸ The idea of Christianity, Watson argued, was in all ages related to its historical context, and the attempt to retrieve a primitive Christianity merely would aspire to its lowest, rather than its most developed form. Ritschl's project was therefore an evasion of the participation of Christianity in historical development and "the reign of law," and of the more urgent question of what form Christianity that should take in the modern world.

The relativizing impact of this historicism paralleled developments in European and American scholarship, and especially the crisis of the search for the historical Jesus symbolized by Albert Schweitzer's famous study of The Quest of the Historical Jesus (1906). Based on comparative literary criticism, Schweitzer concluded that Jesus' teaching was inseparable from his mistaken Jewish Messianism, and that modern claims to the historical Jesus simply imposed contemporary liberal thought on a distant historical figure to sanctify itself. The historical "Jesus of Nazareth who preached the ethic of the Kingdom of God, who founded the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, and died to give His work its final consecration," Schweitzer claimed, "never had any existence. He is a figure designed by rationalism, endowed with life by liberalism, and clothed by modern theology in an historical garb."¹⁶⁹ Schweitzer thus turned historical criticism not only upon the Bible, but upon modern consciousness itself, simultaneously returning Jesus to his own time and denying the ability of critical science to discover absolute truth in historical structures. Christ and modern consciousness were each products of their own

¹⁶⁸John Watson, "Christianity and History," Queen's Quarterly (QQ) 15, 3 (January-March, 1908), 163-175.

¹⁶⁹Albert Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus, 2nd Ed. (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1968 [1910]), 396.

historical context. As if to emphasize his fragmentation of historical reality and transcendent spiritual truth, Schweitzer offered in place of the historical Jesus the mystical spirit of Christ that transcended all time and place.¹⁷⁰

Like Schweitzer, Canadian idealists during the early 1900's explicitly abandoned evangelical claims to locate a metaphysical, absolute truth in the historical past, particularly in a uniquely divine historical Jesus. Watson's rejection of "primitive" forms in favour of present and future forms of "spiritual reality" demonstrated this historicism. His replies in 1914 to the searching questions of Presbyterian Sunday School teacher J. M. Grant indicate even more clearly the parting of ways between his Hegelian idealism and moderately progressive reverent criticism. For Watson, like R. J. Campbell, Jesus represented a universal principle, namely the "'fundamental identity of the nature of man with the nature of God.'"¹⁷¹ Against such a universal principle, claims to Jesus' unique divinity and sacrifice for sin were irrational. In comments to J. S. Woodsworth, Blewett likewise professed to accept the new "paganism" which separated ethical principles from the historical Jesus.¹⁷² In a "modernist" turn from history, Blewett argued that the problems of the historical Jesus and Biblical authority were superseded by the promise of a rationalized religion and the gradual realization of a future "far-off divine event."

Idealists like Watson and Blewett thus moved beyond the impasse of historical criticism with a sacralized historicism in which the eschatological tension of the coming of God's Kingdom was no longer between God and the world, but between past and future. Instead of the historical Jesus, they placed their hope in the immanent, rational teleology of the historical process as a whole, and focused, not on an original God-given order or decisive historical events of redemption, but on the present and future realization of rational unity.

¹⁷⁰Welch, 161-63.

¹⁷¹McKillop, A Disciplined Intelligence, 212-16.

¹⁷²McKillop, A Disciplined Intelligence, 223.

The full impact of historicism, however, culminated in a repudiation even of the absolutist metaphysic of idealism in the positivism and empiricism of the emerging social sciences. The historical religions school of Emile Durkheim, Ernst Troeltsch, and Max Weber, for example, interpreted religions as natural historical phenomena, and identified their essential features by how they functioned in particular societies. Notably, Ernst Troeltsch's articulation of the uniformitarian method rejected the possibility of a normative Christian view of reality, or of a universal truth in the historical Jesus.¹⁷³ Since history could only be studied critically and from within by analogy to one's present experience and consciousness, no past event was allowed to stand out as miraculous or a uniquely divine reality. And since all thinking was historically conditioned, no theology or philosophy could claim to possess universal truth. At best, according to Troeltsch, Christianity was true "for us," insofar as it functioned as part of contemporary consciousness and society.

William James's works, The Will to Believe (1897) and The Varieties of Religious Experience (1902), similarly reflected the historicizing of idealism.¹⁷⁴ In his "radical empiricism" James studied religion based strictly on the reports of belief, judging their truth by how they influenced social behaviour. James thus assumed the inherent "right" to religious belief, but relativized claims to the reality of its object. According to James, consciousness could not be linked with the Infinite, for it was located entirely within the inescapable matrix of historical and natural processes, where it functioned to assimilate experience in order to reconstruct man's natural and social environment. In contrast to theological and philosophical claims to metaphysical reality, James' pragmatism provided a new view of truth as something in the making, accomplished through the ongoing process of experience. With James, as John Passmore notes, modern thought turned from belief in a universal order given by a transcendent God to

¹⁷³Welch, 270-71.

¹⁷⁴Welch, 54-64.

an emphasis on the experience of life and to freedom and relativism in the midst of natural processes.¹⁷⁵

By the 1900's, as McKillop notes, the shift from metaphysical idealism to positivism and pragmatism was evident in the new social sciences and the disintegration of the university curriculum in Canadian universities.¹⁷⁶ While the explosion of knowledge and the emergence of increasingly specialized and isolated departments contributed to this disintegration, this disintegration also reflected the decline of the idealist metaphysic and evangelical belief in spiritual reality that once had unified the college curriculum. Already in 1875, after his appointment to the chair of mathematics and physics at the University of Toronto, James Loudon had argued that the role of the "scientific teacher" was not "to reconcile scientific theory with metaphysical or religious opinion", but rather "to investigate facts, to draw legitimate inferences, and declare them to the world to be accepted or refused, upon their merits."¹⁷⁷ Loudon thus demonstrated the separation of scientific inquiry from the providentialist assumptions and the apologetic function of science in the mid-nineteenth century.

This trend of closing scientific inquiry to metaphysical beliefs also emerged in the new social sciences with the appointment of Adam Shortt to a new chair of Political-Economy at Queen's, and William Ashley to a similar position at University of Toronto, both in 1888. Along with their successors Oscar D. Skelton (1907) and James Mavor (1892), these scholars transformed moral philosophy into a "positive science" of social relations.¹⁷⁸ Their idealist training was reflected in their insistence that social relations sprang from the individual will and therefore depended on moral responsibility, and in their

¹⁷⁵Passmore, A Hundred Years of Philosophy, 103-6, 114.

¹⁷⁶McKillop, Contours of Canadian Thought, 86.

¹⁷⁷McKillop, Contours of Canadian Thought, 85.

¹⁷⁸Doug Owram, The Government Generation: Canadian Intellectuals and the State, 1900-1945 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 102-107. This paragraph is a summary based on Owram; S. E. D. Shortt, The Search for an Ideal (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 107-110, 126, 144; and Carl Berger, The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing since 1900, 2nd Ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 1-25, 48.

assumption that politics and economics must be devoted to a common moral good. In their method, however, they rejected both classical liberal rationalism and idealist speculation in favour of an historical method which sought the patterns and laws of social relations through the inductive study of past relations. Assuming that progress depended on individual moral consciousness and the pursuit of enlightened self-interest, they defended the basic structures of democratic capitalism while hoping to mitigate its effects through education and the scientific regulation of society by the state. Along with progressive evangelicals, they thus advocated the emerging corporate liberalism that would dominate twentieth century Canadian political-economy, but as they did so they shifted the grounds for that corporate liberalism from metaphysical idealism and evangelical moralism to empiricism and pragmatism.

Idealist philosophers like Watson and Blewett responded to the new currents of pragmatism and positivism in a variety of ways. In a 1905 article, for example, Watson defended idealism and criticized both pragmatism and the personal idealism of A. S. Pringle-Pattison as attempts to return to a Kantian separation of theoretical knowledge of natural law from practical reason and moral freedom.¹⁷⁹ While conceding, like British idealists F. H. Bradley and Bernard Bosanquet, that the finite mind could not comprehend the totality of the Absolute, Watson argued that the solution to the limit of knowledge was not the arbitrary Kantian separation of spirit and nature, but a "teleological point of view" -- a rational faith that the universe is ordered, intelligible, and progressing to unity of consciousness and universal law.¹⁸⁰ In subsequent critiques of the logical inconsistencies of pragmatism, Watson would reiterate his idealist faith: "Faith in the goodness of the universe, and in the solubility of the problem of evil, is of the very essence of religion."¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹John Watson, "Humanism," *QQ*, 13, 2 (October 1905), 106-126.

¹⁸⁰Passmore, 61-66.

¹⁸¹John Watson, "Some Remarks on Radical Empiricism," *QQ*, 18, 2 (October 1910-11), 119. See also Watson's review of William Caldwell's *Pragmatism and Idealism* (Toronto, 1913) in "Pragmatism and Idealism," *QQ*, 21, 4 (April 1913-14), 465-72.

While Watson defended idealism, others integrated historicized idealism and the social sciences more fully by locating the principle of the divine Kingdom in the concrete structures of contemporary life. As McKillop shows, George Blewett considered social analysis to be simply the practical side of studying consciousness in its concrete expressions and social forms, and accordingly welcomed contemporary sociological analysis.¹⁸² George Brett, appointed as Blewett's successor in 1912, attempted to integrate the new currents of empiricism and positivism into idealism in his three-volume major opus on History of Psychology (1912-21). Brett drew on William Wrede's neo-Kantian view that philosophy could not claim knowledge of a transcendent Absolute, but only knowledge of contextualized particular manifestations of Reason. He also absorbed James's radical empiricism, especially in treating philosophy empirically as the history of consciousness, and including in that history not only reason and will, but also emotional and social influences. Through the application of critical reason, consciousness itself was now integrated into the structures and processes of nature. At McGill University, meanwhile, William Caldwell, professor of moral philosophy, also attempted to integrate idealism with James' pragmatism in order to confront abstract consciousness with the test of reality. According to Caldwell, education must include the social sciences so as to enable people to interpret and adjust to their social environment, but it also must be informed by history and moral philosophy in order to fully understand and evaluate that environment.¹⁸³ Finally, James Mark Baldwin, appointed to the Philosophy department at University of Toronto, brought to Canada Wilhelm Wundt's physiological treatment of consciousness and the translation of philosophy into the discipline of psychology.¹⁸⁴ In this new generation of scholars can be seen the end of metaphysical idealism and the submersion of human consciousness itself within the matrix of the natural, historical process.

¹⁸²McKillop, A Disciplined Intelligence, 223.

¹⁸³William Caldwell, Pragmatism and Idealism (Toronto: Macmillan, 1913). See also Shore, 33-36.

¹⁸⁴McKillop, Contours of Canadian Thought, 90-92.

Radical progressives like Bland and Woodsworth followed the path of Blewett, if in more practical than academic terms, of combining historicized idealism and positivist social science in order to locate the moral principles of Christianity in concrete social relations. To be sure, Woodsworth continued to profess faith in God as a "personal" guide and a moral inspiration, but his anxious self-doubt concerning what he believed about Christ and his rejection of theology testify at least to his disillusionment with claims to a uniquely divine reality in Christ.¹⁸⁵ Even more explicitly, Bland, like Blewett and Watson, assumed that historical criticism had discredited much of the Bible, and consequently he dispensed with issues of Biblical authority and the historical Jesus, and rejected what he thought were irrational supernatural claims about Jesus.¹⁸⁶ For Bland, Jesus represented a principle that was universal and immanent, and thus not dependent on a uniquely divine Christ. Though he declared in The New Christianity (1920) that the core of Christianity was devotion to Jesus, Bland interpreted this as devotion to the universal principle of brotherhood which Jesus had discovered, embodied, and planted in Christianity.¹⁸⁷

In the belief that Christianity was a spirit of brotherhood that was being realized in concrete social relations, radical progressives began to identify the church and the Kingdom of God with new movements for democratic socialism. Already in 1906, Bland identified Christianity with the triumph of public utilities on the grounds that public ownership was "an essential part of the kingdom of God on earth. It meant the substitution of co-operation for competition."¹⁸⁸ And in his 1913 "Programme of Social Reform," Woodsworth portrayed reform of the social environment to provide "a healthful, happy, human life" as "the first principle of brotherhood, the Christian ideal reduced to its irreducible minimum," adding

¹⁸⁵Christie and Gauvreau, A Full-Orbed Christianity, 9-14.

¹⁸⁶See Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century, 242-46.

¹⁸⁷Salem Bland, The New Christianity, 23.

¹⁸⁸McKillop, Contours of Canadian Thought, 106.

that whatever principle or spirit found expression in such brotherhood "points to the Christian Church the luminous pathway to her glorious goal, the Kingdom of God on earth."¹⁸⁹ The Kingdom of God, and therefore the identity of Christianity, were thus linked with socialism and the rising labour movement.

Salvation, for such radical progressives, consisted in the reconstitution of social structures, particularly in the construction of a social democracy which assured community control of economy and secured healthy, happy life for all. As Presbyterian minister S. S. Craig put it:

'The only sufficient apology for the existence of the church today is that it gets God's will done on earth ... The desideratum to be arrived at in the new apologetic is not how to meet the infidelity of a few learned men, but how the inherent forces of Christianity may be made immediately effective in delivering the masses from industrial slavery, in the purification of politics, in the redemption of man socially, in the harmonization of all true human interests, in the perfect correlation of all rights and duties, in the realization of the Kingdom of God on Earth.'¹⁹⁰

For these radical progressives, truth was not a matter of defining a metaphysical reality, but more pragmatically lay in changing the world. Radical progressives thus had come to interpret Christianity in terms of the realization of God's immanent Kingdom on earth through a revolution of social relations. They would attempt to preserve the liberal idealist tradition by upholding belief in a rational and moral universal order, in the ability of reason to apprehend and realize that order, and in a democratic social order predicated on the rationality, freedom, and ultimate moral value of persons.

Since they insisted on the presence and manifestation of spiritual principles in historical structures, the "new Christianity" of radical progressives was not entirely a secularized repudiation of divine authority. Nor had they yet abandoned the mainline Protestant church. Rather, their work can best be seen as carrying progressive evangelicalism to its most radical modernist end. More insistently than moderate progressives like T. Albert Moore, Charles W. Gordon, and Samuel Dwight Chown, they

¹⁸⁹J. S. Woodsworth, "A Programme of Social Reform," CG (August 27, 1913), 9.

¹⁹⁰S. S. Craig, "The Church and the Money Question," Knox College Monthly and Presbyterian Magazine 19 (January, 1896), quoted in Cook, 194.

challenged what they saw as the traditional and otherworldly identification of religion with theology in favour of actively working out the moral spirit of Christ in life and society.¹⁹¹ By the early 1900's, they were struggling to work out the meaning of the gospel among urban working classes and rural immigrants for whom the established liberal moral order offered little hope of progress or a coming millennium, and for whom the theological problems of modern criticism seemed to have little meaning. Their pastoral concern came to focus instead on the demands of profound social changes and the need of a gospel that would transform not just personal spiritual life, but the social structures that bound workers and immigrants to poverty and powerlessness. Their single-minded pursuit of these concerns, and their rejection of theology, the traditional church, and Biblical claims to the unique acts God in Christ, constituted a revolutionary break from both the authority of the historical past and the progressive hope of identifying a uniquely divine reality objectified in history. Their idealized and historicized Christianity, like that of Blewett and Watson, proclaimed what Richard Allen calls their "liberation from the tyranny of their traditions."¹⁹² And in place of objective historical verifications of spiritual reality, they claimed a present subjective consciousness of a universal spirit which man himself was obliged, and free, to manifest in the future transformation of social relations.¹⁹³

The vocal presence of radical progressives in the mainline churches and colleges at least until World War I also became the occasion for proto-fundamentalists to raise their own questions about progressive evangelicalism and the project of reverent historical criticism. This criticism was evident in the very different response to R. J. Campbell's The New Theology given by T. B. Kilpatrick of Knox College, who himself was a moderate progressive trained in the Kantian idealism and reverent criticism

¹⁹¹Christie and Gauvreau, A Full-Orbed Christianity, 8-12.

¹⁹²Allen, "Introduction," x.

¹⁹³Burkhard Kieseckamp, "Christendom, Nationalism and the Fate of the Nineteenth Century Evangelical Consensus," Acadiensis, XXV, 1 (Autumn 1995), 138.

of nineteenth-century Scottish theology, but who was more sympathetic to personal idealism rather than an historicized Hegelian idealism or positivism.¹⁹⁴ After nodding appreciation of Campbell's intent to vindicate spiritual values to a world increasingly indifferent to "religion," Kilpatrick argued that Campbell's interpretation of the relationship between God, man, and Christ was not based on the Bible, nor was it distinctly Christian theology. Rather, Campbell had imposed a speculative Hegelian "monistic idealism" on such Biblical doctrines as the personhood of God, sin, the divinity of Christ, and substitutionary atonement. In contrast to Campbell's "Hellenistic" speculation, Kilpatrick urged that the truths of Christianity must start "not from a philosophy, but from the permanent historic facts of Christian religious experience."¹⁹⁵

Kilpatrick's review was part of a growing crescendo of warnings about the ultimate results of progressivism and modern critical scholarship. The perceived dangers of radical progressivism, in turn, also became the occasion for reaction from proto-fundamentalists that ultimately was turned against George Jackson, despite his relatively moderate views.

By the early twentieth century, the loose alliance of "proto-fundamentalists" in Canada included prominent clergymen-scholars in the mainline churches like William Caven and his successor as principal of Knox College, William McLaren, who were noted defenders of Presbyterian doctrine; traditional Methodist evangelicals like Albert Carman; Baptists such as Elmore Harris and T. T. Shields; and the dispensational premillennialist William Aberhart. Caven, as well as W. H. Griffith Thomas and Dyson Hague of the evangelical Wycliffe College, all would contribute to volumes of The Fundamentals after

¹⁹⁴T. B. Kilpatrick, "R. J. Campbell and 'The New Theology,'" The Presbyterian (April 18, 1907), 489-92. For further on Kilpatrick, see Fraser, The Social Uplifters, 31-2.

¹⁹⁵Kilpatrick, "R. J. Campbell and 'The New Theology,'" 492.

1910.¹⁹⁶ Although a comprehensive study of the fundamentalist movement would warrant a separate study, what is of interest here is their challenge of progressive attempts to relate Christ and history, and their response to what they regarded as the impasse of historical criticism.

One of the main concerns of fundamentalists was their affirmation of the authority of the Bible by asserting its "factuality" over against historicist denials of the unique revelation of a supernatural God. To challenge that threat, they appealed to the early nineteenth century Baconian method of science. Albert Carman, for example, saw in Jackson's negation of a literal Genesis the skepticism of radical modernism.¹⁹⁷ Carman championed the inductive method and an understanding of the Bible as factual data that all could understand if read without speculative bias. From Carman's view-point, historical criticism like that of Jackson undermined the literal reliability of Scripture and threatened to leave nothing but clouded uncertainty.

This concern with Biblical authority was closely related to fundamentalists' insistence on the historical Jesus as the "factual," real intervention of a supernatural God into the world and historical experience. In a letter to Nathanael Burwash in 1909, C. A. Jones, a Methodist preacher from London, Ontario, warned that radical modernists were undermining Christian faith in the gospel. The Biblical narrative must be accepted as a whole, he urged, for "[i]f those narratives [in the Pentateuch] are not history, neither is the story of the Incarnation and the resurrection of Jesus Christ."¹⁹⁸ Similarly, in warning the 1910 General Council of the Methodist Church of the dangers of "higher criticism," F. W. Winter, a lay representative from Toronto, declared his belief "in Jesus Christ as the divine Son of God,

¹⁹⁶William Caven, "The Testimony of Christ to the Old Testament," The Fundamentals, Vol. IV (Chicago: Testimony Publishing Company, n.d.[1910-14]); Prof. W. H. Griffith Thomas, "Old Testament Criticism and New Testament Christianity," and Rev. Dyson Hague, "The Doctrinal Value of the First Chapters of Genesis," The Fundamentals, Vol. VIII (Chicago: Testimony Publishing Company, n.d.[1910-14]).

¹⁹⁷Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century, 241-42.

¹⁹⁸Quoted in Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century, 245.

but as the higher critics teach about Him He is no Saviour at all. These higher critics base their arguments on baseless assumptions. Their teachings are shipwrecking the faith of hundreds."¹⁹⁹ As Gauvreau has shown, even moderate "constructive" historical criticism had become suspect to preachers like Rev. J. N. Maclean, of Manitoba, who complained to professor A. B. Baird of Manitoba College that such criticism seemed

to consist in stopping before the Majestic Figure of Christ and refusing to yield up faith in Him - a faith for which the old fashioned view of the Bible is largely responsible. In other words the constructiveness consists in a refusal to be a party to the demolition of every thing Divine in the Bible. Logic scarcely warrants this refusal. Only Christian experience does. That is practically the only authoritative asset the preacher does claim.²⁰⁰

To these conservative evangelicals, the historicist results of reverent criticism seemed headed down the slippery slope of denying the whole authority of the Bible, and thus the divine reality of Christ himself.

For fundamentalists, furthermore, the "fact" of Christ was important as God's unilateral solution for a world grown increasingly corrupt. In contrast to optimistic progressives who claimed God's spiritual presence in the world and in human consciousness, fundamentalists were increasingly skeptical that progressive middle class Canadian culture manifested the coming of God's Kingdom. Carman's criticism of the wealthy and progressive businessmen who supported progressivism at Victoria College is well-known.²⁰¹ Carman was a traditional Methodist evangelical committed to the demands of spiritual regeneration and moral perfection. From his perspective, as Cook shows, the growing wealth and comfort of the middle class, at the expense of an oppressed labour class, indicated growing materialism and corruption rather than the progress of God's Kingdom. Modern Biblical criticism only weakened the strictures of the Bible so as not to discomfort the middle class, and thus further undermined the moral

¹⁹⁹F. W. Winter, CG, (September 14, 1910), 9, quoted in Sinclair-Faulkner, 332.

²⁰⁰Quoted in Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century, 248.

²⁰¹Sinclair-Faulkner, 323.

order during the social crisis of the turn of the century.²⁰² Without rejecting the liberal moral order of the nineteenth century, Carman had come to regard Canadian culture as in decline, and also to question the participation of evangelical Protestantism in the Canadian establishment.

An even more radical repudiation of historical progress was evident in the growth of dispensational premillennialism, especially following the publication of C. I. Scofield's Reference Bible in 1909. Already in 1906 William Aberhart, after he was refused entry to Knox College, began his correspondence courses with Scofield, who was the leading American expositor of John Nelson Darby's dispensationalism.²⁰³ Aberhart began to teach while living in Brantford, and especially after his move to Calgary in 1911. After turbulent relations as a Bible teacher in Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist churches, Aberhart founded his own Calgary Prophetic Bible Conference in 1918, through which he would exercise enormous influence in Alberta. Aberhart's affiliation with Scofield suggests that he had moved far from the progressive evangelical mainstream.

Despite the wide variety of their views, proto-fundamentalists generally regarded the historicity of Christ, the authority of the Bible, and also the regenerating work of God's spirit as essential elements of God's supernatural intervention into history to bring salvation to a world in decline. These concerns were aptly highlighted in The Presbyterian's publication of several articles by the Princetonian Presbyterian J. Grescham Machen during 1913.²⁰⁴ As Machen noted, modernist Christianity had separated religion from the historical reality of Christ, and especially his supernatural character and work, and had reduced Christianity merely to human culture. Machen's response to this "secularization" was to reassert a

²⁰²Cook, 20-24, 192.

²⁰³Joseph D. Ban, "T. C. Douglas and W. Aberhart, A Comparison of their Theological Premises and Social Perspectives," in Costly Vision. The Baptist Pilgrimage in Canada, Jarok! K. Zeman, ed. (Burlington, Ontario: Welch, 1988), 71-73.

²⁰⁴J. Grescham Machen, "Christianity and Culture," The Presbyterian (February 27, 1913), 268-70. See a later installment in March 6, 1913, 300-302. For further discussion of Machen, see George Marsden, Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), ch. 7.

theology that recognized the sovereignty of a God who acts decisively and supernaturally in history, especially through Christ. "Christianity," he declared, "is the proclamation of an historical fact -- that Jesus Christ rose from the dead." Without that fact, Christianity would be meaningless and incredible. As his colleague, Benjamin Warfield, argued in his articles in the Harvard Theological Review during 1912, modernist attempts to recover the historical Jesus had minimized his supernatural nature and works. Without Christ and the Cross, Warfield asked, why proclaim Jesus?²⁰⁵

For fundamentalists, the stakes in the battle over historical criticism were high, for they involved the reality of God's supernatural work in Christ that fundamentalists took to be the heart of the gospel. Their appeal to a Baconian method of Biblical interpretation to minimize the historicist problematic of hermeneutics, as Marsden notes, was a uniquely modern response to the modern impasse of historical criticism.²⁰⁶ Though it returned, ironically, to the origins of modern criticism, proto-fundamentalists hoped that this Baconianism would restore a self-authenticating revelation of God and the gospel of divine intervention in history in the miracle of the Incarnation.

In contrast to radical progressives whose historicism led them to abandon the historical Jesus, fundamentalists now claimed an inerrant, decontextualized Bible and miraculous events acts like the Incarnation and regeneration by the Holy Spirit to distinguish the spirit from historical reality, and to assert a transcendent God and the experience of a unique, miraculous spiritual reality. According to George R. Roberts, editor of the Canadian Baptist during the early 1900's, Christian socialism was not wrong, but misplaced the problem in society. The natural laws of society like supply and demand could not be

²⁰⁵Benjamin Warfield, "The Essence of Christianity and the Cross of Christ," Harvard Theological Review, 7, 4 (October 1914), 594.

²⁰⁶Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, 3.

changed; rather transformation must begin with regeneration of the individual.²⁰⁷ This distinction also meant that, in contrast to the idealist and sociological critique of Canadian society by radical progressives, fundamentalists offered an essentially pietist critique of Canadian society that focused on the individual's need of supernatural regeneration. Consequently, they gave relatively little attention to the structured entanglement of Protestants in Canada's liberal culture. Indeed, some seemed to take Adam Smith's theory of "natural law of supply and demand" for granted, thereby leaving the participation of Protestants in Canada's liberal establishment unchallenged. Even more than the Ritschlians whom Watson criticized, the emerging fundamentalist movement dissociated Christ, and the significance of redemption, from historical structures.

Though they dissociated evangelical faith and the "facts" of divine intervention from Canadian culture, fundamentalists also remained within the mainline churches prior to World War I. Though the proto-fundamentalist movement initially provided alternative "homes" for conservative opinion in the various conferences, Bible Institutes, and publications like The Fundamentals, it was increasingly factionalized after 1900 as dispensational premillennialists like C. I. Scofield came to dominate the movement, and as premillennialists themselves divided into pre- and post-tribulationist splinters that brought an end to the Niagara Conferences in 1901.²⁰⁸ Such divisions also indicated the failure of the Baconian method to guarantee a singular and inerrant reading of Scripture.²⁰⁹ Although some Canadians, like Shields and Aberhart, would join the post-war fundamentalist withdrawal from established Canadian institutions, many conservative evangelicals would be reticent to do so. Conservative Methodists

²⁰⁷J. S. Moir, "The Canadian Baptist and the Social Gospel Movement, 1879-1914," Baptists in Canada; Search for Identity Amid Diversity, Jarold K. Zeman, ed. (Burlington, Ontario: Welch, 1980), 153.

²⁰⁸Ernest Sandeen, The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800-1930 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1980 [1970]), 189-207; Douglas Frank, Less Than Conquerors; How Evangelicals Entered the Twentieth Century (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 67.

²⁰⁹Sandeen, 229.

like Carman and Burwash long suspected the fatalism of Keswick and dispensational premillennial thought in the proto-fundamentalist movement, while conservative Calvinists such as Caven and McLaren who drew on a long Presbyterian tradition of Biblical exegesis and systematic theology showed, like J. Grescham Machen, little inclination to dispensational premillennialism. Moreover, conservative evangelicals had not yet given up the battle for the mainline Canadian churches. Burwash's temporary success in preserving Wesley's standards in the Methodist Church until 1908, Carman's apparent triumph in forcing the dismissal of George Jackson and George Workman from Victoria College, and the fact that debates about church union were still in flux, may have given hope for reclaiming the broader mainstream of modern evangelical Protestantism.

Both the new Christianity and the nascent fundamentalist movement presented serious challenges to the progressive evangelical hope of Christendom. Their claims either to level history into a uniform, if spiritualized process, or to appeal to a super-natural divine reality, questioned progressive claims to locate a uniquely divine spiritual reality within historical experience and natural structures. Their conflicting criticisms, meanwhile, threatened to fragment and polarize the Canadian Protestant community, and so unravel the prospect of a united Christendom. Indeed, their arguments challenged the progressive identification of God's Kingdom with the established Canadian social order, thereby calling into question Protestants' entanglement in the established Canadian social order. But at the same time, their separation of a uniquely divine Christ and history by denying one or the other of this relationship, tended to promote, each in their own way, the secularization of Canadian culture.

IV. Progressives and the Problem of Spiritual Reality

The pressures of the early twentieth century placed progressive evangelicals like Jackson and his colleagues on the defensive already before World War I. Despite the outpouring of social reform movements, the focus of progressive evangelical scholars was subtly shifted from George M. Grant's

expansive claim that religion encompassed all of "secular" life, to an increasingly defensive effort to identify a distinct spiritual reality in experience. Though not worked out systematically until after World War, this was the root of a resurgent neo-Kantian apologetic, similar to those of Albrecht Ritschl and Adolf von Harnack, and of such British scholars as H. R. Mackintosh, A. M. Fairbairn, and A. S. Pringle-Pattison, that sought to preserve a critical affirmation of a distinct spiritual reality in experience by identifying the spiritual with the unique personality of both God and humans.

Despite their efforts at the outset of the twentieth century to relate the spirit of Christ to modern life, within a decade some progressives began to warn against the results of radical progressivism. T. B. Kilpatrick's critique of Campbell's Hegelian Christianity, noted above, was one example of a moderate, Kantian suspicion that historicized Hegelianism was not distinctly Christian. Similarly, S. D. Chown, who in the previous decade had become a vocal advocate a "social" gospel, as well as secretary of the Methodist Church's Department of Temperance and Social Reform, now began to question whether social reform and appeals to moral and religious sentiment were really distinctively Christian or fostered belief in the supernatural reality of Christianity. In his 1912 General Conference Address, he warned that modern trends were turning people's attention away from the deity and death of Christ to his personality and teaching, and away from the supernatural toward the natural.²¹⁰ As Marshall notes, though he did not repudiate the social dimensions of the gospel, Chown, as well as others like Alfred Gandier, the new principal of Knox College, and George Pidgeon, doubted that Christian social renewal could come apart from recognition of the unique divinity and work of Christ and worship of an unseen God.

With similar concerns to preserve claims to this distinct divine reality, theologians like William Jordan and Ernest F. Scott, both of Queen's College, re-asserted a neo-Kantian distinction between spiritual reality and nature in order to resist the turn in scholarship to historicized idealism and positivism. In Canada, most clergy-theologians had long resisted Hegelian monism. George M. Grant and John

²¹⁰Marshall, Secularizing the Faith, 152.

Watson worked together at Queen's College for many years on the basis of a vaguely common Kantian philosophy and a common belief that the divine was present in the phenomenal world. But their alliance was tenuous: while Grant used Kant to affirm the reality of God as a distinct being and his presence in experience, especially in a unique, revealed Christ, Watson moved increasingly toward a Hegelian understanding of God as abstract universal Reason, and of religion as part of the naturalized process whereby consciousness gained union with universal Reason.²¹¹ Through the 1890's more traditional evangelicals like Burwash eschewed the Hegelian theories of Watson and Victoria College's own George Blewett, and instead used Borden Parker Bowne's The Philosophy of Theism (1870) to describe religion as a uniquely personal relationship between humanity and the Infinite God.²¹² And when Blewett and Watson each, during the early 1900's, formulated Hegelian treatments of religion in terms of the process of consciousness realizing its unity with divine reason, the response of moderate progressives was circumspect. William Jordan, Professor of Old Testament Theology at Queen's, cited Blewett and Watson approvingly for their treatment of religion as the realization of spiritual intuition, and even Nathanael Burwash appreciated Blewett's defense of spiritual religion. But they also rejected the historicized idealist reduction of Christianity to a stage in a logical evolutionary process. For them, Christianity remained a relationship between the distinct "persons" of God and man as revealed in the unique historical Jesus.²¹³

Accordingly, Jordan and Scott continued to defend scientific criticism of the Bible, but with a renewed emphasis on the experience of a distinct spiritual reality. In his Biblical Criticism and Modern Thought (1909), Jordan maintained that scientific inquiry was the prerequisite to theology and to claims of inspiration, for "literary and historical questions" came first in Biblical interpretation: "that is, you must

²¹¹McKillop, A Disciplined Intelligence, 189-191, 207-208.

²¹²Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century, 273-74.

²¹³William Jordan, "Theological Literature," QQ, 20, 3 (January 1912-13), 312, 318. See also McKillop, A Disciplined Intelligence, 210-216.

place your picture as close as possible to its proper age, if its features, some of which are now dim and antique, are to yield their full meaning. Then you can draw rich results to quicken theology and inspire the religious life of your own time."²¹⁴ Jordan thus affirmed the primacy of critical science for disclosing the kernel of religious truth. In an article in The Presbyterian in late 1909, amid growing debate on historical criticism in the Methodist Church, he again defended historical criticism and chided those who feared the loss of spiritual reality and Biblical authority. Inspiration, he argued, came in personal experiences, namely those of the writers and the readers of the Bible, not in the Biblical words or doctrinal forms. What the Bible and religious history showed, therefore, was "the gradual and partial illumination of persons, whose experience of moral spiritual truth, that is to say, of God, becomes broader and deeper than that of other men, and who thereby become prophets or teachers of humanity."²¹⁵ Religion was essentially a direct intuition of spiritual reality that could be distinguished from the matrix of natural experience. And the Bible was the literary story of the spiritual experience and education of Israel, to be held up as a model for the spiritual education of all humanity.

By 1910, however, Jordan and Scott began to defend the uniqueness of spiritual experience and the rightful place of theology in the academy against the growth of rationalism and positivist empiricism. According to Jordan, the claims of empirical science to explain the whole mystery of life were overstated, for the natural explanation of "a particular process" was not, he claimed, "the banishment of God from that sphere."²¹⁶ Meanwhile, he and Scott welcomed Queen's' tradition of preserving a role for theology in the university where, as at Union Seminary and Chicago Divinity School, it might participate in the

²¹⁴William Jordan, Biblical Criticism and Modern Thought, or, The Place of the Old Testament in the life of today (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909), 41.

²¹⁵W[illiam] G. Jordan, "Criticism and Revelation," The Presbyterian (December 30, 1909), 750-751.

²¹⁶Jordan, "Theological Literature," 305.

wider domain of sciences and belong to the same modern scientific atmosphere.²¹⁷

In his 1909 inaugural address at Queen's, Scott elaborated on the place of theology among the sciences. Theology was a legitimate science, but with its own unique object, for it was "the science that occupies itself with God, and the human soul, and the moral law, and the ultimate purpose and meaning of life."²¹⁸ Theology's task was to "gauge the inner forces" and answer the inherent wonder, the "sense of the mystery at the heart of all things," that moved the religious instinct and which lay at the root of human activity. In that project, however, theology must abandon its claim to be queen of the sciences and admit free inquiry to all the disciplines. In fact, it must "sit at the feet" of the newer sciences and absorb their conclusions, to help theology distinguish "between the essential things of religion and the mere wrappings and survivals."²¹⁹

Like Harnack's The Essence of Christianity (1901), Jordan and Scott attempted to use the latest methods of historical criticism to peel back the husks of historically relative phenomena to reveal the essential spiritual core of Christianity.²²⁰ While accepting Gunkel's theory that the Genesis story was related to Babylonian mythology, Jordan maintained that Genesis reflected a unique spiritual experience: "[h]owever much Israel might be dependent on Babylon in matters of history and science, religiously she was free and independent -- that is, her prophets and leaders had a clear, strong message of their own."²²¹ Likewise, Scott accepted Weiss's argument that the gospel interpretations of Jesus were filtered through Jewish Messianism, though he argued that Weiss had exaggerated the influence of Jewish eschatology, and that the historical Jesus was still distinguishable from the apocalypticism of the gospels.

²¹⁷Jordan, "Theological Literature," 306.

²¹⁸Ernest F. Scott, "The Place of Theology," QQ, 16, 3 (January-March, 1909), 210.

²¹⁹Scott, "The Place of Theology," 209-10.

²²⁰Welch, 146-150.

²²¹Jordan, Biblical Criticism and Modern Thought, 128.

The historically relative and composite features of Christianity, Scott claimed, were secondary to "the essential originality of Christianity," which he claimed "is steadily asserting itself."²²²

Despite this hope, the assured results promised by proponents of reverent criticism remained frustratingly elusive by the early 1900's. Against impatient attempts to construct new theologies, Jordan pleaded in his 1909 article that the time for theological restatement had not yet arrived. In part, he suggested, the barriers to reconstructing a positive theology were due to the uncertain results of literary and scientific investigations.²²³ In the mean-time, Jordan and Scott had assumed a method that began from critical consciousness, and that could appeal finally to subjective authority. Like Jordan, Scott began his defence of theology from the premise of a "religious instinct." While conviction of its inspired authority must follow critical examination, the Bible could have significance only by building on the experience and spiritual sensitivity of the reader. "New truth," Scott warned, "can only be taught to the ignorant by building upon a basis of experience already there, and enlarging it."²²⁴ The crucial question in interpreting the Bible writers, Jordan added, was whether contemporary readers believed their experience was due to the manifestation of a Divine Person, or merely to their own discovery of ideas by natural causes. Ultimately, the standard of spiritual truth lay within the spiritual consciousness and community of faith of the contemporary reader.

As Carl Braaten notes, the attempt to construct a reverent historical criticism did not lead to a renewed confidence in the reality of God's acts in creation and redemption as recounted in Scripture; instead, it "fossilized the Biblical message" by treating it as a story of spiritual experience and, in the interminable task of "peeling the onion" of historicity, dispensed with historicity of much of the Bible

²²²Ernest F. Scott, "The Present Position of New Testament Theology," Harvard Theological Review, 6, 1 (January 1913), 72-73.

²²³Jordan, "Criticism and Revelation," 750-751.

²²⁴Scott, "The Present Position of New Testament Theology," 72-73.

while giving little hope of arriving at an objective and irreducible spiritual essence of the gospel.²²⁵ For progressives, the essence of Christianity was a spiritual, moral impulse and power. While claiming that this spiritual power was to be found within experience and human nature in accordance with critical scientific inquiry, progressive evangelicals also had begun to emphasize that it was in some sense more than natural and historical structures. Herein, however, lay the dilemma that would occupy "modern" progressive evangelicals through the twentieth century: how, from a modern critical perspective, could one peel through the layers of human nature and historical culture to arrive at a distinctly divine and transforming spiritual reality? Put another way, how could "modern" man speak of a God who was other than himself and who was not reducible to the temporal, natural world? From this problematic, twentieth-century progressive evangelicals embarked upon a renewed, and markedly modern, search for spiritual reality.

The appeal of Jordan and Scott to a neo-Kantian apologetic for "religion" based on moral consciousness would receive systematic philosophical defense in the works of William Morgan and John Baillie during the 1920's, thereby sustaining the tradition of Kantian idealism among mainline Canadian Protestants. Nevertheless, its use after 1900 may be seen as a defensive retreat from an earlier confident identity of the whole of structured reality with an immanent divine spirit. In the course of their retreat, apologists for progressive evangelicalism anxiously searched for a spiritual reality in experience, but in doing so they now emphasized the distinction between spiritual and natural realities. In doing so, they laid claim to a unique realm of moral freedom for human and divine personality, but also conceded much of the structured world of nature and history to a secondary realm of merely natural processes differentiated from spiritual reality.

While Jordan, Scott, and also Jackson tried to preserve the Kantian balance of reverent criticism,

²²⁵Carl E. Braaten, New Directions in Theology Today, Volume II; History and Hermeneutics (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), 25.

other progressive evangelicals also would turn to pragmatism, thereby paralleling the work of philosophers like George Blewett and William Caldwell. In their search for spiritual reality, preachers like Burwash and Chown temporarily appealed to James' radical empiricism to assert freedom of the human will against natural determinism, and to claim the reality of spiritual experience and the validity of religion.²²⁶ The turn to pragmatism was made more formally in the affiliation of Canadian churches with the Religious Education Association (REA), which was based at the University of Chicago and was founded in 1903 by the modernist evangelical George Coe to provide a progressive alternative to the International Sunday School Association that was linked to Dwight Moody's Bible Institutes. As Brian Fraser notes, prominent Canadian Presbyterians like Robert Falconer, T. B. Kilpatrick, John C. McFadyen, and George Pidgeon were attracted to the progressive approach of the REA.²²⁷ And in 1912, the Presbyterian General Assembly appointed a Commission on Religious Education to cultivate connections with that association for the purpose of fostering an appreciation of religion in modern society.²²⁸

The results of this affiliation, however, were ambiguous. In keeping with the Commission's purpose, Falconer, Kilpatrick, Pidgeon, and R. D. Fraser began to publish a Sunday School curriculum designed to promote a modern understanding of Christianity, and to cultivate a Christian moral consciousness.²²⁹ With a slightly different interest, W. R. McIntosh of London, Ontario, in a report for The Presbyterian entitled "Modernising Religion," welcomed the connection with an organization that embraced an "up-to-date business method" and brought together scientific experts from "every department of human interest and every school of religious belief" to promote "the scientific but evangelic nurture of

²²⁶Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century, 252.

²²⁷Brian J. Fraser, The Social Uplifters; Presbyterian Progressives and the Social Gospel in Canada, 1875-1915 (Waterloo: Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion/Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1988), 118-19.

²²⁸W. R. McIntosh, "Modernising Religion," The Presbyterian (April 3, 1913), 428.

²²⁹Fraser, The Social Uplifters, 19.

the young in the principles and practice of religion."²³⁰ McIntosh's description of what he considered the Association's "prophetic" value offers a striking demonstration of the search for spiritual reality in a modern, but vaguely-defined religiosity:

What is the most urgent and outstanding task before the world to-day? Is it not so to glorify religion and so to modernize it that it will effectively regulate and redeem the progressive life of our times?

The religious revival which is most needed to-day is the creating of conviction in the minds of men as to the indispensableness of religion to the welfare of the state and the progress of our age.

What is needed are not separatist and emotional reactions from an outgrown embodiment of religion, but an organized leadership of educated and experienced Christian men that shall properly interpret the movements of our time and relate religion thereto in a scientific and redeeming way and so carry forward the entire Church on her progressive mission to the world.²³¹

Thus McIntosh, and by implication the Religious Education Association, held out the vision of a "Bushnellian" revivalism that combined modern scientific methods with the pursuit of a startlingly vague spirituality, the apologetic for which appealed to the practical benefits of "the welfare of the state" and "the progress of our age."

Moderate progressives' appeals to Kantian idealism and pragmatism thus tended, ironically, to support a Christianity that threatened to become disconnected from an historic Christ. Modernists at the University of Chicago like George Coe and Shailer Matthews had effectively abandoned belief in the historical Jesus, and had defined the distinctiveness of Christianity in terms of religious experience and social function.²³² In Canada, the influence of James's pragmatism, and also the "vitalism" of Henri Bergson and Rudolph Eucken, would be epitomized in the teaching of Sidney H. Hooke, Professor of Oriental Studies at Victoria College, and would become more pronounced in the post-World War I trend among some progressives to bypass a now doubted Biblical authority, and to seek a direct experience of

²³⁰McIntosh, 428.

²³¹McIntosh, 428.

²³²Welch, 227-228.

spiritual reality in the flux and relativity of historical experience.²³³ And with a different combination of Kantian idealism and Bergsonian vitalism, other scholars like Andrew Macphail would reject the materialism and worldliness of the social gospel, but also the Biblical story as outdated and inappropriate for informed and modern religion. Like Watson, Macphail defended faith in a distinct spiritual reality and moral values, but he identified the spiritual order with the essential divine law-order in the world, which he claimed humans could know intuitively rather than through rational science. In this case, the task of theology was not to commend the Biblical story, but rather to reconcile "religion" to modern thought.²³⁴

While they attempted to defend claims to a distinct spiritual reality amid the strains of modern thought, progressives sought with anxious hope to promote church growth and social reform. This hope had two dimensions: while they tried to resist the inroads of alternative distractions from church life in modern society, they also looked to church growth and social reform for confirmation of the active presence of the spirit in the world, and thereby to shore up their hope for the moral order of Christendom.

One poignant example of this anxious search for confirmation was the jubilation with which new lay movements like the Laymen's Missionary Movement were greeted. The Laymen's Missionary Movement was a trans-denominational voluntary American organization devoted, like the Student Volunteer Movement, to "evangelizing the world in this generation." The Canadian wing, with Newton Rowell as chairman of the Canadian Executive, was inaugurated in Toronto in April 1907 at a meeting chaired by Joseph Flavelle and attended by clergy, business professionals, and politicians described by The Presbyterian as "300 of the men who are 'making things go' in the practical realm."²³⁵ Rowell described

²³³S. H. Hooke, "Quo Vadis?" Acta Victoriana, XL, 3 (December 1915), 161-167.

²³⁴Shortt, 21-26.

²³⁵Editorial Correspondence, "Inauguration of the Laymen's Missionary Movement," The Presbyterian, April 18, 1907, 488.

the movement as a spirit that was enlisting the "manhood of the Church" to the mission of carrying "the gospel of the Man of Nazareth into all lands [for] the physical, the intellectual, and the moral uplift of all men." A similar organization, more exclusive to the Presbyterian Church, was the Brotherhood Movement described by W. J. Knox as an organization devoted to the study of the Bible and to the mission work of the church to "infuse the Spirit of Christ into every department of the nation's life so that this Dominion of Canada may indeed become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ."²³⁶ In both cases, the reports of these lay activities hailed them as reassuring signs, despite other indications of decline, of the endurance and resurgence of a "religious spirit" among the foremost modern elite in Canadian society. With their support, Christian spirituality could be expected to receive a non-sectarian, efficient, and practical support. Indeed, the vitality of religious sentiment, especially among Canada's professional elite, seemed to guarantee the moral basis of Anglo-Canadian civilization despite the influx of foreigners and urban working classes.

Another illustration of the search for spirituality can be found in the emerging debates about church union. Moderate progressive leaders like George M. Grant had long advocated church union as the most visible and effective way to manifest the unity of Christians in a concrete society, and to make the church "co-extensive with the nation," so that the moral ideals of Christianity might be infused into the life of the nation so as to realize in practice the Kingdom of God in society.²³⁷ As Marshall notes, the initiative for organic church union, beginning in 1902, epitomized the progressive hope of stripping away doctrinal and denominational differences that were merely products of history, in order to promote the essential moral principles of the Kingdom of God in the life of the nation. Nevertheless, by the second decade of the twentieth century, that optimistic progressive vision of church union was tinged with

²³⁶W. J. Knox, "The Presbyterian Brotherhood, Pt. II," The Presbyterian, 25 March 1909, 359-360.

²³⁷John W. Grant, The Canadian Experience of Church Union (Toronto: Ryerson, 1967), 23-30.

a new urgency to make the church more effective and validate its claims to moral leadership in the nation.²³⁸

Though the most intense debates about church union would occur after the war, the tentative terms of union such as the doctrinal Basis of Union agreed upon in 1908 were already in question by the time of the Jackson controversy in 1909. Indeed, as Sinclair-Faulkner suggests, Burwash's efforts to mediate that controversy were aimed partly at preserving unity in support of the Basis.²³⁹ Despite his efforts, criticism came from many corners, not least of all from progressives who considered the doctrinal basis to be an inconsistent and outdated compendium of Methodist and Presbyterian doctrine, and who regarded the requirement of subscription to that doctrine an infringement of conscience.²⁴⁰ One vocal critic was the Presbyterian John Mackay, then principal of Westminster Hall seminary in Vancouver, whose series of articles in The Presbyterian during 1909 challenged the validity of imposing institutional uniformity on faith life. Mackay argued that common participation in the life of the supernatural could occur in diverse forms, and that the glaring weakness of the basis was its lack of a compelling vision of God.²⁴¹

Mackay's argument, which cited not only Adolf von Harnack but also the early twentieth-century Scottish theologian James Denney, suggested that an alternative modern evangelicalism was being formed by some progressives. Already before World War I, James Denney's modern "radical evangelicalism" offered a sharper separation of Christ and history and a new emphasis on the transcendence and initiative of God against the seemingly closed matrix of historicism. In his review of Denney's most famous work,

²³⁸Marshall, Secularizing the Faith, 153-5.

²³⁹Sinclair-Faulkner, 322, 341.

²⁴⁰These objections were pervasive throughout the debate on church union. See N. Keith Clifford, The Resistance to Church Union in Canada, 1904-1939 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985).

²⁴¹John Mackay, "The Case Against Church Union," in The Presbyterian (November 18, 1909), 553. See the continuation of articles in (November 25, 1909), 584-585; (December 2, 1909), 616-617; (December 9, 1909), 650-651; (December 16, 1909), 682-683; (December 23, 1909), 716-717.

Jesus and the Gospel (1908), T. B. Kilpatrick noted Denney's two main arguments. First, Denney argued that New Testament Christianity viewed Christ not merely as the pattern of a universal spirituality, but as a unique object of faith. Like Machen, Denney insisted on the supernatural person and work of Christ as central to Christianity: the Christ of history witnessed by gospel writers was not a human construction of an ideal figure, but the incarnate and resurrected Christ, who was the very source of faith. Secondly, in keeping with a modern critical perspective, Denney insisted that the testimony of the gospel came through experience: the incarnate and risen Christ was a fact of experience, testified by Christ's own self-understanding, the witness of the gospel writers, and ultimately by the living presence of Christ in the church and in believers. Contrary to Machen, the faith of the church was located in a living relationship with the person of Christ, not in doctrines, forms, or even the words of the Bible. The confession of the church, which Denney argued could only be voluntary, therefore could be reduced to the statement "I believe in God through Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord and Saviour."²⁴²

Like the German scholars Martin Kahler and Johann Herrmann who were Karl Barth's teachers, Denney attempted to move beyond the negative historical criticism of Ritschl to a positive gospel which would restore initiative to a transcendent God in his entry into history through Christ, and which would reassert the reality of sin, redemption and new life in Christ.²⁴³ Christianity, Denney claimed, was fundamentally problematic to the modern mind of science, idealism, and historicism, because these denied man's responsibility before God in a personal relationship that transcended nature.²⁴⁴ The Christian could only respond by testifying to the reality of sin and redemption, and to the historic fact that in Christ's life, death, and resurrection the eternal has entered into history. Above all, for Denney, the

²⁴²T. B. Kilpatrick, "'Jesus and the Gospel,'" The Presbyterian, (January 7, 1909), 3-5.

²⁴³Welch, 45-53.

²⁴⁴James Denney, "The Atonement and the Modern Mind," The Expositor, 6th Series, Vol. 8 (1903), 97.

atonement was the distinction of Christianity,²⁴⁵ for it challenged all liberal claims to natural merit that neglected the radical impact of sin on man's constitutional status as God's image bearers. In the atonement, God bore the cost of redemption himself, thereby upholding his moral order. For Denney, ultimate reality was not the inherent goodness of the historical process, but the grace of God's sin-bearing, sacrificial love.²⁴⁶

Along with challenging the modernist hope in an immanent principle of progress, Denney attempted to revolutionize the Ritschlian point of departure which placed religious authority in consciousness by insisting that revelation came from God's initiative.²⁴⁷ He assumed that reality could be known only from experience; there could be no retreat from the critical mind, for "once the mind has come to know itself, there can be no such thing for it as blank authority."²⁴⁸ Like all spiritual realities, the divine truth of Christ was mediated through historical fact. But Denney emphasized that the truth of Christ came from outside of humanity, by way of Christ, Scripture, and the Spirit. The fact of Christ, therefore, was more than history: it was the eternal in the present.²⁴⁹ In that case, the authority of the Bible lay not in its words or historical forms as such, but in the Word of God which comes through the testimony of Bible and authenticates itself to the believer's own consciousness by the inward witness of the Spirit.²⁵⁰ For this, one need not know the whole historical Jesus, but only that Jesus in his relations as mediator between God and man. This Christ could not be known through critical history alone, but

²⁴⁵James Denney, "The Atonement and the Modern Mind," 81-87.

²⁴⁶T. Howard Marshall, "James Denney," in Creative Minds in Contemporary Theology, Philip E. Hughes, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 219.

²⁴⁷Marshall, "James Denney," 227.

²⁴⁸Denney, "The Atonement and the Modern Mind," 84.

²⁴⁹James Denney, "Christianity and the Historical Christ," The Expositor, 8th Series, Vol. 5 (1913), 20.

²⁵⁰Marshall, "James Denney," 207-208.

only through the gift of belief given by the living Christ in the heart, and in the ongoing work of the Spirit in the life of the Church.

To both traditional and progressive evangelicals, Denney's work seemed to combine a moderately progressive modernism with conservative theology. Though Kilpatrick contested Denney's claim to be free from doctrine, he welcomed his theology as an answer to excessive modernism. E. F. Scott, by contrast, interpreted Denney's work as a moderate attempt to use the critical method, but for the purpose of theological conservatism.²⁵¹ While welcoming his attempt to demonstrate a spiritual reality that corresponded to the faith of the church, Scott argued that Denney's merely "analytic" method failed to address the problems of history and literary analysis necessary in order to "grasp the thought of Jesus under its historical conditions."

Despite this ambivalent response from some, Denney's renewed emphasis on the Christ of the Cross would become a vital stimulus in post-war attempts by Protestants to recover a distinct gospel. In particular, his attempt to recover the integrity of a divine revelation centered in Christ would stimulate the renewal of Biblical theology and dogmatics in the work of D. M. Gordon. Already before the war Gordon, then principal of Queen's College, called for the recovery of the great truths of the word of God as the constant element in all attempts to relate Christianity to historical context.²⁵² But Denney's views would be developed most systematically by a new generation, and especially by the Presbyterian Walter W. Bryden, after the disillusioning experience of the war.

Prior to World War I, however, few Canadians took up Denney's new "radical evangelicalism." Mackay, however, was one exception who combined Denney's "radical evangelism" with the legacy of neo-Kantian personal idealism. From 1910 to 1912, Mackay served as president of the alternative Church Federation Association, but in 1912 he ended his involvement in the dispute to focus on leading the new

²⁵¹E. F. Scott, Review of Jesus and the Gospel, by James Denney, in QQ, 16, 4 (1908-09), 366-68.

²⁵²Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century, 251.

Corpus Christi Movement. His choice was revealing: though a progressive evangelical, his first concern had come to be a new form of evangelism through the experience of the person of Jesus. Already in 1906 he had produced a devotional booklet, entitled Religion as Friendship with God; a New Statement of the Old Doctrines. There he wrote:

Two things alone have abiding reality, God and the soul of man. Matter, force, motion, energy, time, space, law, freedom, cause and effect, and the countless other terms which make up the vocabulary of science, are all meaningless, empty sounds apart from the thinking personal spirit which uses them. Between these two realities, the soul of man and the spirit of God, there must be some relation. .. That relation of man and God is religion.²⁵³

His "modern" program of "religion through friendship" would be the model for the "new evangelism" taken up by moderate modernists like Ernest Thomas after the war. For Mackay, "practical preaching" of the gospel had come down to the search for spiritual reality by the "modern" method of an individual existential encounter with the person of Jesus.

These increasingly searching efforts to sustain a modern evangelicalism suggest that, by World War I, the intellectual foundations of the modern hope of Christendom had been severely eroded. Most noticeably, progressive evangelicals had shifted their focus from George M. Grant's "practical preaching" and expansive claims of all of life for God's Kingdom to an apologetic defense of a unique spiritual reality in experience against the naturalizing influences of historicism and positivism. By its very nature, such an apologetic differentiated the divine from nature and culture, thereby undermining the synthesis on which the modern hope of Christendom was founded. More foundationally, however, the attempt to discover that spiritual reality in experience from the critical perspective of human consciousness seemed to produce increasingly indefinite results. Indeed, by the arrival of world war, progressive evangelicals were anxiously preoccupied with the critical search for spiritual reality itself.

²⁵³John Mackay, Religion as Friendship with God; a New Statement of the Old Doctrines (Toronto: Westminster, 1906), 15.

V. Conclusion: Christendom in Crisis

The triumph and the tensions of the modern progressive hope of Christendom culminated, in 1914, with overwhelming support from evangelicals for the effort to defeat the Kaiser in the Great War. While the young men of Canada's still predominantly Protestant population volunteered for military service, and prominent Protestants such as Joseph Flavelle, chairman of the Imperial Munitions Board, organized the administration of total war, unnumbered women took up factory jobs producing the materiel of war, and children badgered "shirkers" into acknowledging their duty to the nation, the empire, and Christian civilization.²⁵⁴ Despite the resistance of a minority of pacifists like J. S. Woodsworth, the Protestant churches joined this mobilization by organizing their resources and efforts to lead the mass support of the war campaign. While women's missionary societies prepared relief packages for soldiers, church committees like the Methodist Church of Canada's Army and Navy Board organized local recruitment as well as chaplain services, and clergy and probationers enlisted for both combat and chaplain service. At the forefront of the domestic campaign, leading progressive clergy like S. D. Chown took the platform at recruitment rallies, controlled church publication editorial policies, and gave regular pulpit voice in unstinting support to patriotism, recruitment, and national efficiency, and even to specific policies like conscription, the War-time Elections Act, and Union government.²⁵⁵

According to Chown, the war effort was a providential opportunity to reaffirm the hope of Christendom.²⁵⁶ In his declaration of support for the war in an open letter to Methodists during September of 1914, Chown identified the defense of the Empire with the cause of righteousness:

We are persuaded that this war is just, honorable and necessary in defence of the principle of righteousness and the freedom of our Empire in all its parts. We believe it to be a

²⁵⁴J. M. Bliss, "The Methodist Church and World War I," Canadian Historical Review, Vol. 49, No. 3 (September, 1968), 219.

²⁵⁵Thomas Socknat, Witness Against War, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 49-50.

²⁵⁶Bliss, 219-220.

world struggle for liberty against military despotism which, if successful, would make our life not worth living.²⁵⁷

If Anglo-Protestant civilization was indeed the embodiment of Christ's ideals, then, as Chown and C. W. Gordon described it, the defense of the empire was a holy war and a test of commitment to the cause of Christ. As Richard Allen suggests, progressive evangelicals viewed the war as a redemptive opportunity: though much to be mourned, it was also a divinely given opportunity to verify the cause of Christ and the accomplishment of God's purposes in the progress of Canadian civilization.²⁵⁸ Coming on the heels of the Social Service Congress of 1914, the war seemed the occasion for drawing the nation together in a common and decisive moral duty, and for providing a much-needed historical apologetic for progressive evangelicalism and the modern hope of Christendom.

But that such a cataclysmic justification of the hope of Christendom was welcomed with such urgency also indicated an increasingly desperate crisis of confidence in the progressive evangelical vision of history. Beneath the surge of progressive activism in the decade prior to the Great War, evangelicals' hope of Christendom had begun to disintegrate. Progressive evangelicals had attempted to resolve the problematic relationship between spiritual and natural reality by locating God within human consciousness and social relations, thereby also claiming that God was accessible to modern critical examination of historical experience. This organic synthesis, however, was fraught with difficulty for evangelical Protestants. Its focus on inner spiritual and moral reality tended to sanctify a liberal anthropology and political-economy by identifying these with God's Kingdom while neglecting the structural problems which followed from that liberal social order. At the same time, it was susceptible to various kinds of reduction, either in absolutizing a self-sufficient historical order or absolutizing a unilaterally-acting supernatural reality. Despite the hope of progressives like Grant that the presence of God in history

²⁵⁷S. D. Chown, in Christian Guardian, September 16, 1914, cited in Bliss, 215.

²⁵⁸Allen, 34-36.

assured the renewal of theology and the imminent achievement of God's Kingdom, the progressive synthesis of spirit and nature in history had begun to unravel. By World War I, Canadian Protestants had begun to question how, from within the temporal order that increasingly seemed inadequate, one could distinguish the authentic reality of God by which life might be transformed.

Chapter 2:

Christendom in Crisis: Rethinking Modern Christianity, 1914-1924

Despite their millennial endorsement of the war effort, by the end of World War I most Canadian Protestants would abandon their identity of modern western civilization with God's Kingdom. The pastoral letter issued by the officers of the Canadian Chaplain Services to the home churches at the close of the war illustrated both the penitence of progressive evangelicals and their call for revitalizing the mission of the Church:

The failures of the Church in the past lie at our door, the power of Christ remains unchallenged. It is our little faith, our lack of consecration and of loyalty that stands arraigned. If we would hereafter truly fulfill the purpose of the Church as our Lord's ambassador, it must mean a reconsecration of all of life to His service.¹

To be sure, the chaplains remained committed to a modern form of evangelicalism. Christianity and God's love had been vindicated, they claimed, in the self-sacrificing heroism of soldiers even amid the tragedy and horrors of the war. And upon their return, the chaplains warned, those soldiers would demand a simple and modern teaching of the basic truths of Christian faith, and a genuine commitment to building God's Kingdom in the structures of society. But the "establishment of God's Kingdom on earth" would in turn require a more vital and authentic Christianity based on renewed preaching of "the Cross of Christ." For the chaplains, both elements were necessary: only renewed preaching and authentic faith in the Christ of the cross would harness the self-sacrificing heroism of returning soldiers to Christian ideals and God's Kingdom.

Indeed, the recovery of that authentic Christianity would become increasingly urgent, and

¹Toronto, United Church Archives, Methodist Church of Canada, Army and Navy Board, Box 3, File 65, "The Message of the Canadian Chaplains Overseas Military Forces to the Churches of Canada." Signatories to the message included John M. Almond, CMG; A. H. McGreer, MC; J. H. MacDonald, CBE; G. O Fallis; E. H. Oliver; A. H. Greggan; G. A. Wells, CMG; G. G. D. Kilpatrick, DSO; Allan P. Shatford; D. V. Warner; A. D. Cornett, OBE; G. G. Hepburn, MC; H. A. Kent; Clarence MacKinnon; F. J. Moore; and P. M. Smith.

strained, in the years following the war. The growing turbulence in Canadian society that was marked by the height of the labour movement in the general strikes of 1919, by the rise of farmer politics, and by the reality of ethnic diversity, challenged Protestants to clarify what they took to be the social identity, mission, and meaning of Christianity. This challenge was further sharpened by international developments like the Bolshevik revolution, and especially the nationalist movements in eastern Asia where the bulk of Canadian Protestant foreign missions were located. Meanwhile, the drift of war veterans and students away from the churches suggested the erosion of Christianity from within. And new currents of modern thought, attractive especially to disillusioned students, threatened to dispense with God in interpreting the world.

With some justification, David Marshall has described the 1920's as an era of "drift" in modern Protestantism.² Nevertheless, their search for some response to the tragedy of war and the post-war challenges brought mainline Canadian Protestants to several decisive turning points. Though hardly the bombshell of Karl Barth's 1917 Epistle to the Romans, the chaplains' message pointed to several such changes. First, it reflected the view of most Protestants that the Christendom for which they had hoped was gone. In fact, not only had the war demonstrated the barbarity of western civilization, but the Church stood condemned for its complicity in supporting the war, and for its participation in a culture that now seemed sharply at odds with God's Kingdom, and in doing so had compromised the claims of Christ. While it reiterated the progressive evangelical commitment to modern thought and building God's Kingdom on earth, the chaplains' summons to renewed consecration questioned the nineteenth-century progressive confidence that Canadian civilization was increasingly manifesting the immanent progress of God's Kingdom. In recognizing the failures of western civilization and the church, they renounced the nineteenth-century post-millennial

²David B. Marshall, Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), ch. 7.

identification of God's coming Kingdom with modern western culture, and with it their hope of a Constantinian Christendom.

Implicit in this renunciation, secondly, was the recognition that the nineteenth-century progressive moral vision, with its identity of spiritual and temporal-historical reality, had failed. The chaplains' call for the renewal of basic Christian teachings, and especially for preaching the Christ of the Cross, reflected a new concern to identify the unique word and work of God that might genuinely transform modern man and civilization.

Woven through both of these concerns was the chaplains' striking departure from the attempt of nineteenth-century progressives to interpret spiritual reality as immanent in historical culture and society. Their admission of failure and their concern for the unique work of God and an authentic Christianity indicated a new suspicion of modern culture, and a new effort to disentangle Christianity from at least some aspects of modern western civilization that they now regarded as contrary to God's Kingdom and therefor "secular." This effort at disentanglement would revive an Augustinian interpretation of tension between the City of God and the City of Man, and would include what David Lyon describes as a "strategic" use of the designation "secular" by Protestants.³ As Lyon notes, the ascription of "secular" to selected dimensions of life was an ambiguous undertaking. In general, it involved an attempt to differentiate Christianity, or more properly God's Kingdom, from what in this case was modern western culture. In part, this differentiation marked a retreat of Christianity which conceded that natural and historical structures were parts of a secular order now seemingly closed to the authority and redemptive work of God. But it also involved the attempt to shore up the distinct central meaning of Christianity so as to provide a new vantage-point for critically assessing western culture. Secularization thus had mixed potential: it enabled Protestants to disengage Christianity from

³David Lyon, The Steeple's Shadow: On the Myths and Realities of Secularization (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), ch. 7.

a civilization which now seemed antithetical to God's Kingdom, but it also opened the possibility that Protestants would no longer claim a comprehensive relationship between God and the world.

The third turning point consisted of the final fragmenting of the broad, if tenuous continuum of evangelical Protestantism. While most recognized the need to disentangle Christianity from the structures of western civilization, modern evangelicals disagreed about where the boundary or antithesis between God's Kingdom and the world, or between divine spirit and temporal-historical structures lay. In Lyon's terms, then, the call to disentangle Christianity and modern culture brought into the open a new discussion of the problematic concerning the location and extent of the claims of God's Kingdom in the world, and hence the relationship between Christianity and Canadian civilization. It was their disagreement about where the line between God's Kingdom and the world was now to be located that sharpened and completed the fracture of the nineteenth century evangelical consensus. While fundamentalists emphasized the supernatural dimensions of God's sovereignty and revelation, and in doing so segregated Christ from the world, radical progressives constructed a historicized interpretation of Christ that identified him with the revolutionary movements of modern thought and society that promised liberation from nineteenth century civilization and the emergence of a society of freedom and brotherhood. From the point of view of their radically modernist, and increasingly secularized critical perspective, they no longer found modern evangelicals' claim to find the distinct reality of God in experience credible. Between these poles of modernism and fundamentalism, moderate progressive evangelicals resisted the pressures of fundamentalism and secularized modernism, and attempted to identify an alternative modern evangelicalism that claimed a Christ who was distinct from the structures of Canadian civilization, but who could be experienced, in keeping with evangelical tradition and critical thought, as a spiritual reality within the world.

I. World War I and the Apogee of Christendom

The final apogee of the evangelical moral vision of history came during the experience of World War I. As noted in Chapter 1, most Canadian Protestants initially supported the war, identifying the patriotic defense of empire and liberty, as Chown had declared, with the cause of righteousness, and viewing the battle as a millennial holy war that would purify the nation of materialism and corruption and open a new age in which the Kingdom of God finally would be realized on earth.⁴ The urgency of that support, however, can also be seen as a sign of the growing tension in Protestants' hope of Christendom. By the end of the war, though most Canadian Protestants still held to a "modern" evangelicalism and hoped for the Kingdom of God on earth, the millennium that they anticipated was a new Christian order sharply differentiated from the barbarism of western culture.

The tension and changes in Protestants' millennial interpretation of the war can be seen in the contrasting views of S. D. Chown and Ernest Thomas. In his open letter to Methodists at the outset of the war, Chown simply declared his conviction that "this war is just, honorable and necessary in defence of the principle of righteousness and the freedom of our Empire in all its parts."⁵ In doing so, he identified the defense of the Empire with the cause of Christ, and suggested that the embodiment of Christ's ideals in the defense of the empire would verify the cause of Christ.

As the works of Michael Bliss and Richard Allen have shown, Protestants' initial support for the war effort can be seen as the culmination of their optimistic efforts to reform social morality and their identity of God's Kingdom with the progress of Canadian society. In August 1914, just prior to the outbreak of war, church officials George Pidgeon and T. Albert Moore organized the first national Social Service Congress. The Congress was quickly followed by the churches' integration of social service with evangelism, beginning with the 1914 change in name of the Methodist Church's

⁴J. M. Bliss, "The Methodist Church and World War I," Christian Historical Review, 49, 3 (September 1968), 213-14, 224-25, 231.

⁵S. D. Chown, in Christian Guardian (CG), September 16, 1914, cited in Bliss, 215.

Committee of Evangelism and Moral Reform to the Board of Evangelism and Social Service and Evangelism. Along with such organizations and their attention to social relations like the welfare of families and the relations between urban and rural communities, the churches kept up a steady warnings against lax morality, particularly as they perceived it in the wet canteen, the card-playing, and the sexual immorality in the army training camps in Britain.⁶ At the pinnacle of reform success in 1917 prohibition became law in all the provinces except Quebec.

Though progressive evangelicals had entered the war with millennial hope, after several years of the war experience, Ernest Thomas suggested a more ambiguous interpretation of the millennial meaning of the war. Writing under his pen-name of Edward Trelawney, Thomas, who at the time was Field Secretary for the Methodist Church's Board of Evangelism and Social Service, explained that the church had two purposes in supporting the war: "on the one hand to support with hallowed fire the glow of loyalty and devotion, and at the same time with a strong hand purge that loyalty of its blatant and sordid features."⁷ While affirming the value of patriotic loyalty, Thomas's interpretation reflected a critical edge to that loyalty and an expectation, similar to that of more revolutionary progressives, of radically transforming the very order that Protestants were seeking to defend.

As the war progressed, many Protestants came to share Thomas's critical millennialism. As their hope of a new age became increasingly critical of western culture and society, their millennial vision came to be defined less in terms of the progress of western culture and morality, and more in terms of discontinuity with western culture. This subtle but crucial shift was especially true of the soldiers and chaplains who experienced the war most directly, as David Marshall has shown in the case of the Methodist experience. Rather than the occasion for heroic righteousness and the triumphant progress of God's Kingdom, the war left soldiers guilt-ridden, helpless, brutalized, and

⁶Bliss, 225.

⁷Edward Trelawney (Ernest Thomas), quoted in Bliss, 214.

disillusioned of the hope of millennial triumph.⁸ Accompanying that disillusionment was the apogee of what Bliss has called the "moral fundamentalism" of the early war years.⁹ As chaplains like A. D. Robb made clear in their pleas to their supervising churches, soldiers' impatience with the church's moral puritanism, and their resentment at compulsory church parade routine, was causing them to lose respect for the chaplains and rendering the church ineffective. Even worse, soldiers and chaplains accused the Protestant churches and traditional Christianity of naive idealism, of being implicated in the social order which had produced the war, and of having falsely identified God's Kingdom with the war effort.¹⁰ E. E. Graham, a Methodist chaplain from Nova Scotia, drew this criticism to its radical conclusion:

He accused the board of erring on the sentimental side and being 'false to actual conditions here.' For the Methodist church to identify 'that which is Caesar's with that which is God's' disturbed him deeply. To Graham the notion that the war was a Christian crusade was "all tommy-rot." "Most of us know ourselves and the fight too well," he defiantly concluded, "to presume to identify it with the cause of Jesus."¹¹

To the Methodist chaplain A. E. Lavell, the church had consecrated an evil social system, and in doing so had demonstrated its spiritual bankruptcy. The church, he claimed, lacked the "spiritual resources or theology to make sense of the world they lived in," and was no longer competent to provide a Christian leadership or function as the agent of God's Kingdom on earth.¹²

To some extent, church leaders at home shared this deepening criticism of the western social order and of the implication of Protestantism in it, and indicated a new sense of antithetical tension

⁸David Marshall, "Methodism Embattled: A Reconsideration of the Methodist Church and World War I," Canadian Historical Review, 66, no. 1 (1985), 57.

⁹Bliss, 226-227.

¹⁰Marshall, "Methodism Embattled," 53, 59.

¹¹Quoted in Marshall, "Methodism Embattled," 53.

¹²Marshall, "Methodism Embattled," 59.

between a "deepened" understanding of God's Kingdom and a now suspect Canadian society. As Bliss notes, leaders like Chown and Christian Guardian editor William B. Creighton began to concede that old moralistic restrictions must give way to recognition of the deeper significance of Jesus' ideals of self-sacrificing service to the brotherhood of humanity.¹³ Like the Jesus who died on the cross, the soldiers' self-sacrifice in redemptive battle was the "martyr spirit of true Christianity."

This move beyond moral legalism to an emphasis on the spirit of service included a more comprehensive criticism of Canadian and western social structures. As Creighton argued in editorials in the Christian Guardian,

[t]he war has taught us many things, and it is teaching us that the right conduct of business is, after all, fundamentally a national affair, and while individualism must necessarily prevail to a certain extent, that extent is definitely limited to the point where it conserves the national well-being.¹⁴

The experience of national mobilization had demonstrated the possibility of a new order of social cooperation in which all individuals and material resources were dedicated to the sacredness of life rather than property rights.

The promise that such a change would "bring the Kingdom of God nearer to us," also implied that the social structures of the British empire must be, and were being, radically altered. This was the hope of more radical progressives like Ernest Thomas, who in 1917 began to advocate the control of private property by and for the nation. The individual, Thomas argued, must find his life in efficient living and service to the nation.¹⁵ Likewise, Salem Bland held out the vision of a "new era of redemption" in which the principles that defined the relations of capital and labour would be

¹³Bliss, 226-227.

¹⁴Quoted in Bliss, 228.

¹⁵Quoted in Bliss, 228, fn. 77.

changed from competition to economic democracy through government control.¹⁶ Such a vision of revolutionary change constituted a pivotal step by progressive Protestants away from their nineteenth century identification of the British empire as the virtual embodiment of God's Kingdom, toward a revolutionary or apocalyptic view in which God's Kingdom was radically different from current western civilization.

This readiness to disown western civilization, however, also implied the eclipse of confidence that history clearly manifested the progress of God's will. To soldiers, the war displayed, not the triumphant progress of God's Kingdom, but a lacuna in the meaning of history that left soldiers cynical that the war would prove anything other than the superior power of military might.¹⁷ Even Chown, after touring the battle front in 1917, admitted the difficulty of seeing the hand of God in the events of war, and bemoaned the loss of evangelical faith occasioned by that crisis.¹⁸ Along with Nathanael Burwash and Ernest Thomas, Chown now saw the war as God's judgement on the sins of Anglo-Protestant civilization, and urged the need of repentance and divine forgiveness.¹⁹ While admitting the sins of western civilization, Chown also was perplexed by the course of history itself. History no longer seemed uniformly to manifest God's Kingdom and reveal God's will to humans. Nor, as Chown admitted after the war, did history unequivocally demonstrate the essential divinity of human nature, the loving and righteous character of God, or the inevitable progress of God's Kingdom in human society. According to Robert Law, professor of New Testament Theology at Knox College, history now seemed tragic and inscrutable: though in God's hands, it seemed beyond human control

¹⁶Salem Bland, "Sermons on the War," quoted in Bliss, 227.

¹⁷Marshall, "Methodism Embattled," 57.

¹⁸Marshall, "Methodism Embattled," 62.

¹⁹Nathanael Burwash, "Prayer and the Great War," *CG* (20 March 1918), 9-10. See also Marshall, "Methodism Embattled," 60; Bliss, 224.

and rational explanation.²⁰

Having witnessed, like Jerome and Augustine during the sack of Rome, the fall of western civilization into barbarism, modern evangelicals now found that history defied any easy identification of God's Kingdom with western civilization or the Anglo-Protestant British. From their experience of the war, progressive evangelicals turned their critical moral consciousness upon Protestantism itself, questioning the entanglement of Christianity in the structures of modern culture. In doing so, they also challenged the nineteenth century moral vision of history, and suggested a new sense of tension between God's Kingdom and Canadian society.

Though history now seemed inscrutable, however, most evangelicals continued to assume a "modern" historical-critical perspective, and continued to affirm that history remained, as Thomas professed in 1917, "chained to the throne of God."²¹ Burwash's call to repentance likewise assumed that God's spirit was still active in experience. And despite human failure, stupidity, and sin, William Creighton maintained, God never fails and his plan was assured. "Where the world passes its decree of 'lost,' the Christ of God writes 'saved.'"²² In a passing comment on "premillennarian pessimists," Creighton rejected the idea that the devil ruled the world. The Holy Spirit, he insisted, was still at work in the world.²³ With this confession, most modern evangelicals retained their concern with history and their adherence to a modern critical method, even amid the paradox and tragedy of history.

The great difficulty for continuing progressive evangelicals after World War I was to identify the presence of God in the world of experience, and in accordance with modern critical method, while

²⁰Michael Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century: College and Creed in English Canada from the Great Revival to the Great Depression (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 263.

²¹Edward Trelawney, "'Safety First' According to Ibsen," CG, (March 7, 1917), 7-8.

²²ed., "God Never Fails," CG (16 January 1918), 5-6.

²³ed., "Premillennarian Pessimists," CG (22 August 1917), 5.

differentiating God from the structures of western civilization. They gradually would address this problem with various modern forms of apocalypticism. An indication of this new sense of apocalyptic divine action in history was evident in the work of chaplains. Faced with the crumbling of their confidence in history amid the trenches of war, chaplains struggled in their pastoral task of affirming the reality of God in the midst of the crisis. That task was made especially urgent by the profound alienation of soldiers, and even of some chaplains themselves, like A. E. Lavell, who simply drifted from the Protestant churches by the end of the war. Moreover, the chaplains' discovery of soldiers' ignorance and lack of interest in basic Christian beliefs convinced them of the failure of the modern evangelical Church to preach the gospel. Their response was a new emphasis on preaching the Christ of the Cross.²⁴

This emphasis on the Christ of the cross, however, was not simply a return to traditional evangelicalism.²⁵ Rather, it was a move beyond the nineteenth century depiction of an historical Jesus who taught in the Beatitudes a permanent moral code that was strikingly similar to nineteenth century liberal idealism. The "Christ of the Cross," in contrast, was a suffering servant and a risen, triumphant Lord who embodied the spiritual union of God and man, and whose spirit could be experienced and give comfort in the midst of a tragic world.²⁶ Though this was a Christ who came to humanity in history, he was also a transcendent spirit divested of the trappings of conventional Christianity and associations with nineteenth century western civilization, and who was experienced mystically in the midst of the tragedy and sin of human experience.

Chaplains linked this Christ to a new and potentially revolutionary understanding of the

²⁴Marshall, "Methodism Embattled," 55-57.

²⁵Contrast this with Marshall's argument that while soldiers and chaplains experienced disillusionment and returned to a more traditional evangelicalism, church leaders at home remained optimistic and committed to a progressive social gospel. Marshall, "Methodism Embattled," 48-49, 61.

²⁶Gauvreau, 260-61.

Kingdom of God. E. H. Oliver, who was one of the signatories to the Chaplains' Message and principal of Presbyterian College in Saskatoon, declared a paradoxical and apocalyptic view of history that was in striking contrast to pre-war post-millennial expectations of progress:

Civilization comes through fire, redemption comes through a cross, life through death. We are learning to-day what sacrifice means, for the human race is marching to its Calvary.²⁷

Though elliptically, Oliver suggested a Kingdom ethic that was no longer tied to historical authority or the established Anglo-Protestant moral order. On the contrary, spiritual communion with the transcendent Christ provided the basis of an ethic of sacrifice that, though experiential and existential, had turned away from historical authority and revelation to a future, eschatological hope.

These themes of judgement on western civilization, the Christ of the Cross, mystical spiritual renewal, and rededication to the Kingdom of God were woven into the major reports produced by the Protestant churches at the close of the war to assess their war experience and to set out an agenda for the post-war direction of the churches and Canadian civilization. Among these reports were the Presbyterian Church's Committee on War and the Church (1917), which was dominated by moderate progressives like J. G. Shearer, George Pidgeon, and T. B. Kilpatrick; the Chaplains' Message (1918), produced by the officers of the interdenominational Canadian Chaplains Service, including both Kilpatrick and Oliver; and reports to the Methodist Church from its Committee on the Church, War, and Patriotism (1918) and the Board of Evangelism and Social Service (1918), authored in part by its secretary Ernest Thomas and Salem Bland, who by then was at All People's Mission in Toronto. All of these documents contained scathing indictments of western civilization, especially of its capitalist and imperialist social order which was assumed to have provoked the debacle of world war. While challenging the Protestant entanglement in the structures of Canadian society, they also called for a renewed emphasis on the experience of the Christ of the Cross, and an ethic based on his self-

²⁷Oliver Papers, reel 1, file 6a, sermon/address, ca. 1916. Quoted in Gauvreau, 260-61.

sacrificing spirit.

In his preparatory paper for the Presbyterian Church's Commission on The Church and the War (1917), Professor John Mackintosh Shaw, then at Presbyterian College (Pine Hill) in Halifax, suggested that the problem left by the war was to reconcile the reality of world tragedy with faith in divine Providence.²⁸ The war affirmed God's moral character, Shaw argued, insofar as it demonstrated his judgement in the consequences that humans bring by their own evil. "The war the proof of the failure of Christianity! Is it not rather the revelation of what comes of the failure to apply Christianity and its ideals in national and international life,..." The war was God's judgement on Canada's capitalist social order. In its report the Commission acknowledged the difficulty of interpreting the events of history, but also affirmed God's presence, in judgement and mercy, in history. As Richard Allen notes, the report focused on calling the church to recognize its complicity in the evils of western civilization, and to submit in repentance to God's judgement on its conventions. Only then could Christians move forward to realize a new order and their full humanity.²⁹

Considering their deepening criticism of western civilization, it is no surprise that the church reports at the end of the war have been interpreted as signs of a post-war surge in commitment to social reform and a social gospel.³⁰ According to Bliss, for example, the war experience produced a shift in emphasis from individual morality to social structures and a willingness to use the state to "remake the community."³¹ Indeed, this trend was reflected especially in the report of the Methodist Church's Board of Evangelism and Social Service, which offered the most radical critique of western

²⁸United Church Archives, Library, pamphlet entitled "The War and Divine Providence" prepared for the General Assembly's Commission on the War and the Spiritual Life of the Church, by J. M. Shaw.

²⁹Allen, The Social Passion, 43-45.

³⁰See especially Bliss, 230-231, and Allen, 44-45, 71-76.

³¹Bliss, 233.

society. Shaped especially by Bland and Thomas, the report repudiated the classical liberal social order and its principles of individualism and competition. And as an alternative, it advocated policies like old age pensions, a living wage, nationalization of natural resources, transportation and utilities, thereby suggesting a new identification of the Kingdom of God with a revolutionary social democratic order.³²

The growth of a revolutionary social gospel movement, however, was only one of several directions opened to post-war evangelicals in the wake of their disillusionment with nineteenth-century visions of the progress of Christendom. The Chaplains' Message, written to summarize the findings of the General Committee of the Canadian Chaplains Services following a questionnaire survey of the views of Canadian soldiers, combined social criticism with a plea for preaching the Christ of the Cross.³³ The chaplains indicted the church for its failure to transform western civilization, and called for renewed consecration to the task of building God's Kingdom on earth. To that end, they urged, the church must "identify herself with every aspect of human life," for it was "the great agency" for fulfilling the Divine Purpose. But also, struck by soldiers' lack of knowledge of basic Christian beliefs, the chaplains urged that the key to that consecration was renewed preaching of the simple verities of the Christian faith, and renewed efforts to meet the modern demand for "reality" in Christianity.³⁴ Renewed consecration to God's Kingdom, they concluded, could be accomplished only by renewed teaching of the reality of Christ and the Cross.

The Chaplains' Message was neither a rejection of social reform, nor a return to traditional evangelical orthodoxy, for it explicitly eschewed doctrinalism, as well as sensationalist and moralistic

³²"Report of the Committee on Social Service and Evangelism," Methodist Church of Canada, Journal of Proceedings, Vol. 10 (1918), 312.

³³United Church Archives, Methodist Church of Canada, Army and Navy Board, Box 3, File 65, "The Message of the Canadian Chaplains Overseas Military Forces to the Churches of Canada," 60.

³⁴"The Message of the Canadian Chaplains Overseas Military Forces to the Churches of Canada," 60.

"distortions" of Christianity. Rather, it pointed to a new concern among post-war Protestants to recover the very heart of the gospel. The war had "stripped away every disguise," and had put God himself in question. Henceforth the church's worship, thought, and life must offer, not formality, abstract dogma, or obsolete phraseology, but simple, clear worship and teaching in modern terms that laid bare the reality of God. "The one constant requirement in all worship," the chaplains declared, "is reality." If the church's message was to be accepted by disillusioned soldiers and youth, it must be "true to life and experience," and it must lead in making the Kingdom of God a concrete reality by taking up the Cross of service in seeking social justice. And the church must lead thus, for the Kingdom of God could only be achieved through a "renaissance of spiritual idealism" that motivated believers with the vision "of God, of the fatherly care that encompasses us, of the self-devoted love that brought His Son to the bitter death of the cross for our eternal welfare, and of His gracious spirit that guides us on our way." Only with this vision could the heroic crusading spirit of the war be directed to service.

Thus, behind debates about individual and social regeneration, a more fundamental change among most Canadian Protestants was their disillusionment of the hope of Christendom, or of their expectation that God's Kingdom was being worked out in the progressive development of western culture. Though they continued to assume that divine reality was present in history, they no longer believed that history universally manifested or realized God's will. History itself now seemed divided, and Canadian Protestants were convinced of the need to disentangle Christ and Christianity from western civilization as the prerequisite to renewed efforts to discover and implement the "reality" of God's Kingdom.

Protestants disagreed, however, about the precise diagnosis of where western civilization had failed, about the "reality" of God's Kingdom and the meaning of Christ for history, and consequently about how modern civilization might be reconstructed. This disagreement may be illustrated in the

contrasting conclusions of A. E. Lavell and S. D. Chown. For Lavell, a Methodist chaplain, the war-time experience finally severed the slender thread that held a uniquely divine spiritual and historical reality together. After the war, Lavell would leave the clergy to work as a parole officer in order to render what he considered genuine service to society. He also urged that theological training focus more exclusively on a few basic truths:

Faith in God, as set forth by Jesus. The practical unity of religion and 'the square deal all round.' Religion as character, right thinking and willing, and human service. The complete reasonableness of real religion.³⁵

Lavell's "real" Christianity, interpreted in terms of human moral and social realities and an ethic of service, was closest to the revolutionary progressivism of Salem Bland's "new Christianity," and demonstrated the way that Bland and other social gospellers would identify Christianity with the promise of a new social order after the war.³⁶

In contrast, S. D. Chown's appeal was to a distinctly divine "spiritual" reality. Despite his pre-war advocacy of social action and a "sociological" application of the teachings of Jesus, as noted earlier Chown had made clear by 1912 that the reform of social relations and the coming of God's Kingdom depended on spiritual ideals and a spiritual relationship with the person of Jesus.³⁷ By 1918, though continuing to hope for the coming of God's Kingdom in society, Chown warned that "scientifico-philosophic considerations" were not sufficient for the task. The Kingdom would not come "without the impact of vigorous spiritual life."³⁸ Admittedly, Chown's appeal remained vague

³⁵A. E. Lavell, "The Returning Soldier and the Church; V. Some Theological Suggestions," CG (May 15, 1918), 9.

³⁶Bliss, 226.

³⁷Compare A. B. McKillop, Contours of Canadian Thought (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 109; Ramsay Cook, The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 229-230.

³⁸S. D. Chown, "Revival Now," CG (December 17, 1918), 8.

about the identity or nature of that spiritual life, and thus highlighted how the progressive evangelical emphasis on an abstract and internal "religion" had attenuated the relationship between the spirit of Christ and historical realities.

Herein lay the problem for post-war progressive "modern" Protestants. The war-time experience did not bring the end of modernist forms of evangelicalism in Canada; it did, however, bring a "chastened apocalypticism," similar to that of Jerome's following the fall of Rome, by finally shattering the nineteenth century evangelical identification of the divine moral order with the established structures of British civilization.³⁹ By the end of the war, progressive Protestants paradoxically agreed in their disillusionment with western civilization and the hope that it progressively manifested God's Kingdom, but also in their demand for the "reality" of the gospel in such a way that would meet the test of experience and critical thought. But what was the nature of "reality," and specifically the essential "reality" of the gospel according to Christianity? As the mainline Protestant churches began to launch their plans for reconstruction, set out in their reports of 1917 and 1918, and in the Inter-Church Forward Movement to mobilize the Canadian public in support of the churches' mission, they immediately were wracked with dissension.⁴⁰ Behind the facade of a common campaign, specific plans or concerns about social reform, foreign evangelism, modern critical thought, and church union raised questions about what it meant to "make Christ real."

The quest to recover "reality," and to disentangle Christ and culture, involved two broad and related issues. First, the urgent pastoral question for Protestants concerned how God could be affirmed and the grounds of Christian faith restored in the midst of tragedy. Without repudiating the significance of social service, the Chaplains' Message called first for the recovery of "spiritual reality."

³⁹Jaroslav Pelikan, The Excellent Empire (New York: Harper & Row, 1990 [1987]), 97-98.

⁴⁰The Inter-Church Forward Campaign would raise 14.5 million dollars. Robert Wright, A World Mission: Canadian Protestantism and the Quest for a New International Order, 1918-1939 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 121-22.

The second question, in turn, concerned how God's Kingdom was to be identified and located in relation to the world. Though only just emerging before and during World War I, the crux of the debate among twentieth century Protestants already was apparent: how, from an anthropocentric, critical perspective within an order of history and nature that now was manifestly inadequate, could one identify and distinguish the authentic and transforming reality of God, in such a way that life could be redeemed? Though in different ways, twentieth century responses to that problem began to differentiate Christ and history. And in doing so, they also tried to recover an eschatological tension between God's Kingdom and Canadian culture, and thus a perspective from which to critique that culture.

The opening of this debate also meant that the 1920's would be a time of sharpened differences among Protestants as they responded to the challenges of the post-war world. As William Creighton noted in February 1919 that many felt as though they had were yet "in the midst of a distraction of turmoil and strife" rather than in a new order of peace.⁴¹ By the early 1920's, revolutionary social gossellers and fundamentalists were moving in sharply contrasting directions away from the moderately progressive attempt to recover a distinct spiritual reality in experience. These differences would emerge in their visions of social reconstruction and the mission of Christianity, in Biblical interpretation and the message of Christianity, and in the identity of the church.

II. The Mission of Christianity

The reports issued by the churches and chaplains near the end of World War I had opened a new phase in modern Protestantism, but their meaning for post-war reconstruction and the future direction of both the churches and Canadian civilization had yet to be defined in 1918. Generally, they indicted the capitalist and imperialist structures of western society, and called the churches to repent of their

⁴¹ed., "Making the Dream Come True," CG (19 February 1919), quoted in Wright, 16.

entanglement in those structures. And as the Chaplains' Message exemplified, they called for both renewed consecration to God's Kingdom, and renewed, though simple and modern teaching of the essential truths of Christianity to meet the modern demand for "reality" in Christianity.⁴² Though most Protestants could agree with these general principles, in working them out they came to disagree profoundly about what the essential truths of Christianity were, and where and how God's Kingdom was to be located.

One area in which these differences came to light was in their definitions of the mission of the church and the identity of both God's Kingdom. Radical progressives took up the themes of the church reports by advocating social revolution and an identity of the Kingdom of God with the emerging labour movement. In the light of the Russian revolution of 1917, both advocates and opponents of this revolutionary gospel also identified it with the Bolshevik experiment. But while radical progressives regarded revolutionary socialism as the embodiment of the Kingdom of God, others saw it as the antithesis of the church's mission of global evangelism. This was especially true of conservatives and fundamentalists, who regarded Bolshevik atheism as the primary threat to Biblical Christianity and mission work in the Far East. Between these two poles, moderate progressives resisted the materialism and potential state tyranny of Bolshevism, and moved to an emphasis on moral Christianity that would be modern, yet would preserve personal freedom and the "reality" of a divine spirit.

Considering their criticism of western civilization, it is no surprise that the reports of the churches and chaplains have been interpreted as signs of a post-war surge in commitment to social reform.⁴³ The reports of the Methodist Church offered the most extensive critique of the "competitive" structures of capitalism and imperialism, and proposed, as the mission of Christianity,

⁴²"The Message of the Canadian Chaplains Overseas Military Forces to the Churches of Canada."

⁴³See especially Bliss, 230-231, and Allen, 44-45, 71-76.

reforms to create alternative social-democratic structures which would more fully embody the principles of Jesus. This was especially true of the report of the Committee on the Church in relation to War and Patriotism which Salem Bland, along with Ernest Thomas, Hugh Dobson, and A. J. Irwin helped to prepare for the 1918 Quadrennial Conference at Hamilton.⁴⁴ Reiterating earlier comments made by Thomas and W. B. Creighton, the report interpreted the war as God's judgement against a social and economic system based on individualism and competition. The document went on, however, to claim that the war also had shown that national organization, service, and equality were not only necessary in the modern world, but could raise society to new heights of brotherhood, well-being, and cooperation.

The war is a sterner teacher than Jesus and uses far other methods, but it teaches the same lesson. The social development which it has so unexpectedly accelerated has the same goal as Christianity, that common goal is a nation of comrade workers, as now at the trenches, fights so gloriously- a nation of comrade fighters.⁴⁵

This identity of Christianity with the goals of socialism was reiterated in the 1918 report of the Board of Evangelism and Social Service, of which Thomas was field secretary, which called for remaking society on the ethics of Jesus, requiring "nothing less than a transference of the whole economic life from a basis of competition and profits to one of co-operation and service."⁴⁶ Though claiming not to specify particular policies, both committees recommended a new system of public ownership and government regulation of natural resources and utilities, old age pensions, and joint workers-owners boards in industry such as those proposed by the British Labour Party.

Such proposals suggested that the hopes of the most radically progressive Protestants might, in the post-war disillusion with western civilization, issue in a revolutionary Christianity. Already

⁴⁴Bliss, 230, fn. 80.

⁴⁵Quoted in Bliss, 229.

⁴⁶"Report of the Committee on Social Service and Evangelism," Methodist Church of Canada, Journal of Proceedings, Vol. 10 (1918), 312.

before the war, Bland, J. S. Woodsworth, A. E. Smith, and others associated with the social gospel were committed to "practical Christianity" and a historicized understanding of the gospel in terms of the critical social sciences. After the war, they developed these two main themes in a way that distanced the gospel of Jesus from structures of the past, and identified it with what they took to be the new structures emerging in modern thought and society. In particular, they identified God's Kingdom with the collectivism of the labour movement and with the latest ideas in evolutionary science. In short, theirs was a Christianity that broke entirely with the authority of the historic past, in the expectation of a revolution in the historic present and future.

From the perspective of radically modernist progressives, World War I was part of a larger battle to transform both Protestant Christianity and Canadian society itself. Prior to the war, advocates of this progressivism had assumed that the heart of the gospel was the spiritual principle of brotherhood and service taught and embodied by Jesus. In part, they shared the idealism of Watson and Blewett in maintaining their belief in a rational and moral universal order, in the ability of reason to apprehend and realize that order, and in a democratic social order predicated on the rationality, freedom, and ultimate moral value of persons. But progressives like Bland and Woodsworth also had appropriated the historicist and positivist methods of the emerging social sciences.⁴⁷ In place of abstract metaphysical spirituality, and the "dogma" of traditional Christianity, they insisted that the spiritual principles embodied by Jesus were located within the progressive unfolding of consciousness in historical processes and structures. "Religion," Woodsworth had declared, "is essentially a life - not a dogma."⁴⁸ Their approach to Christianity concluded that there was no distinction between sacred and secular, or between spiritual and structured reality.

During the course of the war, these efforts to synthesize Christianity with revolutionary social

⁴⁷See Chapter 1.

⁴⁸See, for example, Cook's description of Woodsworth's views in The Regenerators, 217.

change, and their criticism of the war effort and the capitalist order, brought radical progressives into a conflict with the established churches that left them impatient with traditional forms and beliefs about the gospel. Even more radical than A. E. Lavell's turn to practical social service as a parole officer, the career of Alfred E. Smith, who was a founder a pastor of the Brandon All-Peoples' church, shows a move to a revolutionary gospel. As he later wrote in his autobiography, Smith was "converted" to communism in 1917 by the Bolshevik revolution and his own reading of Marx's

Communist Manifesto:

I began to preach about the great events taking place in Russia and about the great storehouse of truth I had found.... I began where I was. I saw that Jesus was a Communist. I linked his life with the old prophets, the great teachers of the Old Testament, who were early Communists. Of course they were not scientific but they stood for the principles of communism. They practiced common ownership and they believed in Communist maxims: 'From each according to his ability, to each according to his need' and 'He who will not work, neither shall he eat.'⁴⁹

For Smith, the significance of Jesus lay in his ethical model of egalitarian socialism. The modern form of that model could be found in Marx's ideas and the Bolshevik revolution, which together marked the modern height of the progress of God's Kingdom. As Ramsay Cook notes, Smith had come to see the church's identity "with the workers."⁵⁰ At the same time, he became embroiled in conflict with his Methodist congregation in Brandon, and by 1918 had resigned from that congregation to found the People's Church in Brandon.

This pattern of polarization from the mainline churches, which radical progressives now regarded as having compromised with capitalist society, could be recounted with many other instances. As Richard Allen shows, William Ivens was dismissed in 1918 from his Methodist congregation in Winnipeg as a result of his sympathy for the labour movement, and when Salem Bland and A. J. Irwin were removed from Wesley College, Manitoba in 1917-1918, they believed they were being

⁴⁹A. E. Smith, All My Life, 43-44, in Wright, A World Mission, 62.

⁵⁰Cook, 225-226.

persecuted for their radical social views.⁵¹ Finally, by 1918, Woodsworth had resigned from the Methodist ministry because he could not reconcile his pacifism with the Methodist Church. The church, he believed, had become a lackey of the middle class that, like the prominent Methodist businessman Joseph Flavelle who was accused of profiteering during the war, had a vested interest in the existing order and the war.⁵²

In all of these cases, the circumstances of war-time, and especially their growing criticism of western civilization, were leading radical progressives to dismiss the established churches as part of the old order and preoccupied with abstract doctrines and metaphysics. In place of traditional Christianity, they began to define the real church in terms of a revolutionary new order that was located among the working class and immigrants. In a 1918 article for the Grain Growers' Guide Salem Bland claimed that religion had no separate realm or independent existence: "It is only as it is materialized that it reveals itself." True religion and fellowship with Christ, or "Applied Christianity," were not merely matters of church rituals and orthodox doctrines, but were "to be found in the processes of industry and commerce. Co-operation in commerce and industry is the real Holy Communion."⁵³

In their search for a new, socialist order, radical progressives began to interpret the battle for God's Kingdom as a "war" against the conventions of the nineteenth century social order. For Bland, the armistice in Europe did not conclude the apocalyptic war for the just Kingdom of God. In November 1918 he wrote that "Canada may only be out of one war into another - not a war of Canadian against German, but of Canadian against Canadian, section against section, race against race,

⁵¹Allen, 50-62.

⁵²Kenneth McNaught, A Prophet in Politics: A Biography of J. S. Woodsworth (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959), 83-85; Bliss, 227.

⁵³Salem Bland, "The Deeper Life -- Not Materialistic Enough," Grain Growers Guide (June 5, 1918), quoted in A. B. McKillop, A Disciplined Intelligence, 222.

creed against creed, class against class."⁵⁴ While descriptive of what he saw as the emerging turmoil in Canadian society, Bland's comments also implied that Christianity would have to take sides in that turmoil by associating itself with new movements, especially that of labour, which gave concrete embodiment to the spirit of social service and cooperation. The failure of the nineteenth century social order, and the application of the spirit of Jesus, called for a new order that was radically discontinuous from the past.

The participation of these social gospel revolutionaries in labour activism, especially in the Winnipeg Strike of 1919, is by now a familiar story.⁵⁵ Their social gospel interpreted Jesus as the embodiment of a principle to be manifested in the structures of society, and they regarded the Strike as part of the emergence of the revolutionary Christian social order in the modern age. In his 1920 description of "The Religion of the Future," Woodsworth identified religion with what Cook calls "socio-economic aspirations," and declared that the form of Christianity of the future would be progressive, scientific, practical, social, and universal.⁵⁶ The task of modern Christianity was the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, and the essence of that Kingdom, and the teaching of Jesus, was the establishment of the cooperative principle in social structures. Salem Bland's famous manifesto, The New Christianity (1920), similarly captured the identity of a revolutionary and modernist Christianity. Here he examined Christianity in sociological and historical terms as part of the development of religious consciousness, explaining the variations and changes in religious forms

⁵⁴Salem Bland, "Who Will Lead If Not the Churches?" CG (20 November 1918), cited in Wright, 16.

⁵⁵See Allen, 80-103; Cook, 221-3; McNaught, ch. 8.

⁵⁶J. S. Woodsworth, The First Story of the Labour Church and Some Things for Which it Stands (Winnipeg, 1920), quoted in Cook, 222-3.

as results of social, especially economic and "biological" conditions.⁵⁷ True religion and fellowship with Christ, according to Bland, were not merely matters of church rituals and orthodox doctrines, but were "to be found in the processes of industry and commerce. Co-operation in commerce and industry is the real Holy Communion."⁵⁸

To be sure, Bland, Woodsworth, Smith, and other radical social gospellers remained committed to the Kingdom of God, and to the principles of Jesus. As Bland understood it, the task of the "new Christianity" was both conservative and revolutionary, or apologetic and prophetic: the labour movement must be Christianized by coming to recognize that the full meaning of its class consciousness and spirit of brotherhood was none other than the principle of Christianity, while Christianity must be revolutionized by the realization of its practical fulfillment in the labour movement.⁵⁹ Here Bland demonstrated his identity of the "new Christianity" with the modern emergence of revolutionary social structures.

It was precisely this identification of Christianity with social reform, much less with revolutionary social structures allied to Bolshevism, that most Canadian Protestants refused to follow. As Richard Allen shows in the case of the Printers' Union strike against the Methodist Publishing House in 1919, part of the reason for the opposition of leading clergymen like S. W. Fallis, S. D. Chown, and even the Presbyterian George Pidgeon, lay in their continued alliance with business elite, and in their outrage that the church itself would be attacked. The occasion of the printers' strike thus demonstrates the extent to which many Protestants retained their institutional and structural ties to the

⁵⁷See also Allen's comments in his "Introduction," in Salem Bland, The new Christianity, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973 [1920]), ix. See also Cook, 194.

⁵⁸Bland, "The Deeper Life -- Not Materialistic Enough," quoted in McKillop, 222.

⁵⁹Bland, The New Christianity, 55.

existing social order.⁶⁰

But the opposition even of progressive Protestants to an alliance of Christianity with social revolution also had important confessional grounds. Many who had helped to write the church reports at wars'-end, like S. D. Chown, George Pidgeon, T. B. Kilpatrick, now clearly opposed the reduction of Christianity to social reform and its identity with a particular cultural or social system. The war had demonstrated the depth of human sin and man's dependence on a sovereign personal God and the sacrifice of Christ.⁶¹ Though the Chaplains' Message indeed called for simplification of the church's message, it also called for a "fresh presentation" of classic Christian conceptions concerning humanity, God, Christ, and salvation, as the very source of the church's power to fulfill its mission.⁶²

As Robert Wright has shown, this concern to recover and preserve the spiritual sources of Christianity was central to the response of most Canadian Protestants to the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. Furthermore, both fundamentalists and moderate progressives viewed Bolshevism and the spectre of Bolshevik-influenced nationalist rebellion throughout Asia as a threat to what they saw as their mission of global Christian evangelism. Hence, Canadian Protestants began to react against Bolshevism already in 1917 after the October Revolution. Both W. B. Creighton of the Christian Guardian and the more conservative Ephraim Scott of The Presbyterian Record saw Bolshevism as a new tyranny that had abandoned the ideals of the war effort and posed a new threat of militant imperialism against Europe.⁶³ Canadians also believed that Bolshevism lay behind the nationalist uprisings that began in the early 1920's in China, India, and Japan, a region where most of the 768 foreign missionaries which the mainline Canadian churches supported were located. Baptist missions

⁶⁰Allen, 176-95.

⁶¹Marshall, 162-3, 178-80.

⁶²"The Message of the Canadian Chaplains Overseas Military Forces to the Churches of Canada."

⁶³Wright, 5, 38-48, 53-63.

in Russia were most directly affected by Bolshevik attacks on Christian churches, beginning with the burning of churches in Russia in 1919, and culminating in the interdiction of religious instruction in 1929. Even to progressive evangelicals, then, social gospeller's identification of Christianity with social revolution and the Bolshevik experiment not only ran counter to the call for spiritual renewal, but presented the prospect of an atheistic materialism and a tyrannical system that threatened the spiritual foundations of the gospel and the liberal order which was deemed necessary for spiritual, moral revival.

The attempt to ally Christianity with Bolshevism or Marxism was resisted most strenuously by the strands of conservatism and fundamentalism that by 1918 were cutting across Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches, as well as the Evangelical wing of the Anglican Church. Among these, radicals like William Aberhart and Thomas Toddhunter Shields represented only the most extreme limits of a more temperate concern of conservative evangelicals for faith in the supernatural reality of Christ and for evangelizing missions.⁶⁴ Already before the war, conservative Presbyterians like Principal William McLaren and his successor, William Caven, had worked with the more conservative American Bible League founded in 1903 to produce Sunday School lessons. The second decade of the twentieth century was perhaps the high point of the fundamentalist alliance. In 1910, W. H. Griffith-Thomas arrived at Wycliffe College. Meanwhile, conservatives and premillennialists worked together in publishing the twelve-volume The Fundamentals (1910-15), of which Elmore Harris was one of 6-7 editorial staff, and which included articles from the ABL's Bible Student and Teacher.⁶⁵ This alliance, dedicated to preserving the central doctrines and methods of nineteenth-century evangelicalism, culminated in the formation of the World's Christian Fundamentals

⁶⁴John G. Stackhouse, Jr., Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century: An Introduction to Its Character (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 12, 21-2.

⁶⁵Ernest Sandeen, The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800-1930 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1980 [1970]), 180, 189-207.

Association in 1918.⁶⁶

By the end of the war, fundamentalists had begun to link Kaiserism and Bolshevism to the threat of modernism. T. T. Shields, of Toronto's Jarvis Street Baptist Church, had supported the war effort against Kaiserism, and accounted Germany's defeat as due to its abandonment of the God of the Bible and the divinity of Christ in favour of Darwinism and other "speculative fancies."⁶⁷ Similarly, W. H. Griffith-Thomas of Wycliffe College linked German liberal theology with its militarism, while a November 1918 editorial by Ephraim Scott in the Presbyterian Record suggested that German brutality followed from German theologians who had eliminated the supernatural and miraculous from the Bible, and replaced divinity of Christ and revelation with the opinions of men.⁶⁸ For these fundamentalists, as Wright notes, post-war disillusionment confirmed the failure of modernism and its optimistic, idealist version of Christianity. In 1919, Dyson Hague, then registrar of Wycliffe College and editor of the Evangelical Churchman, derided the idealistic millennial hope with which progressive Protestants like S. D. Chown had initially supported the war. In reality, he continued, the post-war Canadian Church showed little sign of

those glorious evidences of a revived Church, and an awakened nation. Our churches are not crowded. The general tone of morality is not heightened...There is a revival. But it is a revival of selfishness, worldliness, disobedience, irreverence, Sunday non-observance, and a defiance of authority and order, such as never has been known.⁶⁹

Though fundamentalists were not alone in their impression of disillusionment, they were the

⁶⁶John S. Moir, Enduring Witness, 2nd Ed. (Hamilton: Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1987), 175.

⁶⁷Wright, 12. See also Leslie K. Tarr, Shields of Canada: T. T. Shields, 1873-1955 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1967), 57-8.

⁶⁸George Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925 (New York: Oxford, 1980), 128. See also Wright, 12-19.

⁶⁹Dyson Hague, "A Forward Movement," Canadian Churchman (24 July 1919), quoted in Wright, 19.

most pessimistic about post-war efforts at reconstruction. A January 1920 editorial in the Canadian Baptist entitled "The Forward Movement is not a Pretty Parlour Game," scornfully dismissed the inadequacy of the post-war Forward Movement. "Fair flowers of virtue and righteousness," it warned, "are withering everywhere at the touch of the poisonous breath of atheism, impiety, lawlessness, godlessness and immorality."⁷⁰ The prospects of building a new world order through the League of Nations received little more confidence. According to the Canadian Baptist in 1923,

[a]s a saviour of the nations, as a redeemer of brutal militarists, 'Geneva' and all of its high-minded idealism, peace logic and brotherhood rhetoric has utterly failed....The League can never be (as Lloyd George put it) 'a listening post for the millennium...' Christ is the key and cornerstone of the temple of world peace, and all apart from Him will be but a house of cards, built on the sands and doomed to fail."⁷¹

Of course, there was even less sympathy for Marxism, much less any attempt to ally Christianity and Marxism. According to Hague, Marx was a "typical German hypothesis weaver...." and the modern class struggle was "the result of the madness of the dreams of theoretic madmen."⁷²

The common theme of these criticisms was that the solution to the search for a new order lay not in structural revolution, but in an evangelical revival centered on the supernatural work of Christ and the regeneration of individual souls. Modern society would have peace and disarmament, according to the Canadian Baptist, not through the efforts of the League of Nations, but only when Christ had disarmed hearts. In a 1922 editorial, Ephraim Scott similarly wrote that only when individual hearts were filled with love of God would there be no navies. "Limitation of armaments," he advised, "will settle itself. Don't waste time advising statesmen what they should do. Let each

⁷⁰ed., "The Forward Movement is not a Pretty Parlour Game," Canadian Baptist (8 January, 1920), quoted in Wright, 19.

⁷¹ed., "Can the League End War?" Canadian Baptist (26 April 1923), quoted in Wright, 28-9.

⁷²Dyson Hague, "Karl Marx," Canadian Churchman (7 July 1921), quoted in Wright, 63.

get to work at his own door -- his own heart."⁷³ Similarly, in his critique of the Forward Movement,

Dyson Hague pleaded for such a revival:

Now is the time for lovers of the Lord and His Truth to pray for that revival of spiritual life and power which will deliver us from the miasma of a mere churchy materialism, and the vagueness of a mere humanized new era, and give us a time of refreshing from the Lord Himself, a refreshing and recreating breath from the heights above to cool our fevered brows and give us life once more.⁷⁴

Scott and Hague thus demonstrate fundamentalist evangelicals' focus on the individual, internal experience of supernatural regeneration through the miraculous work of Christ, over against activism in the world of structured social relations.

On these grounds, fundamentalists retained a strong interest in foreign missions. Long before the war, especially through the sponsorship of Moody's Bible Institutes, proto-fundamentalists had developed a strong emphasis on "dispensing" the message of the gospel through evangelistic missions, and to that end had been instrumental in founding the Student Volunteer Movement within the YMCA in 1886, and overseas mission stations like the China Inland Mission.⁷⁵ For fundamentalists, foreign evangelism was at the same time the only answer to the search for a new world order. As the Canadian Baptist put it during the 1930 Naval Conference, in place of naive statesmanship, the greatest contribution to disarmament that the Christian church might make was by leading souls to Jesus, circulating Bibles, and placing missionaries in the mission fields.⁷⁶ In the light of this commitment to traditional foreign evangelism, fundamentalists regarded the spread of Bolshevism as a threat to their mission work in places like India, China, and Formosa.

⁷³"A Warless World," Presbyterian Record (January 1922), quoted in Wright, 32.

⁷⁴Dyson Hague, "A Forward Movement," Canadian Churchman (24 July 1919), quoted in Wright, 19.

⁷⁵Sandeen, 186-7.

⁷⁶ed., "The Naval Conference -- What Can the Churches Do?" Canadian Baptist (30 January 1930), quoted in Wright, 32.

For moderate progressives, Bolshevism and social reform presented a more ambiguous dilemma. This dilemma can be seen in the way that even those who were sympathetic to the goals of social reform, like William B. Creighton and Ernest Thomas, attempted to find some mediating point between a revolutionary social gospel and mainline progressive Protestantism. On the one hand, they sympathized with the goal of social reform, and tried to give assurances that the churches were sympathetic to the cause of the social gospel. Creighton, for example, defended the Winnipeg strikers by arguing that they were not radical or red, but merely trying to secure their rights as citizens.⁷⁷ Even more supportive was Ernest Thomas. As a field secretary for the Board of Evangelism and Social Service, Thomas had helped to produce the Methodist Church reports of 1918 that called for reconstruction of the social order. Also, along with colleagues like Bland, S. H. Hooke, and J. Davidson Ketchum, Thomas was active in the student life of Victoria College, and especially in the Student Christian Movement founded in 1920-21, as well as the Group Studies of Jesus pioneered by H. B. Sharman. Writing in 1919 under the pen-name Edward Trelawney, Thomas initially appealed for a sympathetic understanding of Bolshevism, arguing that Bolshevism stood for fundamental laws that were in harmony with the principle of economic democracy, while efforts to conjure a Red Scare were part of a campaign to return to the pre-war normalcy of capitalism.⁷⁸ The defeat of Bolshevism, Thomas proclaimed hopefully, was "unthinkable for anyone with Christian standards or values." At this point, Thomas' argument was similar to that of Harry Ward, the American social gospeller at Union Theological Seminary, who claimed that the Soviet Union was a great experiment in "direct democracy" and that its goal of a state controlled by producers was "manifestly scriptural in its aim."⁷⁹

⁷⁷Editorial, CG (2 July 1919).

⁷⁸Edward Trelawney, "The Significance of the Soviet," CG (5 February 1919), cited in Wright, 40-41.

⁷⁹ed., "Bolshevism and Christianity," CG (26 March 1919).

As 1919 progressed, however, Thomas began to reconsider his views of Bolshevism. In a clarification in March 1919, Thomas claimed that though the Soviet system was a democratic government, it was one "repulsive" to the west which long had enjoyed representative democracy. Here Thomas's views moved to those of other liberal social scientists, among them James Mavor and J. Gibson Hume of the University of Toronto, and most notably O. D. Skelton of Queen's. In his extensive critique of Bolshevik socialism, Skelton, while conceding that Bolshevism reflected some step toward popular representation, nevertheless criticized Bolshevik tyranny especially against the educated classes of Russians.⁸⁰ By late 1920, Thomas conceded that Bolshevism was "a denial of world order," though he added that it was no more of a denial of world order than was the western system of competitive capitalism.⁸¹

Even while growing wary of Bolshevism, Thomas still tried to convince social gospellers of the church's commitment to social reform. Writing in 1921 for The Canadian Forum, Thomas reiterated the Board of Evangelism and Social Services' 1918 criticism of the supply and demand system, and its call to make "human welfare" the "supreme and universal objective of commerce and industry."⁸² Declaring the democratic principle to be "the inevitable principle in industrial organization," he also called for recognition of workers' collective bargaining rights, and for worker representation in the management of industry "as may be in harmony with the just interests of all concerned." And despite the tepid initial response of the church to the proposals of 1918, and its hostility to labour demands in the Winnipeg Strike and the Printers' Strike, he argued that the 1918 proposals for realizing the aims of both "Christianity and Democracy" had gained support, especially

⁸⁰Wright, 45.

⁸¹Toronto, United Church Archives (UCA), Biographical Files, "Ernest Thomas," newspaper clipping by Ernest Thomas, "The Antidote to Bolshevism," Toronto Star (2 November 1920).

⁸²Ernest Thomas, "Social Reform and the Methodist Church," Canadian Forum (CF) 1, no. 9 (June 1921), 264-6.

in the Toronto Conference of the Methodist Church.⁸³

Having defended the church's sympathy for both radical social reform and modern Christianity, however, Thomas also explained his, and the Toronto Conference's, opposition to revolution and to identifying Christianity with a particular social order. Demands for violent change, he claimed, no less than resistance to just and necessary change, were equally contrary to the principle of democracy. But furthermore, the gospel could not be identified permanently with any particular social structure or program without again becoming a mere propaganda organ. The authors of the 1918 and 1920 reports were wary of identifying the mission of the church "with some passing phases of economic doctrine." "It is futile," Thomas warned, "to emancipate the gospel from subservience to capitalism if we make it subservient to some other equally temporary phases of development."⁸⁴ The gospel could no more be identified with the interests of an exclusive labour class than with those of the capitalist class, and thus the organization of labour churches in the West was no different from the demand for silence regarding social reform in the Toronto pulpits.

As he later would make more explicit, Thomas was proposing to distinguish the spiritual reality of the gospel from social structure as such. While revolutionary social gossellers identified the Kingdom of God with a new present and future structure juxtaposed with the past, continuing moderate progressives would attempt to identify the Kingdom of God with a spiritual reality juxtaposed with the structured order of creation. This version of the relation between the Kingdom of God and the world would result in a continued interest in spiritual evangelism and the distinctly divine reality of Christ.

A similar pattern can be found in moderate progressives' response to the status of foreign missions. Here too, as Wright describes it, they attempted to repent of their earlier identity with

⁸³Thomas, "Social Reform and the Methodist Church," 264-266.

⁸⁴Thomas, "Social Reform and the Methodist Church," 264-6.

western civilization and to disentangle Christ from western culture, even while their support of free, indigenous Christian organizations in foreign lands reflected their continued commitment to both a distinct spiritual reality and western liberal sensibilities. One of the most significant advocates of "rethinking missions" in the post-war era was J. Lovell Murray, author of The Call of a World Task in War Time (1918). Murray was a Presbyterian trained at Knox College who had served as a missionary in India until becoming education secretary for the Student Volunteer Movement in 1903.⁸⁵ Like the other major church and chaplains' reports, Murray feared that the long-held belief of missionaries in the superiority of western civilization, and the complicity of the churches in the war effort and in western imperialism and capitalism, would discredit their missionary efforts. Though sympathetic to the need for social reform, however, he refused to choose between individual conversion and Christianizing all social relations, and he rejected attempts to bring in the Kingdom of God through international organizations or peace treaties "apart from the active and definite spread of Christ's message of the Kingdom." Like the chaplains, Murray called for a modern "realism" that moved beyond pre-war moralism and formalism, the "suppositions, observances and dogmas" that tied Christ to western traditions and social structures, to the "central verities" of Christianity, namely that Jesus Christ was the son of God and redeemer of man. Christianity must be liberated from deadening localism, lest other races identify it with the carnage of Europe and the history of colonial exploitation, and compare it negatively with their own traditional religions.⁸⁶ Christ must be proclaimed in modern terms, but distinguished from western civilization, for only Christ could bind the world's wounds and provide the foundation of a new international order. "When He is lifted up," Murray declared, "He will draw all men unto Him, to meet their individual requirements and to teach them

⁸⁵Wright, 23, 44, 114-117.

⁸⁶J. Lovell Murray, The Call of a World Task in War Time (Toronto: Student Volunteer Movement, 1918), 22, 30.

how to live together in brotherly peace. He has not failed. Men have failed."⁸⁷ It was only "through a positively Christian internationalism" that Christianity could be vindicated, and that the spirit of Christ could be carried into all human relations to become a "great peaceable and constructive agency of equalization, transformation and freedom."

Murray's ideas for "rethinking missions" reflected a new "realism" among post-war progressive Protestants concerning international affairs and the mission of Christianity.⁸⁸ Not only had the Versailles treaty and the Bolshevik revolution failed to bring peace and justice, but the ability of social institutions and peace treaties to realize moral ideals seemed limited. Progressives like Newton Rowell, Canada's main advocate for the League of Nations, welcomed treaties like the disarmament agreement at the Washington Conference of 1921, but as partial, if imperfect, steps toward an international order based on law and Christian principles.⁸⁹ Beyond changes in organizations, however, moderate progressives emphasized the need for the spirit of God in international affairs. Though steps in the right direction, Rowell argued, efforts for international security and law like the League of Nations and the International Court needed the moral and spiritual leadership of the church and its teaching of Christ to effect real solutions to international problems.⁹⁰

Such views were consistent with Murray's insistence on distinguishing evangelism and the message of Christ from western culture and institutions. At the same time, they suggested a new civilizing role for Christianity as a moral agency, for only the spread of the Christian message, they believed, could preserve peace and order. In their appeals for foreign missions in Canada, advocates

⁸⁷Murray, 15.

⁸⁸Wright, 23, 44.

⁸⁹Newton W. Rowell, "The International Situation and the Christian Ideal," Canadian Journal of Religious Thought (CJRT), 1, no. 1 (January-February 1924), 6-15.

⁹⁰Rowell, "The International Situation and the Christian Ideal," 6-15.

for Christian internationalism emphasized the moral value of foreign missions in terms of "missionary statesmanship." At an Inter-Church Forward rally at Massey Hall in 1921, for example, Newton Rowell made clear that this moral statesmanship was linked to a progressive view of Christianity:

The idea that mission work is propagating a creed or extending an ecclesiastical organization is gone forever. It is seen that it is not merely the preaching of the Gospel, as the phrase was understood in former days. Christian mission work is an effort to make the lives and relationships of men everywhere Christian, and to organize human lives and human society everywhere the world over on the basis of Christ's golden rule of brotherhood and service.⁹¹

Another plea made in 1918 by a contributor to the Christian Guardian emphasized the substitution of western capitalist imperialism with Christian statesmanship:

The solution of the problem of the world's peace lies in Christian missions. The harmony of the nations shall be maintained, not by the diplomatic delimiting of the ethnological habitats of the children of men, nor by the most rigid safeguards of international intercourse, but by the imperative behest of a spiritual agreement.... Stupendous issues are in the balance, and only the most complete cooperation between State and Church will suffice for that spiritual invasion of the East whose victory shall be salvation, whose spoils peace."⁹²

As Wright notes, progressive Protestants came to see foreign missions as a "moral equivalent" of western imperialism. Only the ideals of Christ, now distinguished from western culture, would tame other western influences such as capitalism and imperialism and assure world peace.⁹³

To that end, moderate progressives sought to renew the agencies of Christian missions. Since the 1910 World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh, they increasingly emphasized a combined Christian effort at global evangelism, particularly through the cooperation of an ecumenical church. Also, they began to implement a more systematic training of missionaries, beginning with courses in Christian Missions at the church colleges and the formation of a Missionary Education Movement

⁹¹Newton Rowell, "Missions and World Problems," CG (26 January 1921), in Wright, 150.

⁹²Albert Hinton, "Peace and Missions," CG, (25 December 1918), in Wright, 123.

⁹³Wright, 32-33.

(1911-26), and culminating in the formation of the Canadian School of Missions in Toronto in 1921, with participation by the mainline churches and their colleges and with Murray serving as director until 1947.⁹⁴

The attempt to make missionary training more professional included two central themes. First, Murray adopted a self-critical approach to missions that recognized the bankruptcy of western culture and sought to end the assumed superiority of western culture and paternalistic relations with indigenous people. Missionaries could only offer themselves in service to the indigenous churches, but must respect their corporate life and their unique cultural expressions. Secondly, the cornerstone of the new missionary training was to be scientific understanding not only of the redemptive message of Jesus, but also of contemporary life and the culture of the intended mission field. Accordingly, courses were offered in anthropology and foreign cultures and societies, non-Christian religions, medical and personal hygiene, history and theory of missions, moral and sex hygiene, and phonetics.

At the heart of "rethinking missions," however, was a renewed emphasis on the distinct reality of Christ. That Christ was interpreted in "modern" idealist terms as a unique spiritual reality and a moral impulse within humanity and experience. And in response to what they regarded as the discredited structures of western civilization, advocates of "rethinking missions," as had Ernest Thomas, attempted to separate Christ from cultural particularities. Their focus on a unique Christ also identified Christianity with the institutional church. Indeed, their hope for post-war reconstruction now envisioned Christianity as an ecumenical global spiritual community distinguished from and influencing the structures of the economic and political order.

III. The Message of Christianity

Behind the different views of progressives and fundamentalists about the mission of Christianity were

⁹⁴Wright, 134-39. Among the participating colleges were Knox, McMaster, Trinity, Victoria, and Wycliffe.

foundational differences in their views of the relation of God to the world, the meaning of Christ and redemption, and indeed the very possibility of identifying a distinctly divine reality. By the mid-1920's, disagreement on these points culminated in a decisive parting of ways between radically modernist progressives, fundamentalists, and a mainstream that sought a mediating "modern evangelical" interpretation of the gospel.

Already in the late 1800's, proto-fundamentalists had affirmed the primacy of classical doctrines concerning God's supernatural intervention into history for redemption. To summarize, those doctrines included the inerrancy of Scripture, the Virgin Birth, substitutionary atonement, the divinity of Christ and the supernatural character of his miracles, and the resurrection of Christ. These doctrines were defended in the volumes of The Fundamentals during 1910-1915 by scholars whose theologies ranged from premillennialism to conservative Presbyterian orthodoxy. As that cooperative effort suggested, conservative orthodoxy was also allied to the continued efforts of dispensational premillennialists like C. I. Scofield. Indeed, the first conference of the World Christian Fundamentals Association in 1918 focused on prophecy.

While fundamentalists defended a supernatural view of salvation, it was not until the early 1920's that some began to break decisively from what they now regarded as an apostate mainline church. Until this time, proto-fundamentalists had coexisted with progressives in existing institutions. Lectures from S. D. Chown, for example, were still welcomed in long-established conservative Bible colleges such as the Toronto Bible School into the 1920's, while T. T. Shields served as a board-member of McMaster College as late as 1920-21.⁹⁵ During the early 1920's, however, their belief that the modernism defended in the mainline churches was being used to attack the fundamentals of the faith brought many proto-fundamentalists to believe that modernism and Christianity were

⁹⁵Stackhouse, 24. Robert A. Wright, "The Canadian Protestant Tradition 1914-1945," The Canadian Protestant Experience 1760-1990, G. A. Rawlyk, ed. (Burlington: Welch, 1990), 159-64.

irreconcilable, and lead some to militant separatism. A moderate case of parting ways was evident in the Toronto Bible School's response to the perception that traditional evangelism, understood as the saving of souls, was under modernist attack. While the Canadian School of Missions proceeded to modernize its training of missionaries, the Toronto Bible School after 1921 preserved its program of Bible, classical doctrine, practical evangelism understood in limited terms of saving souls.⁹⁶ A sharper institutional break was that of William Aberhart, who had taken various teaching positions in Calgary schools after 1910. Aberhart's exclusion from the Presbyterian pulpits in Calgary, and the attempt of the Baptist Union of Western Canada to remove him from the pulpit of Westbourne Baptist Church in Canada, made clear that there was little room in the mainline churches for his views on dispensational premillennialism and the inerrancy of the King James version of the Bible.⁹⁷ By 1925, therefore, he founded his own Prophetic Bible Institute, affiliated with Pentecostalism, to formalize his dispensational approach to Biblical interpretation and to supply rural pulpits with preachers who would withstand, as John Stackhouse puts it, the "menace" of modernist theology in the newly formed United Church.

The decisive juncture between fundamentalism and modernism may well have occurred in 1923, when the American progressive Harry Emerson Fosdick attacked the fundamentalist approach to foreign evangelism in his famous published sermon, "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?"⁹⁸ In response, J. Grescham Machen developed his 1921 address on "Liberalism or Christianity" into his book-length Christianity and Liberalism (1923). Machen argued that modernism, with its rejection of doctrines concerning the real miraculous birth, death, and resurrection of Christ, and the inerrancy

⁹⁶Wright, A World Mission, 30-34.

⁹⁷Stackhouse, 36-38.

⁹⁸William R. Hutchinson, The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism (New York: Oxford, 1976), 258-9; George Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925 (New York: Oxford, 1980), 173-5.

of Scripture, could not be considered the Christianity of the gospel.⁹⁹ Machen thus called for a choice between what he considered irreconcilably different religions. Machen's challenge was followed by the separation of Orthodox Presbyterians from the northern Presbyterian Church of the USA, and also by a split in Fosdick's own Northern Baptist Convention.

The impact of this schism on Canadian Protestants was coloured by church union. As John Moir suggests, conservative Presbyterians did not separate from the Presbyterian Church of Canada, but instead found a home among other opponents of church union in the continuing Presbyterian Church.¹⁰⁰ In this way, their opposition to what they regarded as the liberal program of church union, and their determination to continue the Presbyterian Church following the union of 1925, provided conservatives and fundamentalists an alternative form of separation from modernists who joined the United Church.

The most noticeable schism, then, was among Canada's Baptists. In western Canada, Baptists concerned to preserve conservative teaching at Brandon College accused theology professor Harris MacNeill of "anti-Scriptural teaching." When Brandon's Board of Governors exonerated MacNeill, some members, led by Andrew Frieve and F. W. Auvache, broke away from the Baptist Union of Western Canada to form the British Columbia Baptist Missionary Council.¹⁰¹ In a more famous case, T. T. Shields was once more set on the path of controversy in 1923 when McMaster College awarded an honorary doctorate to W. H. P. Faunce, president of Brown University and a defender of Fosdick.¹⁰² In his campaign for the purity of McMaster, Shields attacked McMaster theologian L.

⁹⁹J. Grescham Machen, Christianity and Liberalism (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1923).

¹⁰⁰Moir, Enduring Witness, 214-5, 234-5. For a much fuller treatment of the role of fundamentalist Presbyterians in the church union controversy, see N. Keith Clifford, The Resistance to Church Union in Canada, 1904-1939 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1985).

¹⁰¹Wright, "The Canadian Protestant Tradition 1914-1945," 160.

¹⁰²Stackhouse, 27.

H. Marshall in 1924 for his failure to reject higher criticism. When Shields' charges were rebuffed by McMaster's board, and when Shields subsequently was chastised by the Baptist Association of Ontario and Quebec for his unseemly pursuit of the issue, Shields walked out of the association to lead the formation of the separate Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec, along with Toronto Baptist Seminary.¹⁰³ Shields' action was followed in 1925 by the formation of the Maritime Christian Fundamentalist Association, lead by an associate of Shields, J. J. Sidey. In the 1930's, this group would separate from the United Baptist Convention of the Maritime Provinces to form the Independent Baptist Church.

As noted in Chapter 1, progressive evangelicals like William B. Creighton readily dismissed "premillennarian pessimists" in the immediate post-war years.¹⁰⁴ Again following a discussion of eschatology at the Worlds' Christian Fundamentals Convention held in Toronto in 1926, Creighton charged that fundamentalists were preoccupied with "remote speculative questions which Jesus Himself declared to be hidden from mortal men..." and that their diversion of believers from "the tasks and needs of today to some remote future is a sinful perversion of a divine commission."¹⁰⁵ As Robert Wright notes, most Canadian Protestants gave only brief attention to an other-worldly pre-millennialism.¹⁰⁶

The challenge issued by Machen and the schisms which followed it, however, presented a more serious difficulty for progressive Protestants. In the USA, even serious liberals like Charles Clayton Morrison of the Christian Century conceded that Machen had convincingly shown that,

¹⁰³Stackhouse, 27; Wright, "The Canadian Protestant Tradition 1914-1945," 159-160.

¹⁰⁴ed., "Premillennarian Pessimists," CG (22 August 1917), 5.

¹⁰⁵ed., New Outlook (NO) (12 May 1926), quoted in Wright, A World Mission, 34.

¹⁰⁶See "An Interrupted Prophecy," CG (24 November 1920); "A Premillennial Threat," CG (21 December 1921) cited in Wright, A World Mission, 34.

beneath the variations of fundamentalism and liberalism, the modern world indeed now faced in the conflict between tradition and modernism a clash between two different religions.¹⁰⁷ As David Marshall notes, moderate progressives in Canada, like George Pidgeon viewed the charge of fundamentalism as a threat to the modern evangelicalism and the inclusive unity that were the project of the United Church.¹⁰⁸ The growing popularity of fundamentalism especially on the prairies, marked by new Bible colleges, a rising Pentecostal movement, and widespread support for the breakaway Regular Baptist conventions across rural Canada, provided new obstacles to the possibility of developing a "national church."¹⁰⁹ Moreover, Machen's effective juxtaposition of modernism and Christian fundamentals challenged the United Church to clarify its message and mission.

A systematic theology for a "modern evangelicalism" would not be forth-coming until 1926. In the mean-time, when it became evident that the vast majority of Protestants rejected social revolution, radical progressives became increasingly adamant in their modernist critique of traditional Christianity. This new and largely historicist criticism was lead by scholars like S. H. Hooke and J. Davidson Ketchum and the students whom they influenced. Hooke was professor of Oriental Studies at Victoria College, and together with Ketchum was one of the guiding lights of the Student Christian Movement (SCM) founded in 1920, and both were regular contributors to The Canadian Forum.

As John Moir notes, Hooke arrived at Victoria College in 1913 following the release of George Jackson from Victoria's theology department. Hooke's vocal support for radically modernist criticism, however, went far beyond the views of Jackson and the more moderate historical criticism

¹⁰⁷Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, 173-5.

¹⁰⁸Marshall, Secularizing the Faith, 191-3.

¹⁰⁹On the distribution of fundamentalist support, see Wright, "The Canadian Protestant Tradition 1914-1945," 141, 160-1; and Marshall, Secularizing the Faith, 193, fn. 33.

of his department chairman John F. McLaughlin and colleagues like John Hugh Michael.¹¹⁰ In 1915, just two years after his arrival, Hooke declared in Victoria's student newspaper his agreement with the new currents of critical science, anti-metaphysical historicism, and socialism. "Vitalism" in philosophy and psychology, "Expressionism" in art, and "Collectivism" in politics and economics, he claimed, were the religious forces emerging in answer to demands for "reality" in the post-war age.¹¹¹ Henri Bergson's vitalism, which posited a vital life force ("elan vital") as the underlying dynamic of reality, and William James' religious empiricism, seemed to affirm a divine presence, albeit naturalized, in the world. They did so, moreover, on the empirical grounds of consciousness and experience of the divine reality in the world, rather than by metaphysical speculation or Biblical authority. Thus the new currents reconciled free, critical thought based on experience with faith that God was at the center of the world, while admitting the reality of flux in the world and the relativity of human knowledge. Through the early 1920's, Hooke, with Ketchum, would press this historicist view of religion to the point of questioning the uniqueness of Christ and the traditional Christian understanding of God.

One of the central cogs in the emergence of this radically modernist movement was the Life of Jesus group study seminars founded by H. B. Sharman, and participated in by Hooke, Ketchum, and Ernest Thomas, to cultivate a modern Christianity among the members of the SCM. Sharman was a New Testament scholar trained at Chicago Divinity school, and a founding member of the SCM. His modern method of Biblical study rejected theological doctrine and the "deadening familiarity" of words which had lost their meaning, and called for new ways to encounter directly and empathize with

¹¹⁰John S. Moir, History of Biblical Studies in Canada (Chico, California: Scholar's Press, 1982), 44.

¹¹¹S. H. Hooke, "Quo Vadis," Acta Victoriana, 40, no. 3 (December 1915), 161-167.

the person of Jesus.¹¹² Like John Mackay's "friendship" approach to the devotional study of Jesus, Sharman used an experiential "encounter" method of Bible study in place of theological statement. As Burkhard Kieseckamp notes, Sharman's approach represented an attempt to combine renewed devotion to Jesus with a radical modernism.¹¹³ His "life of Jesus" approach assumed that the "person of Jesus" was to be regarded as a man, and that participants were free to encounter and interpret that personality according to their own consciousness. In this sense, Sharman's Life of Jesus reflected a modernist rejection of the historic Church's witness to Christ as the unique, once-for-all incarnation and atonement, and instead elevated modern subjective consciousness as the arbiter of religious truth.

In many respects, the radical modernism of Sharman's Life of Jesus seminars paralleled the historicism adopted by social gospellers like Bland and Woodsworth. According to Richard Allen, the student movement, and especially Sharman's Group Studies of Jesus, offered the theological system for the revolutionary social gospel movement.¹¹⁴ But though it provided an initial common modernism, Sharman's Life of Jesus studies were open to development in different directions. In particular, his focus on the person of Jesus and the experience of subjective consciousness was quite different from the focus of social gospellers' focus on social structures. Ultimately, it would be this introspective personalism that Thomas would adopt as an alternative to the social gospel.

By early 1923, in contrast, Hooke and Ketchum had moved to a modernism that was

¹¹²H. B. Sharman, Studies in the Records of the Life of Jesus (New York, 1938), viii, xv, xvii, quoted in Burkhard Kieseckamp, "Christendom, Nationalism and the Fate of the Nineteenth Century Evangelical Consensus," Acadiensis, XXV, 1 (Autumn 1995), 140.

¹¹³Burkhard Kieseckamp, "Christendom, Nationalism and the Fate of the Nineteenth Century Evangelical Consensus," 140.

¹¹⁴Allen, 220-4, 302-312.

thoroughly disenchanted with Christianity. Claiming to speak for those who no longer could accept the traditional Christian view of God, they particularly rejected the doctrines of Biblical authority, miracle, a transcendent and sovereign God, and the divinity of Christ that fundamentalists emphasized. As Ketchum declared, the Church's view of a triune and capricious God "has become quite impossible to the modern mind."¹¹⁵ Students, he claimed, no longer prayed to a personal God, and in fact students in China protested against the western God. Meanwhile, the growing authority of naturalistic modern science had discredited the possibility of believing in any supernatural deity. And the Church, in relegating religion to "spiritual" matters, had effectively surrendered the realm of nature and human life to naturalistic science.

Part of this criticism was directed against the pre-war identity of Christianity with the moral progress of God's Kingdom in western civilization. Ketchum and his colleagues argued that its complicity in western civilization left Christianity discredited and its claim to a unique missionary witness suspect. In an editorial for The Canadian Student in February 1919, Ketchum claimed that youth would continue to volunteer for Canadian missions only if non-Christians were no longer assumed to be doomed to damnation, and if their religions were no longer seen as "the beastly devices of the heathen."

At the core of their criticism, however, Hooke and Ketchum repudiated the uniqueness of the object of Christian faith. In his Christ and the Kingdom of God (1919), Hooke accepted Schweitzer's interpretation that the historical Jesus claimed by nineteenth-century liberal Protestants was incompatible with the strange Messianic and apocalyptic Jesus of the gospels. But if Jesus was historically bound, then the Biblical narratives presented only a particular stage in the evolution of humanity, but it gave no absolute or timeless truths or norms.¹¹⁶ Ketchum likewise rejected any

¹¹⁵J. Davidson Ketchum, "The Saving of God," Canadian Forum (CF), Vol. 3, No. 31 (April 1923), 204-6.

¹¹⁶Gauvreau, 276.

transcendent, super-natural dimension to God. The "official God" of the Christian Churches," he claimed, was nearing an end. The modern mind needed a new conception of God that was based on science and would relate God to human life. The new God that would satisfy the yearnings of the modern mind "is not personal, much less tri-personal; does not lose his temper even with sinners; does not delight in flowery adulations; and is not outside of, and superior to, the great processes of nature." In a provocative turn of the tables on traditional Christianity, Ketchum suggested that it was God who needed to be saved. And God would be saved only when he died and became "really a Spirit," and when Christ was presented, not as a supernatural "magician," but "as the truest and fairest of the sons of men, the great Pioneer of the way of Love."¹¹⁷

In making these claims, Ketchum and Hooke boldly repudiated traditional claims to the metaphysical and transcendent reality of God and asserted, like Ernst Troeltsch, the closure of reality upon the world of experience that science accounted for by the test of human reason and regular human experience, according to uniform natural processes.¹¹⁸ In a review of current views of the Bible, for example, Hooke began by rejecting fundamentalist and even ambiguous liberal attempts to invest the Bible with sacred authority as pessimistic refusals to trust man himself with the truth. "We are," he declared, "for good or evil, moving away from external authority of any kind, whether of sacred books, sacred institutions, or infallible individuals."¹¹⁹ As a contrast to "external" standards of truth, he held up the sincere but critical approach of group study members who

believe that truth or reality are the objects of progressive search and discovery, and that nothing is to be feared from the results of scientific historical methods applied to the literature which constitutes the book called the Bible. If the results conflict with previous views or theories about the book and its character then these views

¹¹⁷Ketchum, "The Saving of God," 204-6.

¹¹⁸For a thorough discussion of Ernst Troeltsch's critical method and its application in theology, see Sidney Greidanus, The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), ch. 2.

¹¹⁹S. H. Hooke, "Sacred Books," CF, Vol. 2, No. 22 (July 1922), 684-86.

must be abandoned, however far-reaching the consequences of the abandonment may be.¹²⁰

The special virtue of this alternative, he added, was its value of adventure. Indeed, Hooke's spirit of adventure capped not only the trend toward secularized positivist science, but also the evangelical tendency to locate divine authority in human conscience.

This anthropocentric standard of truth was further evident in Hooke's application of a sociological interpretation of religion, similar to those of Herbert Spencer, Ernst Troeltsch, and Emile Durkheim, to the Bible.¹²¹ Hooke described the Biblical writings as "the Sagas, the history, and the social code of a small Semitic race, joined to the fragmentary records of the life and sayings of one member of that race and the correspondence of another...." This code was best explained in terms of its relation to the codes of other Semitic peoples and the universal patterns of religious development "passing through the various stages of totemism, animism, polytheism, and so forth..."¹²² Thus Hooke's use of positivist historical and sociological criticism completed a crucial shift: rather than reading the Bible as a witness to unique acts of God in history, he focused on its human authors on the assumption that religion was known from its natural social function of providing a code of behaviour and a common world-view, and also that it progressed from primitive to modern, rational forms, as Troeltsch had declared, according to the uniform causal processes of nature.¹²³ In these terms, the Bible offered a picture of the Hebrews' unique "spiritual adventure," but neither the Bible nor Christianity, nor any particular event in history, could be considered uniquely normative for modern religion.

¹²⁰Hooke, "Sacred Books," 684-86.

¹²¹For a helpful summary of these pioneers of the sociological interpretation of religion, see Betty R. Scharf, The Sociological Study of Religion (New York: Harper, 1970), 14-15.

¹²²Hooke, "Sacred Books," 684-6.

¹²³Scharf, 14.

With these assumptions, Hooke and Ketchum translated evangelical Protestantism into the hope of a future-oriented evolutionary process. Recent biological theories that posited sudden variations or "mutations," Ketchum argued, gave new hope for satisfying "the almost universally felt incompleteness of man as he is, the acknowledged sense of great possibilities unrealized, great powers unevoked, a great kingdom unclaimed."¹²⁴ The "Life Force" that the biologist James S. Thomson claimed was within the evolutionary process of nature had issued in consciousness, and through it humans were aware of being "pulled" along by a "transcendent" evolutionary impulse that was "working in us and through us, and yet not of us." In contrast to "mechanistic" biological theories, this was an idealized evolution that seemed to preserve the reality of a "spirit" and free consciousness, though these were also encompassed entirely within nature. Modern science, Hooke argued, was overcoming the tensions in both Biblical interpretation and natural science by recognizing both spiritual and naturalistic qualities to life. Though spiritual reality could not be abstracted from its natural historical setting, modern science also challenged the Newtonian mechanistic system which set God outside of nature as an external and arbitrary will. Instead, science now recognized

that a new realm of law exists, that the laws of life now slowly becoming known, both interpenetrate the realm of what we must still call inanimate matter, and also extend beyond it into a region where the possibility of new combinations and new phenomena clearly exists.¹²⁵

At the forefront of this process of spiritual evolution, according to Hooke, was the human person. It was in persons that the natural and spiritual met, for the human body combined organized matter subject to physical and organic laws with psychic forces which might suspend or abrogate material forces. Thus Hooke restated the analogia entis by identifying spiritual reality with the

¹²⁴J. Davidson Ketchum, "The Case for Human Mutation," CF, Vol. 2, No. 24 (September 1922), 749-52.

¹²⁵S. H. Hooke, "That One Face," CF, Vol. 3, No. 27 (December 1922), 76-78. For a different view of the relationship between Hooke and Ketchum on this point, see also A. B. McKillop, Contours of Canadian Thought (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 116-17.

forward-moving impulse of nature, and especially in the human psyche. That impulse --

the 'moral law within me' which filled Kant's mind with wonder -- is nothing more nor less than the very Voice of Nature, cancelling, as it were, all previously issued messages, and calling man to a new adventure, a new step in the mighty series which has made the world what it is.¹²⁶

The natural human psyche and the processes of nature itself now held the promise of raising humans to a new spiritual plane, and of transforming human life in the here and now from the "dull tragedy-comedy" of survival to an unknown but sublime "adventure." In response to a request for further explanation, Hooke referred to Julian Huxley's notion, in Essays of a Biologist, of the achievement of a "psychozoic" stage of evolution where mind controlled matter, as an indication of his new "scientific" religion.¹²⁷

Hooke and Ketchum presented their evolutionary faith in a naturalized eschatological future as rescuing, as well as revolutionizing, Christianity for modern man. The new Christianity, Hooke claimed in March 1923, would be integrated with life itself, and the church would be transformed from the institutional preserve of an outmoded, abstracted supernatural reality into the vital nurturer of the springs of conduct that sustain community, art, and thought.¹²⁸ It would glorify life itself, making visible and credible the Kingdom of Heaven which was the true purpose of life to be achieved by man here and now. By locating God in nature, and thereby sanctifying nature, the church might end its surrender of most of life to purely mechanistic science.

Ketchum followed Hooke's proposals for saving the church with his own for proposal for

¹²⁶Ketchum, "The Case for Human Mutation," 749-52.

¹²⁷G. O. Smith, "Correspondence," CF, Vol. 4, No. 37 (October 1923), 14. Smith argued that apologia entailed confession of faith, and called on Hooke to explain his main ideas in a positive statement. Hooke's response was given in S. H. Hooke, "The Religion of a Scientist: I," CF, Vol. 4, No. 39 (December 1923), 81-82.

¹²⁸S. H. Hooke, "The Saving of the Church," CF, Vol. 3, No. 30 (March 1923), 168-70.

"The Saving of God."¹²⁹ The new God would not be the distant or otherworldly spirit, nor the external capricious will, that was no longer acceptable to the modern mind. Instead, the new God was "invisible and silent; manifest solely in his works, the myriad works of Life." Ketchum waxed eloquently in describing God as an immanent power who

lives and moves and exults in the sweeping rhythm of the Universe, in the exquisite perfection of Nature, in the loveliest thoughts of man....He has never trumpeted forth his will to quaking multitudes; but there are those who have felt him leap for joy in their own hearts, when they have denied themselves, more truly to love others....¹³⁰

And in the new economy of redemption, Jesus was to be viewed, according to Hooke, as a sign-post of "the direction whither life is tending," and as "a discoverer and pioneer in the realm of new laws of life, the explorer and demonstrator of new possibilities." Jesus' apocalyptic ideas indicated his expectation of a better order and better powers in the future, while the miraculous in his life was "the irruption of a new order, a new force in life."¹³¹ In Ketchum's words, Jesus was neither a teacher of moral laws nor a sacrifice for sins, but "the great Pioneer" of an undefined, "apocalyptic" reality which was not merely "behind" us, but also "before" us in the natural process of "creative evolution."¹³²

Taking up the themes of Hooke and Ketchum, H. J. Davis, newly-appointed English professor at University College, added that it was humanity and human life that needed rescue from the weight of tradition.¹³³ The church divided life into sacred and secular realms, limiting Christians' appreciation of the whole of life and conservatively defending traditions of the sacred. The church,

¹²⁹Ketchum, "The Saving of God," 204-6.

¹³⁰Ketchum, "The Saving of God," 204-6.

¹³¹Hooke, "That One Face," 76-8.

¹³²Ketchum, "The Case for Human Mutation," 749-52.

¹³³H. J. Davis, "The Saving of Man," CF, Vol. 3, No. 22 (May 1923), 236-37.

human life;" on the contrary, it always rejected the best saints like Shakespeare, St. Francis, and even Jesus, all of whom were "free men" who have "found their own souls, and have entered into full possession of life." Davis' paean of praise for the new humanity epitomized the Arnoldian view, then being worked out at the University of Toronto, of the humanities as a secular gospel of moral character and liberal civilization.¹³⁴ In a striking reversal of the Genesis account of the fall, he portrayed his saints as becoming God themselves: they had "eaten freely of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil -- and yet they have remained in the Garden." Like Nietzsche, Davis described the saints as having risen above nature and the "tyranny of circumstances;" putting off Epicurian and Stoic restraint of the passions and desires, they now "move about freely in a world of which they are makers." Indeed, having inherited the full life, they have become the makers of their own personality. In the new theology of evolutionary idealism, men who were consciously free rose up and became gods.

As we shall see at a later point, most progressive evangelicals refused to follow the path of radical modernism set out by Hooke and Ketchum. Unwilling to let their position go unopposed, F. J[ohn] Moore, then assistant rector at the Anglican Church's St. James Cathedral and after 1926 director of the Student Christian Association at the University of Toronto,¹³⁵ warned that the new "biological" interpretation of Jesus was not Christianity, for its Jesus was

not the Son of God in the only sense that could originally inspire and today justify the continuance of devotions in His Name,...He is not, in a word, the Christ of the Church,... A religion that centres round such a Jesus as this new philosophy would give us is an entirely novel religion."¹³⁶

Moore concluded that the "new theology" proposed by Hooke and Ketchum offered "auto-suggestion"

¹³⁴A. B. McKillop, Matters of Mind: The University in Ontario, 1791-1951 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 456-7, 466.

¹³⁵"Mostly About People," NO (February 10, 1926), 17.

¹³⁶F. J. Moore, "Correspondence," CF 3, no. 35 (July 1923), 301-302.

Moore concluded that the "new theology" proposed by Hooke and Ketchum offered "auto-suggestion" in place of Christianity: it merely affirmed the human psyche and life as it was, rather than seeking a God who was other than the self and who might transform human life.

With this unsympathetic response, Hooke and Ketchum, with their supporters, concluded their discussions in late 1923 with a defiant, if not necessarily permanent parting of ways. In a series of letters in The Canadian Forum critics cast off traditional Christianity, calling for an end to the God of the church and the liberation of humanity, and for redirecting the church into an institution for humanitarian aid. J. Duff, from Sidney, B. C., suggested that Moore's divine Christ of the Trinity had no connection with Jesus's modelling of gentle goodness and love, and was no longer needed. Modern man did not need forgiveness for sin, nor the "pre-moral" sanction of morality by an autocratic God. Autocracy must give way to democracy and self-government, for the moral law was within man, and was to be expressed simply in love of neighbour. In short, communion with God contained no worthy meaning "beyond communion with the Ideal, the renewed opening of our hearts and minds to goodness and truth[.]"¹³⁷ Irene Moore added that, in place of its preoccupation with authority, the past, and a vague and distant future heaven, the church should see everything in terms of the "here and now" by serving as a humanitarian agency for banishing ignorance and pursuing intellectual emancipation, compassion, and "more peaceful and contented destinies." When the church served thus as the center of "a great movement of organized goodness for social redemption. Then indeed will the Commonwealth of God be set up among living people here on earth."¹³⁸

By 1925, Ketchum added that the entire project of foreign missions also had become suspect. Since the war, he wrote in The Canadian Student, many had come to believe that Christians "were at least in no position to go preaching the gospel of peace to comparatively inoffensive Asiatic peoples

¹³⁷J. Duff, "Correspondence," CF, 4, no. 37 (October 1923), 12-13.

¹³⁸Irene Moore, "The Duty of the Christian Church," CF, Vol. 3, No. 33 (June 1923), 271-72.

until we had cleaned house at home."¹³⁹ And from the perspective of a new internationalism that valued the religions and ideals of other races more highly, Ketchum minimized the unique claims of Christianity even further. Those who feel called to go and serve in India or China, he suggested,

will have to go holding no brief for Western industrial civilization as against the culture and traditions of other continents, and, what is much harder, holding no brief for Christianity as we understand it as against any other religion which, founded on the history and spirit of the race concerned, proves itself capable of leading that race into freedom and love.

Ketchum's comments were followed by suggestions by Sophia Lyon Fahs, an American Student Volunteer Movement authority on race relations, that Christianity should recognize the polytheism, image worship, superstition in much of Christian heritage, and should respect the worthiness of other ancient religions.¹⁴⁰

Such comments reflected the emergence of an historical relativism which called for liberty and respect for all religions as relative cultural expressions, but which could no longer be reconciled with a traditional Christianity that claimed the uniqueness and exclusiveness of Christ. Hooke made this break explicit in a series of articles in late 1923 which offered his "apologia" for a scientific religion. The modern mind, he declared, could accept no authority, even that of Christ, aside from self-authenticated experience.¹⁴¹ Hooke emphasized that the super-natural foundations and personal God of traditional Christianity now were gone, and with it even the moral strictures of Christianity. In their place, he offered a naturalized view of religion as the "felt harmony with the universe as known, in surrender to it. Whether it be called alcheringa or the will of God, the essence of the thing is the same."¹⁴² Accordingly, he recommended Julian Huxley's proposals in Essays of a Biologist for a

¹³⁹J. Davidson Ketchum, ed., Canadian Student (January 1925), quoted in Wright, 149.

¹⁴⁰Wright, 156-57.

¹⁴¹S. H. Hooke, "A Modern Lay Apologia," CF, Vol. 3, No. 35 (August 1923), 335-36.

¹⁴²S. H. Hooke, "The Religion of a Scientist, II," CF, Vol. 4, No. 40 (January 1924), 110-12.

scientific religion in which God still served an important "biological" function as a psychic idea which signified the wholeness of reality, enabling man to sublimate his instincts to rational mental control.¹⁴³ Based as it was on science, this alternative would provide a "real" basis for religion in the unity of matter and psychic energy, and would serve practically to connect man to the forces of cosmic evolution. Here was a solution for "emancipated people" who wanted to combine moral values and full expression of "an emotional dynamic" with "full acceptance of the scientific attitude towards the universe."

Hooke had introduced his modern apologia with a response to the classical warning of the mass: "he that doubteth is damned if he eat." "I doubt," Hooke confessed, "and cannot eat."¹⁴⁴ Hooke explained that he could no longer associate with a church that naively claimed the authority of Christ and a personal God, nor did he believe that Christianity based on these principles could produce a new order.

Hooke's decision was similar to that of numerous post-war Canadians, among them A. E. Smith, Francis Marion Beynon, and Douglas Durkin, who would part company even with progressive evangelical Christianity in the mid-1920's out of disillusionment with traditional Christianity and its lack of a radical commitment to social progress and modern thought.¹⁴⁵ Some, like Smith, Bland, and William Irvine, would leave the clergy for work in politics and social service. In itself, this was not identical with "secularization." To the contrary, they considered such service to be the extension of Christianity and the claims of God's Kingdom into practical areas of life as Grant had suggested

¹⁴³Hooke, "The Religion of a Scientist, I," 81-2.

¹⁴⁴Hooke, "A Modern Lay Apologia," 335.

¹⁴⁵On Francis Beynon, see Ramsay Cook, "Francis Marion Beynon and the Crisis of Christian Reformism," The West and the Nation, Carl Berger and Ramsay Cook, eds. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976). On Douglas Durkin, see Peter E. Rider, "Introduction," in Douglas Durkin, The Magpie (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974).

in the late nineteenth century. Rather, their trend to secularization lay in their break from historic Christianity, especially the Biblical witness to the uniqueness of Christ's work and the claims of a distinct and transcendent God on historical life. Their interpretation of the antithesis between God's Kingdom and the world in modern historicist terms as a conflict between an idealized revolutionary order of freedom and cooperation and the authoritarian capitalist order had also collapsed God into an immanent force within the matrix of the natural world, and particularly in human consciousness.

The consequences of this interpretation were profound. First, it located the antithesis between sin and redemption within the historical process, between the structures of the past and established order and the future order of freedom. This location of the antithesis left redemption a matter of social revolution in order to undo the structures of the status quo. Secondly, having reduced the Biblical gospel to an anthropological expression, it reduced any claim to divine authority or normativity to a merely human, relative claim that by definition was always provincial and potentially imperialistic. In doing so, it made the ideal of freedom and the creative expression of human freedom and rational consciousness to be the present and future norm and the goal of redemption. And by abandoning the distinction between God and the world, it constructed a new problematic for modern humanity defined, not as the relation between God and the world, but as the relation between free humanity and nature.

Curiously, the logic of their historicism was inexorable, leaving the efforts of Bland, Hooke and others to construct a "biological" religion identified with the labour movement short-lived. While becoming increasingly disillusioned with more orthodox Christianity, they also tried to resist the more materialist currents of the labour movement. In their own way apologists for a vision of "spiritual reality," by the mid-1920's their efforts seemed to flounder on internal divisions, marginalization, and finally, as in A. E. Smith's frustrations, the refusal of the labour movement to accede in a "spiritual"

interpretation of their goals through the Labour churches.¹⁴⁶

IV. Progressive Protestants and the Quest for the Spirit

Although they rejected the supernaturalism of fundamentalism, most progressive evangelicals could no more accept the naturalized relativism of radical modernists. Between the Scylla of fundamentalism and the Charybdis of modernism, continuing progressive Protestants attempted to hold to both modern thought and the historic Christian claims to the uniqueness of Christ and the reality of a personal God. The challenges of post-war era, however, presented a crisis that would turn their attention to theological and philosophical concerns. This renewed debate, described by Richard Allen as a shift from social reform to the "religious question,"¹⁴⁷ was not intended merely to evade the issues of moral or social reform. To the contrary, in the wake of World War I, their obvious failure to Christianize the social order had lead progressive Protestants to critique Canadian society more thoroughly, and to conclude that in some sense it had become secularized. Indeed, it was those most sympathetic to the social gospel's critique of western civilization, like Ernest Thomas, who were most alert to the emerging theological crisis. But this conclusion, combined with their historical self-consciousness and critical method, also deepened the difficulty of claiming a unique Christ and a personal God within experience, and by which modern society might be transformed. As Carl Braaten notes, World War I was a watershed for progressive Protestants who had confidently shared the assumptions of critical thought and the expectation of moral progress, but now found themselves struggling to affirm the very existence and possibility of knowing God.¹⁴⁸ Such was the case among

¹⁴⁶Allen, The Social Passion, 163.

¹⁴⁷Allen, The Social Passion, 229-230.

¹⁴⁸Carl E. Braaten, New Directions in Theology Today, Volume II: History and Hermeneutics (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966), 11-13.

mainline Canadian Protestants, for whom disenchantment with the late nineteenth century synthesis of history and God's Kingdom left not only Canadian culture, but the reality of God in question.

Although they would work out a more systematic alternative after 1924, the initial response of progressives to these challenges indicated that their solution would be to distinguish Christ and culture, particularly in such a way that identified the antithesis of sin and redemption with a renewed emphasis on a tension between spiritual reality and the structures and processes of nature. Their claim to the presence of spiritual reality in experience continued the themes of late nineteenth-century Kantian idealism. Nevertheless, their new emphasis on differentiating Christ and culture was a significant departure from the nineteenth-century aim of infusing the spirit into all of life.

The link between pre-war ideas and the post-war distinction of Christ and culture expressed by Ernest Thomas in response to the social gospel, and by J. Lovell Murray in "rethinking missions," was especially evident in the ideas of Methodist General Superintendent S. D. Chown. By the end of the war, Chown had repented of his support for the war effort and his mistaken belief that the war would contribute to a more Christian society.¹⁴⁹ The war, he believed, had shaken the very foundations of Christian faith in the reality and righteousness of God, and also confidence in human nature and the revelatory quality of history. What was needed for reconstruction, he argued in his promotion of "Christian Efficiency" near the end of the war, were not only programs of social reform and church union, but especially a renewal of "spiritual activity" that would save souls, and in doing so would unleash the forces that would save "Christian civilization for the world."¹⁵⁰

In his post-war speeches, Chown, like the Chaplains' Report, continued to call for preaching of the "social gospel," for a "Christian sociology," and for carrying Christianity into the relations between nations and between Capital and Labour in the principle of cooperation, but he did so on the

¹⁴⁹Marshall, "Methodism Embattled," 63.

¹⁵⁰S. D. Chown, "Conferences for Christian Efficiency," CG (February 7, 1917), 2.

premise that social questions were rooted in distinct moral and spiritual principles.¹⁵¹ In his national call to revival at the end of the war, Chown was careful to distinguish spiritual principles from natural structures. Significantly, he began by juxtaposing theology and philosophy. Both, he argued, spoke of reality as proceeding from the same spiritual source, but while philosophy could only study the trend of historical events and the "yearnings of humanity," theology spoke distinctly of the divine reality and source of the spirit. Christian thought, by which he seemed to mean theology, was affected by transcendence, while philosophy was limited to the immanence of God.¹⁵² He went on to argue that both philosophy and theology called man to a new order of "super-men." That new order, he believed, was emerging in the march of science, socialism, and Christianity. But he also warned that the present age was "full of danger for the Christian ministry" because of the temptation to view new social movements as sufficient in themselves to produce the new order, and to think only in terms of "scientifico-philosophic considerations." Even Rudolf Eucken's theory of creative evolution pointed to the underlying reality of spiritual life. Christianity's task, which he seemed to identify primarily with the clergy, was to minister to the divine agency of the spirit of God on which social progress depended. While social amelioration was needed, there also remained "the old and undiminished need of men for deliverance from sin and the assurance of personal salvation."

Chown thus regarded moral or spiritual principles as a transcendent reality distinct from the natural structures that were disclosed by philosophy. His continued insistence on the primacy of evangelism, as Michael Gauvreau shows, aimed to recover what Chown called the "divine natural" foundation for a modern evangelical faith against the "wisdomizing tendency" of modernity to confine

¹⁵¹See, for example, UCA, Biographical Files, S. D. Chown, newspaper clippings entitled "'The World Has Struck Its Tents And Is Once More On the March,'" Toronto Star (4 June 1919), and "Ample Opportunity Of Today Brings Before Modern Church Challenge To Greater Service," (no journal title, no date).

¹⁵²S. D. Chown, "Revival Now," CG (17 December 1918), 8-9.

itself to merely natural reality.¹⁵³ Chown's appeal to the "divine natural" suggested two possibilities: that though distinct, spiritual reality was present within historical experience; and that though spiritual principles and natural structures were distinct, they also were parallel and complementary. This second suggestion was evident in his support for church union. While urging that church union was needed to ensure effective accomplishment of its primary task of the religious and moral control of Canada for Protestantism, his famous phrase of 1922 referring to the "religio-political realm" indicated his perception of the church as the moral partner to the state, or, as Principal E. H. Oliver described it, the conscience of the nation.¹⁵⁴

Chown's concerns suggest that the rejection of revolutionary modernism was in part, as Robert Wright argues, the response of an older generation which was entrenched as leaders of the institutions of mainline Protestantism, and whose progressive evangelicalism was rooted in a nineteenth century Kantian idealism, like that taught by William Jordan and E. F. Scott at Queen's, which could assume an ontological dualism and the distinct reality of a personal transcendent God and divine spirit. Like Chown, many of the leading clerical administrators of church boards of evangelism, social service, and foreign missions were appointed to their positions before, or immediately after, World War I. Such was the case with board secretaries like Jesse Arnup in the Board of Foreign Missions with the Methodist and United churches (1913-52); H. E. Stillwell, secretary of the Canadian Baptist Foreign Mission Board (1919-39); R. P. Mackay, secretary of the Presbyterian Foreign Mission Committee (1892-1926); and field secretaries like James Endicott, of the Board of Foreign Missions for the Methodist and United churches (1911-36). Though critical of western civilization, they remained

¹⁵³Gauvreau, 257-58.

¹⁵⁴On Chown's view of church union, see N. Keith Clifford, The Resistance to Church Union in Canada 1904-1939 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985), 121. See also E. H. Oliver, "The Place and Work of the United Church in the Life of Canada," NO (10 June 1925), 19-20.

committed to a progressive but nevertheless evangelical and idealist Protestantism.¹⁵⁵

Among this entrenched leadership, however, figures like Chown, Ernest Thomas, and John Mackay were especially pivotal in the transition of that pre-war progressivism and Kantian idealism to the post-war era of disillusionment. Ernest Thomas was born in London, England in 1866 and, from his Wesleyan Methodist upbringing, had developed a missionary zeal that was satisfied by answering the call for missionaries from the Home Mission fields of the Methodist Church of Canada in 1890.¹⁵⁶ In addition to his mission work in the Montreal Conference of the Methodist Church, Thomas also studied at Wesleyan Theological College, Montreal, and at Queen's College in Kingston, until his ordination in 1894. After several pastoral positions, he was appointed as field secretary of the Board of Evangelism and Social Service of the Methodist (later United) Church (1918-1937). By then, Thomas was devoted to progressive social reform, and after moving to Toronto in 1918 his participation in the Life of Jesus group studies initiated by H. B. Sharman at Victoria College gave him contact with students and with leaders of the more revolutionary modernism like Hooke, Bland, and Ketchum. But while Ketchum and Hooke moved beyond those studies by dismissing Jesus as the norm for Christianity, Thomas would continue to regard them as essential to spiritual experience, and would become, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 4, the leading advocate of "fellowship studies" of Jesus into the late 1920's.

Thomas' continued interest in group studies of Jesus was similar to that of John Mackay, who was the Presbyterian founder of the Corpus Christi Movement. Born in the Owen Sound region of western Ontario, Mackay had studied at the University of Toronto (1894-1899) and Free Church College in Glasgow (1899-1902), where he would have contacted the developments on Ritschlian thought in the work of H. R. Mackintosh and James Denney, the latter of whom emphasized the post-

¹⁵⁵Wright, A World Mission, 111-113.

¹⁵⁶UCA, Biographical Files, "Ernest Thomas."

critical recovery of the living Person of Jesus testified by the gospels.¹⁵⁷ After serving at Crescent Street Presbyterian Church, and as temporary lecturer in the Presbyterian College in Montreal from 1902 to 1908, Mackay moved to British Columbia to help establish Westminster Hall as the Presbyterian Church's west coast seminary. From 1920 to 1938, he served as principal of Manitoba College. He also served on the Presbyterian Church's Foreign Mission Board (1909-1919) and its Board of Education (1914-1919), and during the 1920's he became involved in the Canadian Institute of International Affairs and the Institute of Pacific Relations.¹⁵⁸

As noted earlier, Mackay's pre-war opposition to church union, unlike conservative Presbyterians wishing to preserve the Presbyterian heritage and the Westminster standards, was based on his belief that the doctrine of the Basis of Union was out-dated, and that the proposed uniform institution was an unnecessary mechanical imposition on freedom. Mackay's commitment to a progressive and liberal piety was suggested by one editorialist's comment that Mackay was known for his learning and tolerance, and his concern to relate Scripture to the "common struggle of life in lay occupations."¹⁵⁹ That concern was directed primarily to the Corpus Christi Movement that he founded 1912. His writing after the war, which included Steps into the Larger Life (1918), The Life of Lives (1927), and Paul Another Chapter in the Life of Lives (1928), all of which were devotional booklets, continued his pre-war "modern" evangelism aimed at cultivating a common participation in the life of God's spirit through the direct experience of the person of Jesus. Religion, as he wrote in his Religion as Friendship with God; a New Statement of the Old Doctrines (1906), was essentially

¹⁵⁷UCA, Biographical Files, "John Mackay." See also Clifford, 43-4.

¹⁵⁸UCA, Biographical Files, "John Mackay."

¹⁵⁹ed., "Doctor John Mackay," Winnipeg Free Press (16 May 1938), in UCA, Biographical Files, "John Mackay."

the relationship between the two realities of the soul of man and the spirit of God.¹⁶⁰ The realities of the physical world were empty and meaningless apart from this relationship. And this relationship was to be fostered through small "friendship" studies of the person of Jesus.

Unlike Chown, both Mackay and Thomas arrived at their focus on the person of Jesus through the process of critical disillusionment with the nineteenth century moral vision of history. Like Mackay's progressive criticism of church union, Thomas' alternative to revolutionary modernism was developed in response to the demands of disillusioned students for "reality," modern thought, and social reform. In his crucial article in The Canadian Forum for June 1921, Thomas explained that he was by no means unsympathetic to the demands of doubters for critical free thought and for "reality."¹⁶¹ Indeed, while rejecting revolution, he urged the church to promote knowledge of society and the building of a new order which would value persons higher than machinery and profit, as well as knowledge of the Bible and the "social foundations of the church and Christianity." And it must do so especially through group discussions rather than from the isolation of the pulpit, in a way that allowed free expression of all views consistent with Christianity, for such freedom was of the essence of Christianity. Finally, the church must promote a "spirit of devotion to the common good," in contrast to any mere class interests. Here Thomas seemed to suggest not only the primacy of individual conscience, but also the existence of spiritual reality which was both distinguishable from particular social and historical identities, and universal in its claim.

Yet Thomas' concern for authentic spiritual reality, and his emphasis on experiencing the person of Jesus, seemed to turn historical criticism upon modern Protestantism itself in much the same fashion as Albert Schweitzer had done to the historical Jesus. Already in 1918, Thomas indicated his

¹⁶⁰John Mackay, Religion as Friendship with God: a New Statement of the Old Doctrines (Toronto: Westminster, 1906), 15.

¹⁶¹Thomas, "Social Reform and the Methodist Church," 264-266.

dis-satisfaction with the progressive, or what he called "liberal" Protestant treatment of religion in terms of evolution and environment, and its expectation that people could be perfected by changing their environment using the "machinery" of institutions.¹⁶² Again in a 1927 book review, Thomas suggested that the nineteenth century liberal view of Jesus as an ethical teacher was no more credible than the supernatural Jesus of fundamentalism. Both gave "one more piece of machinery, introduced to make good the failures of the machine which we call nature."¹⁶³ Indeed, Thomas considered both liberal and fundamentalist views of Jesus to be outmoded, static, and mechanical views which diminished the spiritual reality and the presence of the divine in experience that Jesus embodied.

Thomas also concurred with Ketchum's critique of the church's ties to the wealthy classes in its Inter-Church Forward Movement. His June 1921 article in The Canadian Forum admitted that these ties were evident in the U.S. in the attempts of "Steel Kings of Pittsburg [sic]" to cut off financial support to the Inter-Church Movement and to undermine the churches' advocacy of Christianizing industry when the Inter-Church Movement investigated a steel strike.¹⁶⁴ In the case of Canada, Thomas claimed more vaguely that efforts by business to pressure the churches in the Forward Movement were never fully organized and were successfully resisted. He went on to assure the Forum readers that, though Christianity could not be identified with a particular order or class, the "overwhelming preponderance of thoughtful opinion" would not "turn away from the effort to interpret Christianity in terms of the industrial and commercial order."

Rather than retreat from critical social thought, Thomas's views suggest a deepening and more comprehensive criticism of the historical structures of western thought and society. His departure

¹⁶²Allen, The Social Passion, 126-27, 256-57.

¹⁶³Ernest Thomas, review of The Historical Life of Christ. By J. Warschauer....London: Ernest Benn, Ltd. CJRT, 4, 2 (March-April 1927), 164.

¹⁶⁴Thomas, "Social Reform and the Methodist Church," 264-6.

from an optimistic modernism came through the application of critical thought to progressive Protestantism itself. And from this criticism, Thomas, like Hooke and Ketchum, perceived a growing crisis involving questions about both society and God. Amid the intense debates of the early 1920's,

Thomas noted already in 1921 that:

[t]he dominant interest in many religious quarters today is the search for reality, the conviction that life is not to be measured in terms of the things done, but in terms of man's participation in the eternal life. Consequently men are seeking the content of their faith; and doctrine, in no narrow sense of that term, is coming to its own again. It is not something external to religion, but is the attempt to express in terms of reason the true inwardness of the Christian faith.¹⁶⁵

In his review of the 1925 Religious Education Association conference in Milwaukee, Thomas again warned that doubt and uncertainty now put the very nature and norm for religion into question:

Is every religious experience valid? Is it really religious? Is every kind of religious experience really desirable? If not, on what basis shall some be sought and others rejected? Shall experiences be counted desirable unless they prove to be socially fruitful? What then happens to religious experience as an actual enhancement of personality?¹⁶⁶

Finally, in the heat of debate during 1923, Thomas sympathetically conveyed the concerns and challenge of revolutionary modernists to the mainline churches.¹⁶⁷ There was, he claimed, a growing "insurgency" within the church, marked by rebellion of clergy and parishioners alike against the "headquarters" of the church and a growing sense of frustration with the ineffectiveness of the local ministry of the church in addressing modern life. Based on the findings of a survey of the prairie provinces, he identified three main concerns in the church. First, the "comradeship" or social community of the church lacked vitality. Secondly, the worship lacked the "sublimity" necessary for genuine and lasting inspiration. And thirdly, the preaching and teaching of the church were unrelated to "the general mass

¹⁶⁵Thomas, "Social Reform and the Methodist Church," 264-6.

¹⁶⁶Edward Trelawney [Ernest Thomas], "Religious Experience and Education," NQ (22 July 1925), 5.

¹⁶⁷Ernest Thomas, "Insurgent Movements in the Church," CF, 3 no. 29 (February 1923), 140-142.

of knowledge of the modern man."¹⁶⁸ In contrast to Chown, Thomas blamed the challenge of modernism not on the threat of modern thought, but on the lack of "spiritual efficiency" within the church itself. Religion, he argued, had become "excessively pragmatic," with the church accepting the standards of business in measuring success by the size of its rallies and the amount of money it raised rather than seeking like Jesus to create "right human relations." Meanwhile, its dependence on businessmen risked allowing financiers to control the church and silence its criticism of capitalism. Thus the reconstruction hoped for after the war had been diverted by a deeper commercialism within the church which accepted the attempt to increase man's control over the physical world, - to exercise "the will to power," with no corresponding responsibility for the use and direction of those forces. Thus, the problem was due not simply to the threat of science, but to the church's own participation in the ideologies and social structure of modern western civilization.

Given this diagnosis of a church entangled in the status quo, Thomas welcomed "insurgent movements" as "redemptive agencies,"¹⁶⁹ for they promised to increase the spiritual energies of the church. Rightly, they challenged the conservative routines or mechanical obstructions within the church and pressed it to renewed efforts to "make real to ourselves those mystical experiences or historical achievements which are voiced in the earliest Christian literature[.]" In demanding reality, they also opened questions about the adequacy of traditional creeds, the need for more fitting symbolic worship to express "the deep things of the spirit," the methods of traditional Sunday School classes, and the social fellowship of the church and its relation to the state and society. Furthermore, the search for spiritual reality was necessary for rediscovering the church's prophetic task of challenging the prevailing political-economy with the call to service. Since western society was entrenched in a system which resisted God's spirit, Christians could no longer rely on the state to Christianize society,

¹⁶⁸Thomas, "Insurgent Movements in the Church," 140-142.

¹⁶⁹Thomas, "Insurgent Movements in the Church," 140-142.

nor could they finally give their loyalty to the existing system.¹⁷⁰

In his own way, Thomas' concern for authentic spiritual reality, and his criticism of the existing order, suggested a no less revolutionary antithesis between the church and the structures of western civilization. "What shall the Christian fellowship do," he queried,

with the organized life which through its official heads so scoffs at the ideas of business and industry being dominated primarily by the quest for service rather than for private gain? What responsibility rests on the church to resist the demands of the state when those demands are based on the desire to perpetuate the very factors which resist the Christian spirit?¹⁷¹

In answer, Thomas argued that the church had its own unique identity:

[i]t is no longer sufficient to assert the technical supremacy of the state. The church has its heritage of martyrs and a new list may have yet to be made. We worship One who was executed on a charge of sedition; and so the charge of sedition can never be a final verdict for the Christian.

The church's task was to recover the spiritual sources, and a distinct spiritual community, in a battle against the world of existing social structures.

Thomas' analysis portrayed a new state of affairs for Christianity in modern culture. Modern culture had become secularized, -- so much so that God himself, and the finality of Christ, were in question. Moreover, the church and its theology had become accomplices in that secular culture. Like the searching students whose views he conveyed, Thomas sought to cut through the impeding secular "machinery" of social structures and the limits of the modern sciences, as well as the supernatural authoritarianism of fundamentalism, to a direct experience of spiritual reality.¹⁷² Unlike the more radical evolutionary positivism of Hooke and Ketchum, Thomas would continue to regard Jesus as the incarnation of spiritual reality disentangled from western culture, and from the "hermeneutic of

¹⁷⁰Thomas, "Insurgent Movements in the Church," 140-142.

¹⁷¹Thomas, "Insurgent Movements in the Church," 140-142.

¹⁷²ed., "The Central Student Conference," CJRT, 1, no. 5 (September-October, 1924), 369.

suspicion" which was the legacy of critical historicism he sought the discovery of authentic spirituality behind historical structures in a direct encounter with the "person" of Jesus. By definition, such a spiritual encounter must be free and moral, unobstructed by the "machinery" of institutions and structures, and it must lead to a moral redirection of believers to the open-ended and undefined "adventure" of the spirit of love that Jesus revealed. Such a recovery of the vital roots of Christian faith and society would revive the church community, but would also place it in tension with modern secular culture.

But how could such a unique Jesus be encountered, and how could a unique spiritual reality be claimed in the midst of historical experience, and from the perspective of modern critical thought? It was precisely these points that lay at the heart of the challenge of radical modernists like Hooke. Moderate progressives' responses to the writings of Hooke and Ketchum in 1923 indicate both the dilemma for progressive Protestants and the solution that they would take. On the one hand, some respondents objected to the proposals of Ketchum and Hooke on the grounds that their "science" was, as one observer who claimed to be a practicing scientist chided, naive. The scientific method, he claimed, was limited to the sphere of natural phenomena, and could make no affirmation or denial about supernatural reality.¹⁷³ Another observer also insisted on the limits of science, arguing that though science might reveal some of the laws of God's creation, it was not adequate to reveal the Creator, for "far greater than all His works is He, Himself."¹⁷⁴ Science and the natural world could not supersede the infinite powers of man's maker.

While these objections questioned Ketchum's and Hooke's views of science, F. J. Moore challenged their view of religion in a two-part response. He agreed that science could not support the proposed new divinity, for "[w]hen Science has told us all it has to say there is still a further step to

¹⁷³Donald D. McKay, "Correspondence," CF, 3, no. 32 (May 1923), 237-238.

¹⁷⁴W. A. Robinson, "Correspondence," CF, 3, no. 35 (August 1923), 334-335.

be taken before Religion is possible."¹⁷⁵ But furthermore, Moore doubted that Ketchum's portrayal of an impersonal God could sustain a religious life that was more than merely ethical behaviour. In fact, according to Moore, the new theology was a regression in the development of religion, for it proposed to revert from the high point of knowledge of a Personal and Universal God to a more primitive and vaguely felt impersonal divinity. Religion, Moore argued quoting Jonathan Edwards, consisted "'in great part in holy affections'," and in "a communion in which the human will and affections are submerged and embraced in the Divine."¹⁷⁶ It must therefore retain in its view of the Ultimate Reality such personal properties as Intelligence, Will, Design, Forethought, which we are aware of in ourselves. As the students themselves demonstrated in their turn away from prayer, one could not have communion with an impersonal "Life-force;" in fact, such a God was essentially amoral,— a God of power and ruthless necessity,— and therefore unable either to uphold a Divine moral imperative or to grant forgiveness.¹⁷⁷ In the contrast between its vision of a biological life-force and the historic Christian confession of a personal God embodied in the Christ of the Church, Moore concluded that the new theology was a "novel" religion rather than the expression of Christianity.¹⁷⁸

Together, these criticisms suggested that continuing progressives would attempt to solve the challenge of modernity partly by distancing science and religion, and partly by insisting on the distinct and transcendent personality of God. According to Moore, Christianity and modern secular civilization would be transformed only by infusing it, through the church, with "the free and

¹⁷⁵F. J. Moore, "Correspondence," CF, 3, no. 32 (May 1923), 236-237.

¹⁷⁶F. J. Moore, "Correspondence," CF, 3, no. 35 (July 1923), 301-302.

¹⁷⁷F. J. Moore, "Correspondence," CF, 3, no. 32 (May 1923), 236-237; and no. 35 (July 1923), 301-2.

¹⁷⁸F. J. Moore, "Correspondence," CF, 3, no. 35 (July 1923), 301-302.

adventurous spirit of its Founder."¹⁷⁹ Here were the roots of the neo-Kantian apologetic, differentiating between nature and spirit, that would be developed during the mid-1920's.

A potentially more ominous challenge to both revolutionary modernism and progressive Protestantism, however, came in related comments on the "new idealism" by University of Toronto philosopher George Brett and University of Toronto political-economist R. M. MacIver. From their historicist and pragmatic perspectives, Brett and MacIver questioned whether science could support any ontological claims about the existence of metaphysical spiritual reality within the world. In a 1923 review of May Sinclair's The New Idealism, Brett noted that revolutions in mathematics, physics and biology had challenged the faith that "something akin to thought was the real stuff of the Universe and that to be, in any proper sense, means to be known."¹⁸⁰ The ideas of Russell, Whitehead, and Einstein that Sinclair examined, and that Hooke and Ketchum acclaimed, reflected both a new "realism" and a new "idealism." That is, they acknowledged the reality of space, time, and causality, rather than treating them merely as mental postulations and abstractions, yet their demonstration of the reality of intelligible laws meant that "our realism must be a new rationalism." The new claims which identified "spiritual principles" with the real laws within the historical process offered a new idealism in place of the absolutist and transcendent metaphysics of the nineteenth century.

Neither Brett nor MacIver were convinced, however, that the new idealism had demonstrated that consciousness was a meta-physical reality within experience. Sinclair's proposals, Brett argued, assumed an essentially static ontology that still was left with the difficulty of distinguishing the "matter" of experience in the physical dimensions of "primary consciousness" from secondary consciousness.¹⁸¹ Without this distinction, the new realism could as easily support materialist

¹⁷⁹F. J. Moore, "Correspondence," CE, 3, no. 35 (July 1923), 301-302.

¹⁸⁰G. S. Brett, "A Woman in Philosophy," CE, 3, no. 31 (April 1923), 212-213.

¹⁸¹Brett, "A Woman in Philosophy," 212-213.

behaviourism such as that of the American psychologist John B. Watson. And in a review of a French work that claimed to arrive at metaphysical reality through psychology, MacIver likewise questioned the attempt to prove "metaphysics" through psychology. The author's claim to a new science of metaphysics through the study of dreams and the reports of subconscious phenomena, MacIver complained, was simply naive subjectivism.¹⁸²

Brett's own proposal to overcome the duality of consciousness and the "real" external world was to consider "things" as "events" so that reality could be found in "the pure events of our experience."¹⁸³ In a fuller article on the relation of science and modern philosophy in 1926, Brett argued that Kant especially had laid the foundations of modern critical and historical thought in turning philosophy from abstract speculation about the metaphysical essence of reality to problems of the nature of knowledge and the ends and function of the mind.¹⁸⁴ These changes, popularized in Pragmatism, both limited and extended the scope of philosophy. The task of philosophy was now reduced to the analysis and synthesis of all knowledge from the more limited sciences into a "total interpretation of experience." Though limited, Brett claimed that this approach had the benefit of taking the history and role of the mind as a reality rather than an abstraction. Nevertheless, Brett's new historical approach to philosophy had decisively abandoned claims to knowledge about the ontological reality of the external world. Not unlike Nietzsche, Brett had interiorized the problem of ontology within the mind and reduced the external world to a process of undefined events, to be defined only by and for the functional mind.

On a similar theme, MacIver's review of Havelock Ellis's The Dance of Life, which celebrated the free movement of the "elan vital," signified the emergence of a new problematic in the conflict

¹⁸²R. M. MacIver, "The Bookshelf: Metaphysics," CE, 4, no. 37 (October 1923), 23-24.

¹⁸³Brett, "A Woman in Philosophy," 212-213.

¹⁸⁴G. S. Brett, "The Philosopher's Stone," CE, 6, no. 72 (September 1926), 370-372.

between consciousness and nature. MacIver warned that the mystical "art" of life in conscious activity invariably, by natural necessity, became entrenched in the material struggle for survival and the webs of ritual, institutional authority, and fear which quenched "the springing flames of intuitive religion." In a variation on Jean-Jacques Rousseau's conflict between consciousness and nature, MacIver suggested that a "war" existed between the determined order of constructed civilization and creative spirit. Disappointed with Ellis's work, MacIver pleaded for reconciliation of the rhythm of nature with the course of consciousness and human activity, - a disclosure of "the meeting place of mind and nature" in "some yet undiscovered law that transcends the bounds between the sentient and the inanimate."¹⁸⁵

The import of this shift in critical thought from metaphysical ontology to a self-sufficient process between mind and nature was enormous for progressive Protestants. Combined with their awareness of their own entanglement in the secular structures of western civilization, the shift in critical thought left progressive Protestants with the problem of how modern thought could still claim the unique reality of God that transcended the processes of nature and civilization and might transform human life.

Throughout 1924 and 1925, the writings of progressive Protestants echoed the theme of crisis in the search for reality. In a 1924 editorial in the newly-founded Canadian Journal of Religious Thought (CJRT), modern youth were described as searching for spiritual truth with a new earnestness, and also with a critical viewpoint:

Their concern is less with creeds and dogmas than with the insistent issues of life. 'What does Christianity really mean?' 'Who is Jesus Christ and wherein does His authority consist?' 'Is His way of life practicable for the world today?'¹⁸⁶

For student "seekers," the very possibility, measured in terms of practical meaning, of faith in God

¹⁸⁵R. M. MacIver, "The Dance of Life," CF, 4, no. 42 (March 1924), 172-174.

¹⁸⁶ed., "The Student Christian Movement," CJRT, 1, no. 3 (May-June 1924), 185-186.

was in question. In a 1925 article on "Teaching Religion to Childhood and Youth" Rev. C. A. Myers, field secretary for the United Church's Religious Education Department, noted that the experience of war and the failure of the church had given new urgency to educating children in the gospel of Jesus.¹⁸⁷ That task, however, faced the new challenges of materialism, wealth, amusements and recreation, transportation and communication, which distracted youth from a personal relation to Christ. In another article, Rev. John Moore noted that the rise of modern science, in particular, had envisioned a world in which the traditional doctrine of Christ was difficult for youth to accept.¹⁸⁸

J. W. Bainbridge especially captured the sense of transition in modern thought and society. Bainbridge warned that the task of educating youth in the gospel had become difficult because of the scientific principles and critical, experimental method taught already to children in the schools. Youth as well as adults had been pried loose from earlier beliefs.

They can no longer believe in an ultra-human God and a mechanical creation, and yet they have no adequate conception of the Personal Spiritual Soul of the Universe and the process of His evolutionary Creation. The literal interpretation of an infallible Bible is no longer tenable to them, but as yet they have no tangible concept of the larger understanding of inspiration and the more divine-like purpose of the Bible. They have lost their footing on the old view-point but have not been firmly established on the new.¹⁸⁹

In response to these challenges, Myers, Moore, and Bainbridge all called for new efforts in practical, scientific education that would make religion intelligible and acceptable to youth.

Though intended more to promote scholarship than education of youth, the formation of the CJRT in 1924, shortly after the debates of 1923, was one answer to this crisis. Among its founding

¹⁸⁷Rev. Dr. C. A. Myers, "Teaching Religion to Childhood and Youth; An Old Task With a New Need," NO (10 June 1925), 9.

¹⁸⁸Rev. John Moore, "Religion, Youth and the Church," NO (29 July 1925), 5-6.

¹⁸⁹J. W. Bainbridge, letter to the editor, NO (October 1925).

editorial board were F. J. Moore and George Brett,¹⁹⁰ and after its first year of publication it boasted a general business manager in George Brockwell King and 700 subscriptions.¹⁹¹ The professed aim of the CJRT was to promote "vital" religious thought that would meet the challenges of contemporary thinking and living. The opening editorial of the CJRT explained the occasion for the renewed challenge of theological and philosophical debate:

A few years ago, at the close of the war, many were saying that in the future the Church would pay less attention to doctrine and more to practical living and ... social reconstruction....The very insistence of the practical problems have led men to endeavor to get a deeper understanding of the Christian faith...The dominant interest in many religious quarters to-day is the search for reality... Consequently men are seeking the content of their faith; and doctrine, in no narrow sense of the term, is coming back into its own again. It is not something external to religion, but is the attempt to express in terms of reason the true inwardness of the Christian faith.¹⁹²

The crux of the modern crisis had shifted from social application to the more fundamental problem of recovering certainty about the reality and nature of God. Such a task, it admitted, was "harder than ever." The apparent failure of practical reconstruction of the new order, the post-war weariness and tragic disillusionment, the mechanized work of industrial capitalism, the formal and bureaucratic system of education, and the timidity of conservative religion all were choking out the "divinely given urges of the soul" that naturally directed all people to religion and creativity.¹⁹³ Nevertheless, these same conditions created the demand for renewed religion, which now was the more necessary to enable the church, according to the CJRT's editors, to "breathe into society" the spirit of God that would transform its culture and liberate its oppressed.

In the second number, the editors indicated their desired direction by referring to a lecture

¹⁹⁰"Mostly About People," NO (10 February 1926), 17; John A. Irving, "The Achievement of George Sydney Brett," University of Toronto Quarterly, 14, no. 4 (July 1945), 342.

¹⁹¹"Our Enterprise," CJRT, 1, no. 6 (November-December 1924), 457.

¹⁹²"Editorial," CJRT, 1, no. 1 (January-February, 1924), 1-5.

¹⁹³"Editorial," CJRT, 1, no. 1 (January-February, 1924), 1-5.

given at Yale by B. W. Bacon entitled "The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow." Bacon had noted, first, that the growing separation of "church and state" threatened to drive religion and secular life apart. In education, for example, secularism was "committing more and more of education to a secularized, commercialized and avowedly utilitarian state." Secondly, Bacon argued that fundamentalism and modernism were becoming increasingly polarized, with neither offering an acceptable Christianity. Modernism offered only "a narrow 'liberalism' which evacuates Christianity of its religious content, which discounts 'the word of the Cross' as the central element in the faith, and which, by reducing the gospel of Jesus to mere ethical teaching, Judaizes it and turns the whole passionate experience of the Christian Church into delusion..." And with its "obsolete" theory of Scripture and withdrawal into sectarian institutions, fundamentalism threatened only to divide learning and evangelical ministry. In contrast to both of these, the spirit breathed by the church, the editorial urged, must be that of an "evangelical and enlightened Christianity" which insisted on more effective preaching of the essentials of Christianity, but which yet would be worthy of the respect of science.¹⁹⁴

V. Conclusion:

The position adopted by the CJRT was significant in several ways. First, in repudiating the extremes of both fundamentalism and modernism, it acknowledged the fragmentation of the nineteenth century evangelical consensus. That fragmentation emerged as the tenuous evangelical synthesis of history and God's spirit proved its untenability in the tragedy of World War I. Secondly, though continuing progressive Protestants would continue to identify themselves as the mainline Christian "church" in Canada, they now also regarded their own Christianity as in tension with the structures of Canadian society and history. Through their own moral concern and critical scholarship, they had concluded

¹⁹⁴"Editorial," CJRT 1, no. 2 (March-April, 1924), 91-93.

that modern western civilization had become secularized. In contrast to nineteenth-century efforts to synthesize Christianity and secular culture, they now conceded the opposition of modern thought and social structures to Christianity. And in epitomizing modern civilization as secular, they moved to a new emphasis on antithesis, which they located between the spiritual reality of Christ and contemporary culture.

This problematizing of history, however, complicated the third commitment of continuing progressive Protestants, namely that of an "enlightened evangelicalism." In keeping with nineteenth century evangelicalism, progressive Protestants continued to assume that Christianity was essentially an immediate encounter with divine reality in human experience, particularly in conscience, and that this experience would transform personal morality and social relations. In his reply to Ketchum and Hooke, F. J. Moore had reiterated this tradition by claiming Jonathan Edwards and Friedrich Schleiermacher together as heroes of evangelicalism.¹⁹⁵ This commitment to experience, in turn, warranted continued commitment to a critical epistemology, and it ensured that modern Protestants would demand an historical revelation as the starting point of their apologetic for Christianity.

In the post-war years, however, this commitment to modern critical thought and historical revelation was rendered paradoxical by the tragedy and secularization of history and the trend in critical thought to exclude spiritual and metaphysical reality from the processes and structures of nature. Progressive Protestants would attempt to resolve this problem by simultaneously accepting the validity of modern critical thought, and by attempting to go beyond the limits of nature and history to distinguish a unique spiritual reality from the structures of the world.

This strategy, however, would remain subject to the "hermeneutics of suspicion" and the historical self-consciousness of post-Kantian critical thought. Consequently, the challenge of modernist doubt would continue to reverberate through Protestant attempts to develop an "enlightened

¹⁹⁵F. J. Moore, "Correspondence," Canadian Forum, 3, no. 35 (July 1923), 301-302.

and evangelical" apologetic: how, from a critical perspective, could Protestants demonstrate or affirm the experience of God? how could they distinguish God from mythology and psychology? how could they be discerned in a unique revelation in Jesus? and how could the experience of spiritual reality be related to history in such a way as to transform human life? In short, how could authentic spiritual experience come to humans when they were entangled in the processes and structures of history?

Though the paradox of it would not be apparent until the later 1920's, progressive Protestants sought a renewed spiritual vitality that could satisfy the demands for experience, critical thought, and the transformation of life in terms of freedom -- demands which arose from the very culture which they now considered to be secularized. Their response in defense of "enlightened evangelicalism" would consist in the attempt to move from human experience and consciousness to a spiritual reality which was disentangled from natural structures and located in the unique personal relationship between human consciousness, a personal God, and the Incarnate Jesus.

Chapter 3:

Modern Evangelicalism and the Quest for God, 1924-28

During August and September of 1925, Ernest Thomas published a series of articles in the New Outlook charging the newly formed United Church with its spiritual task. His theme in these messages was the quest for spiritual reality:

Never in our day was there such an interest in religion as we now witness. There is a quest for God such as our generation has not known. It is, however, a quest, not an assured discovery. After a generation of bald services in which sermons predominated, and after a period in which preaching was essentially either 'practical' or oratorical, the heart cries out for the living God.¹

Thomas welcomed a variety of efforts to pursue this quest, from the "daring adventures" of the Student Christian Movement to the new church architecture which restored the choir to the veiled chancel balcony and emphasized mystical worship. All of these offered some way of "achieving communion with the Unseen and Eternal," and of confirming that God "could be heard speaking and found working in the movement of history." In the light of this reality, the church's task was to "release such spiritual powers" to enable seekers to achieve that communion with God and cooperate in his divine plan for history.²

Thomas's vision of spiritual adventure was part of a broader effort among moderately progressive Canadian Protestants during the mid-1920's to answer the challenges of fundamentalism and modernism, and the realities of tragedy and secularized culture, by constructing the "enlightened evangelicalism" called for by the editors of the Canadian Journal of Religious Thought (CJRT). Issued in 1924, that call signified a period of renewed theological and philosophical debate among

¹Ernest Thomas, "'Prepare to Meet Thy God,'" New Outlook (NO) (2 September 1925), 5.

²Thomas, "'Prepare to Meet Thy God.'" See also Ernest Thomas, "Should the United Church Condemn War? Article II. We Wrestle Not Against Flesh and Blood," NO (12 August 1925), 5.

moderately progressive Canadian Protestants. Their central problem, as F. J. Moore had indicated in reply to J. Davidson Ketchum and S. H. Hooke, was to find the reality of a personal God, but without retreating from the critical perspective of modern thought.

The first phase of reconstructing an "enlightened evangelicalism," to be examined in this chapter, centred on the revival of a neo-Kantian apologetic for religion and a "second search" for the personality of the historical Jesus. Among the systematic advocates of this reconstructed apologetic in Canada were those, like William Morgan, Ernest Scott, and John Baillie, who were trained prior to the war in the neo-Kantian ideas of Albrecht Ritschl and Adolf Harnack, and the personal idealism of A. S. Pringle-Pattison. Though aware of the profound alienation and crisis of faith in the post-war world, their reconstructed apologetic continued the tradition of neo-Kantian idealism and moderate historical criticism cultivated by early twentieth-century scholars like William Jordan at Queen's.

At the heart of their neo-Kantian apologetic was the claim that "religion" consisted of a unique realm of spiritual relations between humans and a personal God, and that human consciousness of moral absolutes confirmed both the unique nature of human persons as free moral agents and the reality of a transcendent personal God. This internal experience, in turn, was validated by the historical Incarnation of divine reality in the person of Jesus. Though the events of history no longer were reliable manifestations of divine purpose, human moral consciousness and a revived study of the "personality" of Jesus promised to reaffirm the nineteenth century hope of discovering the metaphysical reality of God within historical experience. As well, the new apologetic restated the nineteenth-century evangelical version of the analogia entis that identified human consciousness with the divine, so as to provide a modern scientific apologetic that began from human experience. The new apologetic thus attempted to move from God's "immanence" in human consciousness and the historical Jesus, to the transcendent reality of God.

During the mid-1920's this reconstructed apologetic offered new confidence to progressive

Protestants, and served especially as the unofficial but de facto doctrine of the United Church. Formed June 10, 1925, the United Church of Canada brought most moderate progressives from the Congregational, Methodist, and Presbyterian congregations under a single institution. Ironically, the fracture of the nineteenth century evangelical consensus relieved progressive Protestants from the difficult task of mediating between fundamentalism and revolutionary modernism, allowing them now to fully embrace the moderate critical method that once made the ideas of scholars like George Jackson so controversial.

Though this neo-Kantian apologetic seemed to provide a creative reconstruction of the nineteenth century historical theology,³ the post-war version included several significant departures. In striking contrast to pre-war efforts to infuse the claims of God's Kingdom into all of life, the post-war reconstruction was a defensive apologetic which tried to disentangle spiritual reality from natural structures and processes even while locating the spiritual within historical experience. Ultimately, this theme of differentiation surrendered natural and social structures, and the scientific study of them, not only to the belief that they had become secularized in the sense that they were opposed to God's Kingdom, but to the view that they were parts of a natural order which was structurally closed to God. Also, in the context of post-war self-critical consciousness, confidence that the intuitions of moral consciousness were related to transcendent and universal principles soon withered under the scrutiny of critical social sciences like psychology.

The new apologetic, therefore, was limited. It did stimulate a revival of Biblical studies and philosophical debate, as well as a resurgence of modern "personal evangelism." And by differentiating Christ from nature and linking him with moral consciousness, it enabled moderate Protestants to claim the therapeutic guarantee of moral freedom for persons in what seemed an indifferent and complex

³Michael Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century: College and Creed in English Canada from the Great Revival to the Great Depression (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 280.

world. Nevertheless, this disentanglement seemed also to leave in question the relationship of Christianity and God's Kingdom to Canadian society. Indeed, its subjective claims to the spiritual significance of values seemed finally merely to consecrate rather than transform western civilization. By 1928, even its advocates were moving beyond the new apologetic in search of a more radical understanding of God's transcendent word and work, and its significance for transforming Canadian civilization.

I. The New Apologetic

Renewed debate during the mid-1920's of what Richard Allen calls the "religious question"⁴ was premised on the belief that western civilization had become secularized, and that critical thought had placed in question the reality of God. Since the Chaplains' Report and throughout early 1920's, the perception of progressive Protestants was that uncertainty, agnosticism, and searching for spiritual reality were the fundamental problems for Christianity in Canada. As the opening editorial of the CJRT put it,

The dominant interest in many religious quarters to-day is the search for reality... Consequently men are seeking the content of their faith; and doctrine, in no narrow sense of the term, is coming back into its own again. It is not something external to religion, but is the attempt to express in terms of reason the true inwardness of the Christian faith.⁵

The crux of the search for reality, the editorial continued, concerned the modern conception of God and the need to recover spiritual reality. Consequently, though the early editorial policy of the CJRT under F. J. Moore and George Brett included a variety of commentary on modern "religious education," changes in worship, the needs of preaching, and contemporary politics, early volumes were

⁴Richard Allen, The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada 1914-28 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 229-230.

⁵"Editorial," Canadian Journal of Religious Thought (CJRT), 1, no. 1 (January-February, 1924), 1-5.

dominated especially by articles on theology and philosophy.

In assuming modern thought and society to be secularized, advocates of the new apologetic accepted the modern problematic of doubt and the scientific interpretation of a world closed to God, and proceeded to argue for a distinct spiritual presence in the world. As F. J. Moore insisted in response to J. Davidson Ketchum and S. H. Hooke, Christianity still rested on communion with a uniquely divine Jesus and a personal God.⁶ The difficulty of the mid-1920's for progressive Protestants was to articulate and justify this traditional evangelical confession in terms that would satisfy the modern critical mind. While positivist and evolutionary sciences seemed to repudiate a uniquely divine reality, Albert Schweitzer's critique had discredited the historical Jesus portrayed as teacher of liberal social ethics. The patent failure of western civilization to realize the Kingdom of God, meanwhile, occasioned renewed criticism of Canadian society and the redoubling of efforts at moral revival, but it also raised suspicions about the ability of historical structures to reveal the divine, and about the complicity of Protestants in those historical structures. In short, the search for a new apologetic was conducted from the context of historical self-consciousness, yet attempted to move from that consciousness to a transcendent divine reality.

Progressive Protestants attempted to meet this challenge by cutting through or bypassing, as Thomas had suggested, the "mechanisms" of a now compromised culture in order to recover authentic spiritual reality. Like Thomas's search for a disentangled Christ, this approach also implied that spiritual experience was distinct from, more immediate, and transcendent beyond the structured world of social relations. James Smyth, principal of Wesleyan Theological College, Montreal, made this point most clearly in claiming that modern man could no longer return to the authoritative creeds and simple revivalism of fundamentalism, but neither could religion be reduced to social reform or moral

⁶F. J. Moore, "Correspondence," Canadian Forum (CF), Vol. 3, No. 32 (May 1923), 236-237, and Vol. 3, No. 35 (July 1923), 301-302.

improvement:

Many earnest people...are inclined to make a religion out of the call for social justice. But religion and social reform are not synonymous. More is needed than social enthusiasm to meet permanently the spiritual aspirations of the human heart. Religion in its essence is a response to the ideal and the eternal. It is life in connection with the unseen.⁷

Smyth went on, however, to insist that this connection with the unseen was to be gained within experience, to meet the modern demand that truth be authenticated in the individual soul. Religious experience of the transcendent, Smyth suggested, could be identified as "the appeal of the truth to the highest and best in us, - if you will, the Divine Spirit speaking through the consecrated faculties of heart and mind...." And this experience, in turn, would have an impact on experiential life through "deliverance from all that is opposed to the ideals of the Kingdom and their realization in the life of the individual and society." It could, as a result, be tested by what Ernest Thomas called "its actual enhancement of personality."⁸

The initial philosophical and theological solution to the problem of justifying the "Divine Spirit" in the "heart and mind" was worked out during the mid-1920's through a neo-Kantian apologetic and a new emphasis on the person of Jesus, especially by William Morgan (1862-1928), John Baillie (1886-1960), and Ernest F. Scott. Scott offered studies of the "person" of Jesus, and in doing so contributed to the renewed "second quest" for the historical Jesus. Morgan and Baillie offered major works, as well as articles in the CJRT, on apologetics for religion. Using the neo-Kantian ideas of Ritschl and Pringle-Pattison, they argued that spiritual reality was recognized by the intuition of moral values. Their appeal to Kant's epistemology assumed the primacy of experience and critical method, and yet claimed on the grounds of moral certainty a realm of spiritual relations

⁷James Smyth, "The Faith of the Modern Man," CJRT 1, no.1 (January-February 1924), 61-70. See also A. B. McKillop, Contours of Canadian Thought (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 116.

⁸Edward Trelawney [Ernest Thomas], "Religious Experience and Education," NO (22 July 1925), 5.

that included both human moral freedom and a personal God.

The early careers of these scholars show close links with the reverent criticism of Queen's theologians like William Jordan, and to the neo-Kantian ideas of German scholars like Ritschl and Harnack and personal idealists in Scotland. Morgan and Scott were colleagues with Jordan at Queen's Theological Seminary following its separation in 1912 from the secularized Queen's University. While Scott came to Queen's as professor of New Testament Theology already in 1908, William Morgan arrived at Queen's as professor of Systematic Theology in 1912. Born in Scotland, he had studied at Aberdeen and United Presbyterian College at Edinburgh, and at Halle, Germany. Scott and Morgan became close friends and collaborating colleagues until Morgan's sudden death in 1928.⁹ Scott would leave Queen's for Union Theological Seminary in 1919, but would continue to publish in Canadian journals like the CJRT, and thereby participate in Canadian discussions as well as encourage links between Canadian moderate Protestants and Union Theological Seminary.

John Baillie came to Canada in 1927 as T. B. Kilpatrick's successor in Systematic Theology at Emmanuel College following its establishment after church union.¹⁰ Like Morgan, Baillie was born in Scotland, the son of strict Free Church parents. During his studies at Edinburgh's New College, he assisted A. S. Pringle-Pattison and H. R. Mackintosh, and became familiar with the work of James Denney. Combined with summer studies at Marburg under Ritschl's student Wilhelm Herrmann, Baillie's education steeped him in developments on Ritschlian theology and personal idealism. After serving as a steward at the 1910 World Missionary Conference and as a volunteer in YMCA communication and education services for British forces during World War I, Baillie was recruited by Auburn Theological Seminary in New York from 1919-1927, with the hope that he would

⁹United Church Archives, Biographical files, "William Morgan," newspaper clipping, H. A. Kent, "Late Rev. William Morgan, D.D.," NO (8 February 1928).

¹⁰"New Professor for Knox College," NO (2 February 1927), 2.

mediate the conflict between fundamentalism and liberalism.¹¹ His brief tenure at Emmanuel College, from 1927 to 1930, was followed by his move to Union Theological Seminary, where he would contact the ideas of Reinhold Niebuhr and H. Sloan Coffin, and in 1934 he would return to Edinburgh's Free College, there becoming one of Scotland's leading twentieth century theologians. As a group, Scott, Morgan, and Baillie brought the ideas of Ritschl and Pringle-Pattison, and of post-Ritschlian Scottish theologians like H. R. Mackintosh and James Denney, to Canada, and their work marks the peak of neo-Kantian personal idealism in Canadian Protestant thought.

Especially through the work of William Jordan, the neo-Kantian tradition of reverent criticism was well-established at Queen's already before the war. In a 1913 review of theological literature, Jordan had anticipated the challenges of the critical social sciences by criticizing prominent American psychologists of religion such as Edward Scribner Ames and George Coe. These scholars, Jordan warned, reduced religion to a purely natural phenomenon that was defined by its origin in human consciousness and its function in social life. Such theories meant that religion was merely a matter of attitude and education that could be manipulated by psychological techniques, rather than a sense of an infinite divine reality.¹² In contrast, Jordan guardedly commended George Blewett's The Christian View of the World (1911) for describing the theologian's task as keeping alive, in the common field of life, "a prophecy of the intuition and the love" of God. Intuition of the reality of God, though science could not speak to it, remained for Jordan the core of religion.

The apologetic efforts of Morgan and Baillie were devoted to defending this conception of religion. Even before his arrival in Canada, Baillie had written two major works, The Roots of Religion in the Human Soul (1926) and The Interpretation of Religion (1928), that were remarkably

¹¹D. S. Klinefelter, "The Theology of John Baillie: A Biographical Introduction," Scottish Journal of Theology, 22, no. 4 (December 1969), 423-424.

¹²William Jordan, "Theological Literature," Queen's Quarterly 20, no. 3 (January 1912-1913), 311-312.

similar to William Morgan's The Nature and Right of Religion (1926). Baillie in particular wrote from awareness of the deep alienation from the church and Christianity that followed from the war, warning in his The Roots of Religion in the Human Soul that soldiers and youth were frustrated by confusing doctrines, petty legalism, and the apparent "lack of reality about the religion of the Christian church."¹³ At a more theoretical level, both Morgan and Baillie directed their apologetics on the one hand against speculative idealism, and on the other hand against positivist sociological and psychological interpretations of religion. Baillie opposed speculative idealist attempts to reduce religion to rationalist metaphysics, as well as romantic attempts to rescue religion by identifying it with a mystical feeling apart from "reflective thought."¹⁴ But neither could religion be reduced to socially reinforced moral conduct alone, as suggested in the sociological interpretations of Comte and Durkheim. Comte, Durkheim, and even William James, both Morgan and Baillie argued, had reduced religion to its most primitive forms and its social function, while failing to acknowledge the sources that awakened religion or the impulses which constituted it.¹⁵

In contrast to these interpretations of religion, Morgan and Baillie attempted to validate knowledge of spiritual reality by following Ritschl's approach of justifying religion on the Kantian grounds of independent moral values.¹⁶ Using Kant's epistemology to distinguish two kinds of knowing, they argued that religion was sui generis, a unique experiential knowledge of God. In a 1914 article, Morgan claimed that Kant and Schleiermacher had freed religion from speculative

¹³John Baillie, The Roots of Religion in the Human Soul (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1926), 11-12.

¹⁴Baillie, The Roots of Religion, 81.

¹⁵William Morgan, The Nature and Right of Religion (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clarke, 1926), 1-3.

¹⁶William Morgan, "Religion and Philosophy," The Expositor, 8th Series, 7 (1914), 441-443; John Baillie, "The Meaning of Duty: A Plea for a Reconsideration of the Kantian Ethic," Hibbert Journal, 24 (1925-26), 718-730.

rationalism and anchored it in moral consciousness and practice.¹⁷ Like Ritschl, Morgan distinguished between philosophy's rational search for the unity of experience based on empirical and logical judgements and religion's roots in practical life, particularly in "our sense of dependence on a power above us" and our practical judgements of the value of an object for us as beings of desires, feelings, and ends. While both philosophical reason and religion were natural human impulses, religion, contrary to Hegel and John Caird, was not an intellectual or rationalized search for the ultimate cause and unity of reality, but Kant's moral imperative, the direct impulse of "great moral sanctities" which oblige us and call for reverence.

Baillie's argument followed similar lines, but began first from the problem of theological knowledge. In contrast to traditional claims that theology was the science of God, Baillie, like Ritschl and Herrmann, claimed that theology was the "interrogation of the religious consciousness."¹⁸ As the special critical "science of religion," theology had its own strictly limited field and was bound to the evidence of experience. God in himself could not be known as an object of science; hence theology could only be concerned with God "in so far as He is conceived of as entering into a religious relationship with the human soul."¹⁹ Citing Benedetto Croce's historicist attempt to preserve a science of culture by treating philosophy as the history of the mind, Baillie saw theology bound to the empirical history of humanity's experience of God. Consequently, the object of the science of theology was not God; in keeping with Kant's anthropocentric dictum to "know thyself," Baillie described theology's task as the descriptive analysis of the phenomena of religion as it arose

¹⁷Morgan, "Religion and Philosophy," 441-443.

¹⁸John Baillie, The Interpretation of Religion; An Introductory Study of Theological Principles (New York: Scribners, 1928), 14, 171. Note that in the preface, Baillie indicated that this work was prepared between 1922-25.

¹⁹Baillie, The Interpretation of Religion, 3-7, 30-1, 171.

in human consciousness.²⁰

Despite its limitation to human consciousness, Baillie and Morgan claimed that religious consciousness had a real personal God as its object and source. To make that claim, they posited a symbiotic relationship between the human subject and religion's divine object. As Baillie stated in his summary of The Interpretation of Religion:

Religion is essentially a relation between two terms, or more exactly, a communion between two personal existences, the human soul and God. We who are men stand at the human end of this relationship, and therefore it is natural and proper that our study of it should be undertaken from that end too.²¹

As a critical science, then, theology began with the human subject's experience of the religious relationship that was known by moral judgements of values.²² Man interprets God in terms of the highest values known to him, Morgan argued, and consequently religion is rooted in the "valuation" of certain ideals as ultimate, and it progresses as morality does.

Though starting from values, religion could not be reduced to mere morality or to the influence of social norms, for morality was related to the religious experience of something beyond itself, the "ultimately real."²³ From Kant and Plato, Morgan argued that consciousness of values such as truth, beauty, and goodness could only be taken as divine commands, and pointed to the objective side of religion. Even the arguments of Ritschl, James, and Pringle-Pattison were inadequate on this point, for they only postulated God as an expedient of human moral freedom over against mechanical nature.²⁴ Religion, however, was constituted in a direct experience of a real God who "meets us

²⁰Baillie, The Interpretation of Religion, 14, 58, 171.

²¹Baillie, The Interpretation of Religion, 448.

²²Morgan, The Nature and Right of Religion, 9.

²³William Morgan, "Religion's Right and Value," CJRT, 3, no. 4 (July-August 1926), 268; Morgan, The Nature and Right of Religion, 7-8, 12-14.

²⁴Morgan, The Nature and Right of Religion, 16, 65.

directly in the reality amid which we stand," both in the causal mechanism of nature and in the higher domain of Spirit where we find the "innermost soul and meaning of things" as the living God. Consciousness of values, therefore, provided the moral certainty for faith:

Confronted by the highest values, we know that we are face to face with the Divine, with what gives to the stupendous universe its meaning and its law. And one may add that a deepening experience of God in large measure consists in a deepening experience of values. As we live in the love that cherishes the good and forgets self in the service of others, we more and more live in God. There is no other way to God than this way of faith.²⁵

Belief in God, therefore, was "an act of faith springing from our feeling for values," and those values, as William James suggested in Varieties of Religious Experience, indicated that the God of faith was near and real. Though it could not be proved by logical or empirical science, and indeed may seem to be "flung in the very face of what seem the hard facts of existence," faith was its own distinct knowledge grounded in moral certainty.²⁶

Though later critics would question the validity of claiming an objective God on the grounds of subjective moral values, Morgan insisted that the objects of human values were not mere human fantasy or human constructions, but "historically given" and indubitable "facts" of reality that "we gather up under the term Revelation," and that were affirmed by faith.²⁷ The "facts" of moral values were self-evident and could not be proven by appeal to some other data, for they were immediately present to human consciousness.

Baillie likewise denied that his approach was subjective, and claimed that religion was

²⁵Morgan, The Nature and Right of Religion, 21; "Religion and Philosophy," 450.

²⁶Morgan, The Nature and Right of Religion, 17; Morgan, "Religion and Philosophy," 450.

²⁷Morgan, "Religion and Philosophy," 248.

"communion with a Deity who is objectively real."²⁸ But his support of these claims appealed more explicitly to an historicist self-consciousness of the subject's context in history than Morgan. As a science of spiritual experience, theology could only be approached from the inside, from a premise that shared in faith. Theology was not authorized to dismiss, prove, or prescribe a norm for the religious consciousness. Recalling Augustine's credo ut intelligum, the experience of faith was prior to theology, while theology could only critically describe and exhibit that faith.²⁹

Like Morgan, however, Baillie concluded that religion arose from the sense of duty which regarded moral values as related to the "system of things."³⁰ Values were moral judgements that religion took as "revelation" from an Eternal purpose that humans were conscious of being dependent upon. Values, then, were the experience of something not ourselves,-- a world over against us, Morgan declared, making us aware that we live "held in the grasp of a stupendous reality which every moment of our life affects us for good or for ill."³¹ Faith's knowledge of God was the discovery by the human soul of the highest values, and at the same time the self-revelation of the personality of God. Values could be taken as revelation because they were, as both Augustine and the creative evolutionist Rudolph Eucken suggested, "the felt imperatives of duty" which come from Beyond ourselves.³²

Baillie's and Morgan's arguments restated nineteenth century neo-Kantian apologetics, but qualified them with a new historical self-consciousness that made values the interpretive filter of the

²⁸Baillie, The Interpretation of Religion, 10. In this passage, Baillie made brief reference to Emil Brunner, thus giving one of the first indications among Anglo-Canadian theologians of awareness of the "crisis theology" then emerging in the work of continental theologians like Brunner and Karl Barth.

²⁹Baillie, The Interpretation of Religion, 19-22.

³⁰Baillie, The Roots of Religion, 110-11, 222.

³¹Morgan, The Nature and Right of Religion, 4.

³²Baillie, The Interpretation of Religion, 448, 462.

experience of God. As Schleiermacher had argued, according to Morgan, it was in felt values that human consciousness experienced immediate communion with the divine spirit.³³ Similarly, Baillie referred to Herrmann's Communion With God to argue that the consciousness of faith was "the presence of Christ which we can experience in true communion with God, when His appearance comes home to our hearts as the most important thing in all the world."³⁴ Similarly, Morgan suggested that consciousness of values was confirmed in the heroes of the Christian tradition, among whom Jesus was the most sublime.³⁵

A crucial premise of this neo-Kantian attempt to move from human moral consciousness to the reality of God was the assumption of divine immanence, though not to the exclusion of divine transcendence, and the analogia entis. According to Morgan, Luther's "evangelical" view of God was similar to that of the Romantics who portrayed God's supernatural transcendence as an infinite spiritual reality within the world rather than beyond it.³⁶ While he claimed that contemporary theologians Machen and Denney alike proposed a "Medieval" notion of revelation as an external supernatural authority, Morgan claimed, Morgan argued that the "evangelical" basis of authority rested on the internal work of God in the heart and conscience, or in man's feeling for values, to accept Jesus in faith. Morgan thus claimed divine immanence to justify an experiential, internal basis for authority. While science was validated merely by external data, the validity of values depended on the "inner satisfaction which their respective objects afford."³⁷ Thus, Morgan suggested that the appeal to consciousness of values corresponded to the evangelical belief in the presence of spiritual

³³Morgan, "Religion and Philosophy," 441-443.

³⁴Baillie, The Interpretation of Religion, 233.

³⁵Morgan, The Nature and Right of Religion, 21.

³⁶Morgan, The Nature and Right of Religion, 59-62, 149-169.

³⁷Morgan, "Religion and Philosophy," 447.

reality in experience.

The correlative of divine immanence was the assumption that religion was "natural" to human consciousness, and that there was an analogy of being between human moral consciousness and God. As Pringle-Pattison had argued, since humans were aware of the moral good, there must be some being who corresponded to that good, for if the highest good known to man did not exist, the universe would be morally intolerable.³⁸ God was a moral necessity, and the therapeutic guarantor of humanity's highest hopes. Furthermore, Baillie argued, since humanity was God's image bearer, then God's character and will as a Person must be most fully revealed in man's moral nature and personality when man is at his best.³⁹ Here was a revived neo-Kantian statement of the analogia entis and the optimistic assumption that "spiritual reality" was built into the structure of human consciousness, giving humans the natural capacity to seek God.

Remarkably, though they were intended as apologetics for Christianity, the works of Morgan and Baillie made little mention of the unique role of Christ or the Bible until their closing chapters. Their philosophical claims to the universal structure of human consciousness and divine immanence, however, had yet to account for the unique and universal significance, or even the need, of Christ. In fact, Baillie argued that the focus of Schleiermacher, Ritschl, and Herrmann on Christianity alone had limited the universal claims of Christ by exaggerating the dissimilarity of Christianity with other religions. All people, Baillie averred, have the natural impulse to seek God, and so theology must study the entirety of religion among all the world's cultures "until it has reached the furthest limits of our human traffic with the Eternal World."⁴⁰

At this point, however, Baillie followed Harnack's argument: rather than unique, Christianity

³⁸Morgan, "Religion and Philosophy," 448; Baillie, The Interpretation of Religion, 40.

³⁹Baillie, The Interpretation of Religion, 460-464.

⁴⁰Baillie, The Interpretation of Religion, 60-62.

was the universal religion, for it finds its final expression in the supreme soul of Jesus. While this argument presupposed the superiority of the values of those who found Christ worthy, it also emphasized an Incarnational theology. What was peculiar to Christianity, according to Baillie, was the fact that it "has at its heart the supreme personality of Jesus."⁴¹ Christianity could therefore be studied exclusively as the microcosm and supreme example of all religion.

By emphasizing the personality of Jesus, Baillie and Morgan bypassed both the fundamentalist claims to Jesus's miraculous birth and the nineteenth century liberal emphasis on the ethical teachings of an "historical" Jesus. "What is new in the Christian conception of God," Morgan wrote,

has its ground, not in the story of the Incarnation and Atonement, but in the personality of Jesus as disclosed in His life and teaching. It is the moral grandeur of Jesus, the stainless purity of His soul, the tenderness of His pity, the largeness of His generosity, love, and self-sacrifice, the might of His faith, that have operated as a redemptive force of incalculable magnitude and giving to our thought of God a new content.⁴²

This Incarnational theology portrayed Jesus as the unique embodiment of the symbiotic relationship between an immanent divine reality and human values. Jesus' moral "grandeur" made him the "object" of human values, in the sense that he achieved and thereby demonstrated the highest human values to be divine. But though Jesus was uniquely divine, he was so only in degree, since he was also the expression of an immanent divinity. According to Morgan, the moral grandeur of Jesus demonstrated the longing in all religious faith for redemption from failure to live up to the highest values, and the realization that these cannot be "self-achieved," but only in communion with God.⁴³

While it validated the essential divinity of human personality, this neo-Kantian Christology also confirmed, as Baillie argued, the conception of God as a personal Father. Contrary to Bergson's

⁴¹Baillie, The Interpretation of Religion, 64-65.

⁴²Morgan, The Nature and Right of Religion, 104.

⁴³Morgan, The Nature and Right of Religion, 23-30.

idea of the "elan vital," Jesus's demonstration of God as a Person meant that God must be seen not only as an impersonal immanent force, but also as a transcendent and other being.⁴⁴ In the relationship between that God and human persons, however, Jesus' redemptive role was primarily that of a moral revelation and appeal. Jesus' personality, according to Baillie, was revealed most fully in his death on the Cross: "[i]t is the Cross of Christ that has persuaded men not only that redemptive love is the highest secret of noble living but that it lies enshrined at the center of the universe in the heart of God."⁴⁵ Surrender to the moral supremacy of the Jesus of the Cross brought one into full realization of the highest human values and fellowship with God.

While it focused on his "personality" rather than his teaching or actions, the new apologetic nevertheless required an historical Jesus. Jesus' Incarnation of God's personality in historical experience verified, as Morgan put it, that "Christianity is an historical religion, and the question as to its essence is one of fact."⁴⁶ Efforts to recover a credible "spiritual reality" in the personality of Jesus gave new impulse to the study of an "historical" Jesus, but in a way that muted efforts to explain Jesus in terms of his historical context, and that emphasized instead his immediate moral appeal and moral impact on the early church. Rather than binding Jesus in his time and subsequently seeking to peel away the layers of historical influences on him, the new historical Jesus now was located in the faith and doctrine with which the historic church had described him. In this way, the neo-Kantian apologetic contributed to the renewal of Biblical studies that accepted historical criticism and yet sought the spiritual within the historical.

This revived search for the Biblical Jesus was embodied especially in the work of Ernest F. Scott. Despite moving to Union Theological Seminary in 1919, Scott's work through the 1920's set

⁴⁴Baillie, The Interpretation of Religion, 395-7.

⁴⁵Baillie, The Interpretation of Religion, 44.

⁴⁶Morgan, The Nature and Right of Religion, 253.

out for Canadians important new arguments about the continuity of the church's witness to the historical Jesus and the moral significance of the person of Jesus. Already in 1913 Scott had noted that, after years of critical studies, conservative and modernist Biblical scholars were approaching reconciliation, giving rise to a revival of positive New Testament theology.⁴⁷ Scholars were now widely agreed on the basic periodization of the Bible and its documents, and that early Christianity drew from the diverse Judaic and Hellenistic ideas of its day. Though Schweitzer's claim that Jesus understood himself in terms of the Jewish Messianic hope and apocalypticism of his day could be granted, Scott rejected Schweitzer's "consistent eschatological" interpretation that Jesus' thought and work was entirely conditioned by apocalypticism.⁴⁸ Rather, Jesus merely used the eschatological language to convey eternal intuitions. Finally, Scott noted a new emphasis on continuity and development from the thought of Jesus to the teaching of the apostles and early church, which now meant that the New Testament must be taken as a whole, and that the historical Jesus must and could be seen through the historic witness of the church and the New Testament writings.

From 1913 to the late 1920's, Scott elaborated these main points in a series of articles, and in The First Age of Christianity (1926). In 1922 he argued that though Jesus couched his teaching in the apocalyptic language of John the Baptist, and though the early church initially expected an immediate, visible Kingdom of God, Jesus' intention in speaking of the "day of the Lord" referred, like the prophets, to the demand for an immediate "new kind of life, a new relation to God, and while he looked for the Kingdom his interest was in those moral requirements which it involved."⁴⁹ As Scott had written in 1913, Jesus perfected the "ethical-redemptive" religion of Old Testament prophecy

⁴⁷Ernest F. Scott, "The Present Position of New Testament Theology," Harvard Theological Review, 6, no. 1 (January 1913), 60-75.

⁴⁸See also Ernest F. Scott, The Kingdom and the Messiah (1911).

⁴⁹Ernest F. Scott, "The Place of Apocalyptic Conceptions in the Mind of Jesus," Journal of Biblical Literature, 41 (1922), 18.

concerning the Kingdom of God by insisting on perfect obedience to the will of God and identifying that will with moral goodness. By following his example of faith in God, modern humanity also could be regenerated to new moral life.⁵⁰

In fact, argued Scott, Jesus' thought was an "inward contradiction" of the apocalyptic expectation of a future kingdom that would come "suddenly by the immediate act of God." To the contrary, Jesus assumed God's present rule in the world, and he called believers to submit to the will of God in the present rather than in some apocalyptic future. Apocalypics, whether Schweitzer's historicism or fundamentalist pre-millennialism, thought that God had temporarily withdrawn from the world, unable to do anything in the face of evil, and that there were no regenerating forces present within the world that could gradually bring about a better time. Scott's progressivism stood out in sharp contrast. Christ had taught the presence of God's goodness within the world, especially in the natural impulses of man: "[h]e makes his appeal, ever and again, to the goodness that is present in men, and tries to foster and direct it, so that it may help on the divine purposes."⁵¹ For Scott, Christ was the guarantor of the divine presence within the world, and of an optimistic post-millennialism.

In order to establish continuity between Jesus and the New Testament church, Scott also criticized new developments in New Testament studies, including the form criticism of Rudolf Bultmann, that he thought undermined the historical reliability of the New Testament.⁵² The new form criticism portrayed the original documents which lay behind the New Testament as fragmentary "preacher's anecdotes" which the gospel writers had selected and arranged to convey their particular theological interpretation of Jesus. Though the gospel writers certainly intended to portray Jesus as

⁵⁰Scott, "The Present Position of New Testament Theology," 60-75.

⁵¹Ernest F. Scott, The First Age of Christianity, (1926), 140.

⁵²Ernest F. Scott, "The New Criticism of the Gospels," Harvard Theological Review, 19, no. 2 (April 1926), 143-163.

revealing a new way of life, Scott argued, their writings were primarily an historical narrative of Jesus' life and personality. The epistles developed the apostolic witness further by extending its application from Paul's own subjective experience of Christ to cosmic significance. As Ernest Thomas noted in his review of Scott's book, Scott thus portrayed Christianity as a living historical organism centered in a personal relation with Jesus, who was the "commanding personality" and "creative power" behind the formation of historic Christianity.⁵³

Scott's arguments paralleled those of American liberal theologians like Shirley Jackson Case, of the University of Chicago, who during the war began to criticize both fundamentalism and radical modernism.⁵⁴ In his The Historicity of Jesus, published in 1912 and reprinted in 1928, Case argued that both extremes seemed to withdraw Jesus from historical authenticity and leave only faith in a mythical or "heavenly Christ." Such interpretations undermined the authority of Jesus for modern intelligent men. The historical and natural Jesus, Case argued, was inseparable from and necessary to his revelation and his ability to effect, through personal contact, man's spiritual union with God and God's Kingdom in the present.⁵⁵ A similar argument had been made by Ritschl and Herrmann, who argued that though Jesus could only be apprehended from within the community of faith, nevertheless that faith required the objective reality of an historical Jesus.

Scott's work exemplified the recovery of an historical approach to Jesus, the Bible, and the early church that would help to reopen Biblical scholarship and theological debate in the 1920's. Though other Canadian theologians like William Manson and especially younger scholars like William Bryden and John Line would question Scott's interpretation of Jesus's significance, their participation

⁵³Ernest Thomas, "About Books and Their Writers," NO (16 June 1926), 17.

⁵⁴George Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture (New York: Oxford, 1980), 145-146.

⁵⁵Shirley Jackson Case, The Historicity of Jesus (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1928, [1912]), 24-30, 297.

in the revival of theology would reflect a similar emphasis on the continuity between the historical figure of Jesus and the early church.

In the short run, however, Scott's work complemented the neo-Kantian emphasis on the recognition of the divine in moral consciousness. As Morgan put it: "in Jesus we find a religion we can believe, a leader we can follow - one whose faith supports ours - and the presence and working of the living God as the God of our salvation."⁵⁶ The new apologetic appealed to Jesus as the Incarnation of divine spiritual reality, and thus the confirmation in historical fact of the reality of a personal God and the divinity of human consciousness. In turn, the authority of Jesus and the Bible lay in their satisfaction and appeal to inherent human values. As F. J. Moore indicated in one book review, the new apologetic for spiritual reality was essentially psychological, and was based on the assumption of the reliability of the soul or personality to experience "'the beyond that is within.'"⁵⁷

Moore's comments indicate that, though it appealed to an historical Jesus, the new "enlightened evangelicalism" shifted its focus from the limits of history to subjective human values and the distinctly spiritual significance of Jesus' personality. And while upholding the validity of modern science and the authority of critical thought, it also claimed the existence of a real, personal God and a moral relationship between God and humans that was characterized by freedom.

Perhaps more importantly at the time, the apologetic seemed to support renewed confidence in spiritual progress and a teleological purpose in history despite the tragedy of historical events. Both Baillie and Morgan had claimed that the moral certainty of religion provided the grounds for a spiritual interpretation of the world, and for a new idealism that affirmed belief in an objective moral

⁵⁶Morgan, The Nature and Right of Religion, 109, 88.

⁵⁷F. J. Moore, review of Social Law in the Spiritual World, by Rufus M. Jones, and Can We Find God, by Arthur B. Patten, in CJRT, Vol. 1, No. 3 (May-June 1924), 262.

order.⁵⁸ Rather than a speculative rationalist idealism, this was strictly a moral idealism, as Baillie noted, in the tradition of Pringle-Pattison, that accepted the metaphysical reality of spiritual life.⁵⁹ Such a spiritual view offered reassurance in the midst of what Morgan called "the Tragedy of Christendom," for the Cross of Christ revealed that the highest moral values were achieved through the "furnace of suffering" for others.⁶⁰

With its moral optimism, the new apologetic also claimed to offer an alternative to modern pessimistic views, expressed by Bertrand Russell in works like Free Man's Worship (1903) and What I Believe (1925), about the insignificance and powerlessness of humanity in the face of what seemed an indifferent material nature.⁶¹ For those "weary of cheating themselves with false hopes and hollow optimisms and expectations for this-worldly millenniums," Baillie wrote, the new apologetic opened life to the eternal.⁶² Despite the apparent enigma in which life was lived, spiritual idealism gave assurance of a real moral order, and of the worth of all that is best and noblest in humanity. "It connects," wrote Morgan, "the moral with eternity, establishes it at the centre of being, and so doing invests it with a new majesty and security."⁶³ The assurance that religious experience in conscience was also the call of God to fellowship with him preserved the unique status and freedom of humans. The spirit at the heart of reality was also a spirit of freedom, for it bound people only by their own conscience. At the same time it united humanity to the God who controls nature, enabling them to

⁵⁸Morgan, The Nature and Right of Religion, 74-75.

⁵⁹Baillie, The Interpretation of Religion, 36-40.

⁶⁰Morgan, The Nature and Right of Religion, 102-103.

⁶¹Morgan, The Nature and Right of Religion, 74-75.

⁶²John Baillie, "The Meaning of Duty: A Plea for a Reconsideration of the Kantian Ethic," Hibbert Journal, 24 (1925-26), 730.

⁶³William Morgan, "Religion's Right and Value," CJRT, , no. 4 (July-August, 1926), 273.

"bear and master nature."⁶⁴ And in enabling humans to reach the height of morality through forgetting self, its redemption of individual persons opened up into service of one's neighbour.

Thus, the neo-Kantian apologetic offered renewed hope of redemptive progress and revived the optimistic idealism of moderate progressives during the mid-1920's. Such optimism was sounded, for example, by Arthur W. Brown in an end-of-the-year reflection in 1925. Despite the rapid pace of change and fear of the passing of an old order in thought and technology, Brown urged, Christians could move beyond pessimism to a new hopefulness, for

the Christian ideal and vision is a new world wherein dwelleth righteousness. He cannot be content with the world as it is. Progress must be made...the Christian optimist knows that God and truth and goodness survive every age and change.

Indeed, the gospel held out the promise of

man's triumph over natural and evil things. It has set forth visions such as, 'the feud between rich and poor,' being healed and social justice established and regnant on the earth, the darkness of the lands vanishing in the Christ that is to be....Dare we not then say that it is a splendid Christian spirit which travels gladly with the future...?⁶⁵

The certainty of faith must be taken up as a venture of trust in the moral order of the universe. "We cannot prove the eternal and cosmic significance of life's supreme values," wrote Morgan, "but we stake our life upon the fact, face life and face death on the strength of it."⁶⁶ Here was a future-oriented eschatology equal to that of more radical modernists.

Of course, it also was significantly different from more radical forms of modernism, as well as from pre-war progressive Protestantism. Unlike radical modernism, the new apologetic still claimed a spiritual experience of a distinct personal God in moral consciousness, that was objectified in the person of Christ. But this claim to a unique spiritual reality now was one side of a world divided

⁶⁴Morgan, The Nature and Right of Religion, 25, 265.

⁶⁵Arthur W. Brown, "The Marching Years," NQ (30 December 1925).

⁶⁶Morgan, "Religion and Philosophy," 450.

between spirit and nature. And having minimized the structures of natural historical experience, it promised that humanity's inherent spiritual freedom would enable humans to transcend and triumph over nature. Whether western "values" could withstand the scrutiny of critical consciousness to sustain the claim to their divinity and universality, and whether they were sufficient to transform western civilization, remained questions that would continue to plague the new apologetic.

II. The New Evangelism

The themes of the new apologetic were embodied especially in the United Church in the first years after its founding in 1925. Leaders of the union adopted as their mission a "new evangelism" that emphasized the experience of spiritual reality, a personal encounter with Jesus, and moral idealism. While seemingly evangelical in the traditional fashion, however, the "new evangelism" was a product of the post-war problematic, and it reflected the post-war trend to distinguishing Christ and culture, and spiritual and natural reality. With this emphasis, progressive Protestants developed a new identity of the church as a spiritual body, with the mission of disclosing the spiritual in the world through education. Especially during the period 1925-1928, the United Church mission would be defined in terms of realizing the spiritual potential of persons in a campaign of modern evangelism.

The new emphasis on spiritual reality can be seen in broad outline in the way that leaders of the United Church identified the church. S. D. Chown's famous description of the "religio-political realm" reflected a view of the church as the spiritual partner to the external community embodied by the state.⁶⁷ Similarly, E. H. Oliver, principal of St. Andrew's College in Saskatoon, described the role of the new United Church as the "conscience" of the nation.⁶⁸ The church's task, according to

⁶⁷See N. Keith Clifford, The Resistance to Church Union in Canada, 1904-1939 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1985), 121.

⁶⁸E. H. Oliver, "The Place and Work of the United Church in the Life of Canada," NO (10 June 1925), 19-20.

Oliver, was to reprove sin and to declare the "eternal verities" for society, so as to "quicken all social impulses, interpret the Spirit of God, and inspire to service. In the best sense it must be evangelical, definitely winning men upon these plains for Christ." George Pidgeon, the first moderator of the United Church, described the church as the mystical body of Christ,-- the "divine society," as preacher Richard Roberts described it,-- which was to be infused with the spirit and vital energy of Christ.⁶⁹ To the Alberta Conference meeting of 1925, Pidgeon described the church as a national body inclusive of all types of Christian experience and personality.⁷⁰ What defined the church, he suggested, was its fellowship of personality that could, as a spiritual body, unite all variations of society and culture. The present mission of the church, as Principal A. S. Tuttle of Alberta College added, was that of chief custodian of the spiritual energy that was the real instrument of God for the recovery of broken lives and a broken world.

In a more systematic fashion, a series of articles on modern evangelical faith set out by the new United Church publication The New Outlook advocated the theme of an "enlightened evangelicalism" between fundamentalism and modernism. Since its formation in 1908, the Doctrinal Basis of Union lay largely ignored, the patch-work product of an era of "practical preaching" which had minimized theological doctrine, and had not yet grappled with the crisis of historical theology and the challenges of fundamentalism and modernism. Hence, it was the theology of an "enlightened evangelicalism" that answered the demand for theological restatement, and became the de facto creed of the United Church and its "new evangelism."⁷¹

In explaining "The Foundations of Christian Faith," J. R. P. Sclater, the Scottish-born preacher at St. Andrew's United Church in Toronto, claimed that all serious modern evangelicals believed that

⁶⁹George C. Pidgeon, "Members of Christ's Body," CJRT, Vol. 2, No. 6 (November-December 1925), 393-95.

⁷⁰G. G. W. "The Alberta Conference of the United Church," NQ (25 November 1925), 24.

⁷¹On the need for a new theological statement, see also Marshall, Secularizing the Faith, 191-3.

Christianity was "the religion of redemption through Jesus Christ."⁷² As part of that faith, they also held to two cardinal doctrines, namely the divinity of Christ and the saving power of God.⁷³ Here Sclater dismissed as mere ancient heresy any form of modern thought which rejected those doctrines. But while sharing these fundamentals of the faith, Sclater spent much of his efforts criticizing fundamentalist views of authority. Fundamentalism, he claimed, was entrenched behind traditionalism and literalism, which misplaced faith from its true object in Christ. In contrast, Sclater advocated the alternative of a humble and reverent modernism, which he identified with critical thought and the authority of conscience. Modernism, he explained echoing American modernists like Shailer Matthews and Harry Emerson Fosdick, was

the belief that, in its own region, reason stands supreme: that external authority for religion is subject to the examination of reason; and that accepted beliefs must go, if they are clearly incompatible with what is otherwise known to be true. And these positions, surely, appeal to all right-thinking men.⁷⁴

Sclater went on to add that reason must be accepted as an independent authority "in its own region," namely in the region of such "externals" as the empirical data of history and nature. But he also claimed, like Morgan and Baillie, a realm for religion that was unique, namely the intuitive and direct apprehension of spiritual reality. As Sclater put it, "the final authority for religious belief is the authority of personal experience."⁷⁵

This appeal to internal, personal experience as the authority for religion was articulated further by Frederic Platt of Handsworth College, Birmingham, in a series on "the Sure Foundations of the

⁷²J. R. P. Sclater, "Modernism: What is It? Second of a Series of Articles on Foundations of Christian Faith," NO (11 November 1925), 10.

⁷³J. R. P. Sclater, "Fundamentalism: What is It? First of a Series of Articles on Foundations of Christian Faith," NO (4 November 1925), 5.

⁷⁴Sclater, "Modernism: What is It?" 10.

⁷⁵J. R. P. Sclater, "The Final Authority. Ninth of a Series of Articles on Foundations of Christian Faith," NO (6 January 1925), 8.

Christian Religion," in the New Outlook during 1925. Like Morgan, Platt argued that the essence of the Protestant Reformation was the claim that internal authority was the basis of evangelical faith. Platt added that the demands for a fixed and unalterable certainty like the laws of nature was too mechanical for matters "only knowable by the exercise of the moral and spiritual faculties."⁷⁶ Modern evangelicalism seemed to be going through a second Reformation in trying to recover, against the dogmatic claims of the church, the verification of historic faith in "the present personal experience of redemption by the Christian believer."⁷⁷ Ultimately, he insisted, "the primary authority for the Christian faith lies where all certainties lie, in the realities of consciousness."⁷⁸ All knowledge, including religious, was fact "for me", as "my own experience."

Both Sclater and Platt had drawn the neo-Kantian view of religion into a sharp distinction between the laws of nature understood by reason and the direct and "primary" spiritual intuition of the spirit of Jesus. Platt went on to make this distinction more explicit. Like Sclater, he argued that though reason and revelation were complementary, and reason "has its own spheres of certainty," reason's empirical and logical form of knowledge was distinct from spiritual and ethical knowledge.⁷⁹ In fact, certainty based on rational evidence was coercive and thereby lower than the ethical knowledge that appealed to "the free choice of a free personality." Against rationalist standards for interpreting faith, Platt cited Pringle-Pattison and Dewey in claiming that consciousness was prior to cognitive reflection, and that "the creative forces of the will, the strong executive of feeling and the

⁷⁶Rev. Frederic Platt, "Certainty and the Christian Faith; A Series of Short Articles for Christian People on the Sure Foundations of the Christian Religion," NO (22 July 1925), 7.

⁷⁷Platt, "Certainty and the Christian Faith," 7.

⁷⁸Rev. Frederic Platt, "Certainty and the Christian Faith; Article II: The Certainties of Christian Experience," NO (29 July 1925), 6.

⁷⁹Frederic Platt, "Certainty and the Christian Faith, Article IV.-The Function of Reason," NO (12 August 1925), 11.

primary instincts of the soul" were the root of human certainty and action. Practical certainty and the experience of the soul were the ultimate authority for humans, and the experience of Christian consciousness in the moral certainty of sin and God's grace in Christ were therefore prior to reason which must serve as "the handmaid of the authoritative Christian experience."

Platt similarly critiqued the authority of the Church, Scripture, and history. The Church provided a social expression and communication of the faith, checking each individual believer's "false assumption that his own consciousness is the measure of all reality."⁸⁰ But in the tradition of Wesley, the external authority of the church was not sufficient or primary: "[b]ehind the ecclesiastical lies the experimental." Likewise, the authority of the Bible lay not in its literary or historical accuracy, but in its "internal and spiritual value."⁸¹ The central feature of the Reformation, he echoed Morgan, was not the substitution of an infallible Bible for an infallible church, but Luther's recovery of a personal experience of spiritual redemption and freedom in the possession of the living Gospel displayed in the early New Testament community. The authority of the Bible rested on its interpretation to the individual by the Spirit of God and its verification of the truth of redemptive experience. Or, as Platt put it another way, its authority was found in "the spiritual experience it embodies," most fully in Christ, and "the spiritual experience it creates" in satisfying sinful man's desire for spiritual fellowship with God. As a secondary authority, however, the certainty of the Bible was verified in "that 'newest testament' - the testament of Christian experience."⁸²

For this religious certainty, the knowledge of mere externals like history, including the

⁸⁰Frederic Platt, "Certainty and the Christian Faith, Article V.- The Authority of the Church," NO (19 August 1925), 8.

⁸¹Frederic Platt, "Certainty and the Christian Faith, Article VI.-The Authority of the Bible," NO (26 August 1925), 10.

⁸²Frederic Platt, "Certainty and the Christian Faith, Article VI.-The Authority of the Bible," NO (26 August 1925), 10.

historical Jesus, were inadequate and merely secondary "background."⁸³ To be sure, the historical Jesus was essential, for the living Christ without the historical Christ would be "an enigma." In this sense, Christianity was an historical religion, and the credibility of its historical record was essential. But that record depended on a secondary tradition of witnesses to the first-hand experience of the historical Christ in remote apostolic times. As such its record was fallible and offered only probable knowledge. Its function was to provide a supreme example to stimulate a personal experience of God, and a norm by which to distinguish Christian faith from esoteric mysticism.

For Platt, history, reason, the church, and the Bible were forms which mediated the ultimate authority for Christian faith. That authority was the person of Christ himself, and the religious consciousness.⁸⁴ Platt insisted that what was primary was not so much Christ's work or his teaching, but his incarnation of the living Word of God and the impact of his spirit in reconciling humans to fellowship with God, changing their life into new creation. It was this inward personal relationship, identified as a spiritual and moral reality, that constituted the ultimate authority for Christianity.⁸⁵ As defined by Sclater and Platt, the "historical" theology of the new evangelism emphasized personal internal experience; external historical events could only be secondary to internal and self-authenticating spiritual and ethical knowledge. Here was a reiteration of the neo-Kantian apologetic, but also the assertion of a sharp distinction between the spirit of Christ and historical structures.

This distinction permeated the emphasis of the United Church on evangelism rather than direct social action during the period 1925 to 1928. As the first Moderator, George Pidgeon directed the church's Boards of Evangelism and Social Service and of Home Missions to make the revival and

⁸³Frederic Platt, "Certainty and the Christian Faith, Article III.-The Value of History," NO (5 August 1925), 11.

⁸⁴Frederic Platt, "Certainty and the Christian Faith, Article VII.-The Supreme Certainty: Jesus Christ," NO (2 September 1925), 12.

⁸⁵Platt, "Certainty and the Christian Faith; Article II: The Certainties of Christian Experience," 6.

deepening of spiritual life their main focus.⁸⁶ "Leadership in Evangelism" was to be accomplished with a new campaign of pamphlets on the evangelical doctrine of the Basis of Union, group studies of the life of Jesus, development of Lay Men's Work, and spiritual conferences.

These emphases were worked out especially in the Board of Evangelism and Social Service (BESS). From 1925 through 1928, the BESS focused its efforts on prohibition and "Educational Evangelism," consisting especially of mass evangelism by approved evangelists, group studies of the life of Jesus, apologetics, and lay evangelism.⁸⁷ Its 1926 report on "The Christianization of Industry," delivered by its Secretary D. N. McLachlan, argued that while social and moral concerns were essential to Christianity, the fundamental problems that made for social problems like "industrial warfare" were not structural nor the product of conflicting interests, but were due to the failure to understand and implement the social and moral principles of the gospel. The root of social problems lay in different views of "what constitutes the good life and serves its end."⁸⁸ And their solution lay not first of all in the reorganization of industry, but in teaching right motives and a Christian view of the use of property for the service of humanity.

As Richard Allen notes, this turn from social action to "evangelism" was a remarkable change from the promise of social reconstruction that some saw in the church reports after World War I.⁸⁹ Indeed, some officers of the BESS, like Hugh Dobson, who was a field secretary for the United Church's BESS and had helped to form the reports of 1918 and 1919, would continue to resist the

⁸⁶George Pidgeon, "Leadership in Evangelism; the Moderator Urges Aggressive and Persistent Effort," NO (20 January 1926), 18.

⁸⁷United Church of Canada (UCC), "Evangelism and Social Service," Yearbook, 1926 and Record of Proceedings of the First General Council, 93-96.

⁸⁸UCC, "The Christianizing of Industry," Yearbook, 1926, and Record of Proceedings of the First General Council, 88. See also Douglas H. Ross, "A Theological Analysis of the Socio-Critical Role of the United Church of Canada Between 1925 and 1939," (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Saint Paul, Ottawa University, 1981), 58-59.

⁸⁹Allen, 218-30, 261-2.

apparent retreat from social action. For McLachlan and Ernest Thomas, however, the turn from social action was the result of disillusionment with the structures of Canadian society, and their attempt to defend spiritual personality by a strategy of distinguishing spiritual and external realities.

In part, this concern arose from their belief that Canadian society had become secularized. In 1925 J. W. Macmillan, Professor of Social Work at Victoria College, noted the "slump" in moral forces of society evident in the rise of conservative governments in western countries, the loss of prohibition legislation, the decline of trade union membership, and lack of support for the League of Nations.⁹⁰ Even more clearly, Thomas was convinced that since the end of the war, the "old order" of Protestant consensus in Canada had passed away.⁹¹

Disillusionment with the structures of western civilization led Thomas and McLachlan also to distinguish between what seemed the mechanical forces of social structures and political institutions, and the spiritual reality that was at the heart of human personality. As he explained in an article in the CJRT, Thomas regarded all current political parties as too "commercialized," and he feared that demands for political action would bring the imposition of the state on personal aspirations. Though he called for social reform, he insisted that social reform be voluntary, lest otherwise it be no different from Mussolini's new fascism.⁹² The church's task in this setting, according to Thomas, was to conserve and revitalize the spiritual roots that were necessary for a movement of social reform that would be genuinely Christian, and by definition free.

Similarly, in the annual report of the BESS for 1926-27, McLachlan explained the board's reticence to relate the "Christianization" of society to legislation and the state:

...since the war, the tremendous powers entrusted to the State are being questioned.

⁹⁰J. W. Macmillan, "The Slump," CJRT, Vol. 2, No. 1 (January-February 1925), 37-41.

⁹¹Allen, 261.

⁹²Ernest Thomas, "The Significance of Political Groups," CJRT, 1, no. 1 (January-February, 1924), 71-81.

The Christian Church is entrusted with a mission of Redemption and its predominant attitude to sin is that of forgiveness, while the State is concerned not with sin but with wrongdoing of such a character as menaces the social order. While not disputing the right of the State to use its power for the general welfare and restraint of organized forces that impede the highest things in life, serious minds are questioning the extent to which coercive power and punishment should be employed for the furtherance of goodness. The Church is being reminded that in view of its distinctive mission it ought to think very seriously before invoking the coercive power of the State to further its ends.⁹³

McLachlan's distinction between sin and "wrong-doing" against social order reflected a distinction between the personal life, defined in terms of morality, and the natural law-order of social relations that Reinhold Niebuhr would capture in his concept of moral man and immoral society.

In turn, McLachlan went on to subordinate structured institutions to spiritual reality, describing the human soul and personality as "the thing of supremest value in the universe." McLachlan seemed to reduce the Kingdom of God to that which served personality. In 1926, he wrote in his report that

[i]nstitutions were made for men, not men for institutions. The worth of any institution is to be gauged solely by its effect on personality. Insofar as it conserves and increases personal value, it is good. Where it is destructive of personality, it is the enemy of the Kingdom of God, in loyalty to which we must seek and work for its suppression.⁹⁴

Service to human personality was the moral norm to be learned and applied to resolve social conflicts like that between business managers and labour.

This tension between moral spirituality and social structures made the relations between religion and social science ambiguous for progressive Protestants. Following the shift of provincial policies to regulated sale of alcohol rather than outright prohibition, the BESS proposed to publicize scientific information about the hazards of alcohol, in the hope that an informed public conscience

⁹³UCC, Board of Evangelism and Social Service (BESS), Annual Report, 1926-27. "Thy Will Be Done," Yearbook, 1927, Record of Proceedings of the Second General Council, 18.

⁹⁴UCC, BESS, "The Christianizing of Industry," Yearbook, 1926, Record of Proceedings of the First General Council, 88. See also Ross, 371.

would eventually be enacted into law.⁹⁵ To that end, and in response to the Social Service Council of Canada's request for a more "scientific" approach to the problem, Ernest Thomas produced an article on the negative personal and social effects of alcohol.⁹⁶

In their comments on social work, however, progressive Protestants expressed wariness about the social sciences, and called for recognition of a "spiritual element" in diagnosis of "anti-social" problems. Following the National Conference of Social Work held in Toronto in 1924, for example, the CJRT hinted at tension between social work and "religion."⁹⁷ On the one hand, it was impressed with the display of scientific expertise at the conference, and welcomed the effort and the faith in "the sovereignty of good-will" indicated in proposals for social justice. But the editorial went on to note two main problems in the emerging social sciences. First, following the post-war enthusiasm for broad programs of reconstruction, attention had now shifted to practical, concrete questions concerning "what action best meets the need?" To this, social scientists were responding with "the scientific attitude of experiment and open-minded enquiry" by examining the conditions of social problems and the potential results of actions with "precise observation."

This scientific effort, however, posed the second problem, namely the threatened exclusion of religion from social work. While notable exceptions, such as the University of Toronto sociologist E. J. Urwick, resisted the fragmentation of social science and moral values,⁹⁸ the editors of the CJRT noted that social scientists were coming to the conclusion that "even Christian incentives" were not sufficient to "guarantee adequate treatment" of social problems like rehabilitating broken families or

⁹⁵BESS, "Thy Will Be Done," 21.

⁹⁶BESS, "He Must Reign," 26.

⁹⁷Editorial comment was listed under "Conference of Social Work," "Still to Study the Question," "Social Workers and the Church," and "Social Dogma and Experiment," CJRT, Vol. 1, No. 4 (May-June, 1924), 276-280.

⁹⁸See Sara Burke, Serving the Highest Good: Social Service and Gender at the University of Toronto, 1888-1939 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 124-9.

criminals. Social workers now enlisted the aid of other community organizations, and especially the sciences, to promote social well-being. As an antidote to the trend to eliminate religion from social work, the editorial welcomed Jane Addams' warning that "economic and social forces" alone could not resolve social ills. The social worker must enlist also the spiritual forces needed for social change, and in turn the Church must "produce a type of spiritual life alert to recognize the place for communal activity in treatment of social evils."⁹⁹ The editorial concluded with a warning against confining social work in social service organizations based only on civic institutions without any relation to organized religion. The failure to reconcile science and religion would leave social science fatally short-sighted, and religion morbidly and unrealistically introspective.

The ambiguous differentiation between religion and social analysis and reform was especially evident in the work of progressives like Ernest Thomas and Frank Stapleford. Thomas' emphasis on spiritual revival through fellowship studies has already been noted. Stapleford, however, elaborated on the distinction between the church, religion, and social work in a 1925 article for the CJRT. On the one hand, he celebrated the growth of social work organizations, and the growing role of municipal, provincial, and federal governments in addressing social problems and "pushing the ideals of democracy into the furthest corner of our social life."¹⁰⁰ He then defined social work as a technical science using a highly specialized "method of research." Its aim was "the enlargement and development of the personality of the individual, aiming to make of him a more efficient unit of the social whole," and conversely also to make "an efficient society ...that will give to that individual the highest possible development of which he is capable."¹⁰¹

⁹⁹Editorial comment was listed under "Conference of Social Work," "Still to Study the Question," "Social Workers and the Church," and "Social Dogma and Experiment," CJRT, Vol. 1, No. 4 (May-June, 1924), 276-280.

¹⁰⁰F. N. Stapleford, "The Relation of the Church to Social Work," CJRT, 2, no. 1 (January-February, 1925), 61.

¹⁰¹Stapleford, "The Relation of the Church to Social Work," 61-62.

Although the church had founded many service organizations, Stapleford suggested that the time had come to surrender control of those institutions. Such a change, he argued, did not involve their separation from religion, for most people on their boards were connected with the churches and worked from strong religious convictions. Hence the change would constitute merely institutional differentiation, but not the end of religious influence on social service. But Stapleford then went on to plead for a distinction between religion and the science of social worker, arguing that preoccupation with religion and religious identity sometimes led to inefficiency and undue emphasis on the psychology and ideals of the social worker, and to forgetting that social work was a technical profession. Though the institutional church itself served a vital socializing role in local communities and could provide facilities for meetings and information about social problems, Stapleford recommended that its primary task should be education and inspiration to rouse the "religious motives" of service.¹⁰²

Having thus separated both the church and religion from social analysis, however, Stapleford also called on the church to address the moral dimensions of social problems more directly, for "[p]ractically every economic fact has its moral bearings." While economics was concerned with the efficient production and distribution of wealth, these had as their end human value, and it was the church's task to advocate that value. Morality was related to "social facts," and the preacher's task was to "discern and interpret the moral issues in the economic movements and problems of the time."¹⁰³ Accordingly, he urged the church to cultivate a new sense of sin and the demand of service in concrete terms that would show the scope of morality:

There are men who would regard it as a sin to play cards or go to a theatre, but who do not think of making any moral judgments in regard to industrial factors which

¹⁰²Stapleford, "The Relation of the Church to Social Work," 64.

¹⁰³Stapleford, "The Relation of the Church to Social Work," 69.

have a thousand times more influence upon human welfare.¹⁰⁴

The church, he concluded, could advocate social morality, without endorsing particular and sweeping social theories.

Like McLachlan, Stapleford's distinction between "moral man" and "non-moral" society portended Reinhold Niebuhr's later work Moral Man and Immoral Society. It also reflected the ambiguity that resulted from the Kantian attempt to identify religion with human values, and yet to preserve a distinction between spiritual and natural realities. While it tried to preserve a role for religion in terms of morality, it also assumed a method of social analysis which was essentially secularized.

It was this attempt to distinguish religion and science, and yet preserve an intimate relation between them, that permeated the BESS annual reports of the mid-1920's. In the report for 1926-1927, McLachlan noted that social workers treated social work cases in "scientific" terms. Much as a physician treated ailments as products of physical causes, so modern professional social workers treated individual cases as sick members of the social order, carefully measuring the impact of heredity and environmental conditions like unemployment in order to diagnose the cause and cure of social dislocation. While McLachlan agreed that heredity, environment, and nurture all played a role in the social dislocation of individuals, he argued that the main cause of social evil was the moral character of the individual and his society.¹⁰⁵ Likewise, in his discussion of business-labour relations, he recognized that material needs of food, shelter, clothing were fundamental needs which God provided for through the industrial system. Because of its relation to God, Industry was an economic problem, but also a "moral and religious one."¹⁰⁶ McLachlan claimed that this spiritual diagnosis did not

¹⁰⁴Stapleford, "The Relation of the Church to Social Work," 70.

¹⁰⁵BESS, "Thy Will Be Done," 22-23.

¹⁰⁶BESS, "Thy Will Be Done," 28.

mean that social problems were reducible to the individual's own responsibility. The greed of business managers was equally a moral cause of social problems like unemployment and poverty.

Since their roots were spiritual, the solution to those social problems required spiritual transformation. Here too, McLachlan acknowledged that material conditions warranted change, and that industry needed to establish its own institutional organization, its own constitution of rights and justice, and its own boards and courts to resolve conflicts and accomplish a democratic order of "industry of, by, and for the people as a whole."¹⁰⁷ But like its diagnosis, the scientific cure of social problems by changing social conditions failed to "bring the personality to a fuller life[.]" Social problems ultimately required spiritual transformation and the creation of "Christ-filled personality" throughout society. In fact, McLachlan claimed, the faith of the labour movement was correlative to the faith of the Church: both recognized human need, both regarded evil as man-made and therefore "curable by man," and both aimed at establishing the Kingdom of "Justice, Love, Brotherhood[.]"¹⁰⁸

According to McLachlan, the Church's primary task was evangelism in order to "bring to the light the Eternal Spirit" and so release the spiritual powers for brotherhood and democracy in social relations. In his report for 1927, he urged that this evangelism must consist of more than sermon-dominated church services and appeals to doctrinal fundamentalism. But it also must offer more than "practical preaching" and programs for ethical, social, economic, and political reforms. Rather, it must involve worship, liturgy, and group study which would alert people to the presence of God, and would enlist them in the Christian life.¹⁰⁹ Referring to Rudolf Otto's Idea of the Holy, he argued that the first need of humanity is the recovery of religious experience of the divine mystery and the presence

¹⁰⁷BESS, "Thy Will Be Done," 29.

¹⁰⁸BESS, "Thy Will Be Done," 28.

¹⁰⁹BESS, "Thy Will Be Done," 25.

of his self-sacrificing love in Christ against the sin of the world. Social transformation would be accomplished only "[a]s the individual is brought into that super-normal power" of God and the recognition of his own sin.¹¹⁰

By 1928, this concern for the primacy of spiritual life had culminated in the proposal of the BESS and the Board of Religious Education for a joint campaign for "a revival of the religion of the Cross and of the Spirit, in the hearts and lives of our people, and challenging our children and youth to live lives of sacrifice and adventure for Christ and His Kingdom."¹¹¹ McLachlan's rationale for this focus explained that, amid rapidly changing conditions and the trend of modern social thought,

the Church must give its strength to educational efforts rather than attempt to secure reforms by direct political action. Facts are God's arguments -- hence the board regards its duty primarily to be the discovery of facts, the revealing of spiritual values, and the presentation of these to the Church. By this means, there is reasonable hope to believe that informed public opinion and a sustained political consciousness may be created which will find expression through political channels and finally have its convictions, when necessary, enacted into law.¹¹²

Since spiritual forces were primary in social relations, no system or plan could "take the place of the pulpit as a Christianizing agency."

In part, these concerns responded to the growing professionalization of the social sciences and their differentiation, during the mid-1920's, from the church institutions which had initiated them.¹¹³ Even more radical social gossellers could not agree on the relation of the gospel and social science. While modernists like J. Davidson Ketchum portrayed the church's social service work as inadequate

¹¹⁰BESS, "Thy Will Be Done," 26-27.

¹¹¹UCC, BESS, Annual Report, 1928, "He Shall Reign," Yearbook, 1928, and Record of Proceedings of the Third General Council, 6.

¹¹²BESS, "He Shall Reign," 265.

¹¹³Allen, 294-301.

and its social ethics as "the mere reflection of culture and class,"¹¹⁴ social gossellers like Salem Bland and John Coburn, among others, resisted the trend to separating social ethics and the gospel and tried to sustain the social action of the churches.¹¹⁵ The broader trend in Canada, however, was toward a separation of "religion" and social science. Since its origins in the progressive evangelicalism of the late nineteenth century, scholars like Adam Shortt, James Mavor, and Carl Dawson had moved the social sciences toward a strictly empirical and positivist method of social analysis. Carl Dawson, the Baptist founder of the department of social work at McGill and founding chairman in 1925 of the Canadian Association of Social Workers, could still argue in 1922 that it was the church's task not only to redeem men, but to "redeem the forces that will help men to realize the best ends of life."¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, his analysis of those forces was carried out in terms of the positivist social science of the Chicago School where he had studied.¹¹⁷

The relocation of the social sciences to the university and civic institutions can be seen as part of a broader movement which distinguished between science and religion on the grounds of an assumed ontological distinction between spiritual reality and structured nature. Their assumption of such a duality led progressive Protestants to accept the relatively autonomous authority of the sciences in their own realm of external nature, while at the same time attempting to preserve a claim for spiritual authority, as well as free personality, in addition to the sciences. Indeed, advocates of "spiritual evangelism" finally were profoundly optimistic that education in the right principles of morality would be decisive in changing society.

¹¹⁴Allen, 291.

¹¹⁵Allen, 294.

¹¹⁶Carl Dawson, cited in Allen, 289.

¹¹⁷See especially Marlene Shore, The Science of Social Redemption (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), ch. 3.

Through the mid-1920's, therefore, the BESS focused its efforts on a campaign of "spiritual evangelism" that included group studies of the personality of Jesus, the formation of a lay-movement called the "United Churchmen," and "visitation evangelism."¹¹⁸ While John Mackay continued to cultivate his Corpus Christi Movement, Ernest Thomas' group studies of Jesus, learned no doubt from his contact with H. B. Sharman and the Student Christian Movement, was the most prominent model of that education. In late 1925 and early 1926 Thomas began to ply his group "fellowship" studies, entitled "A Week With Jesus," at Student Christian Movement conferences and throughout the conferences of United Church. As H. D. Ranns reported from Saskatchewan, their main theme was the recovery of the life of Jesus in its historical setting, focusing especially on the problems he faced, the decisions he made, and thus the emergence of his personality.¹¹⁹ As one participant described it, the fellowship method was a sympathetic study in the life of Jesus aimed at bringing one into vital contact with the living Christ and his embodiment of complete trust in God, his consciousness that sacrificial death was the way of redemption, and his meeting the disciples as a living presence.¹²⁰ And according to Hugh Dobson, these conference activities were intended to support

applied Christianity; the reconsecration of spiritual life, the revisualization of the task of the church, the rededication of the entire membership to God, and the extension of the Kingdom of God by definite evangelistic effort.¹²¹

In the new strategy of applied Christianity, Dobson reported, the solution to social problems and the need to Christianize society was the creation of "a new attitude," to recover the spiritual roots of personal and social morality.

¹¹⁸BESS, "He Shall Reign," 15, 20, 26.

¹¹⁹H. D. R[anns], "Saskatchewan and the United Church," NO (27 January, 1926), 24. See also J. A. C. "The United Church in Manitoba Conference," NO (27 January, 1926), 23.

¹²⁰R. S. Laidlaw, "A Fellowship with Jesus," NO, (9 December 1925), 16.

¹²¹Hugh Dobson, "The Fellowship of Conversation and Devotion in the Presbyteries," NO (21 April 1926), 21.

According to Thomas, these studies were intended to recover spiritual experience and the value of worship in restoring awareness of God over against the "deadening" effects of the increasingly popular "doctrine of determinism."¹²² They also were a modern alternative to the more traditional evangelism of mass rallies and class meetings. By 1928, perhaps with visions of Billy Sunday's populist mass rallies in mind, Thomas was suspicious of old-time revivalism. He also rejected the practice of "tacking on" to calls for repentance the requirement of moral and social reform, as if these were the goal of religion. Instead, Thomas preferred a simple portrayal of the person of Jesus whom participants were free to accept or question, thus allowing Jesus himself to draw people to God.¹²³ The positive experience of Jesus, and the new spiritual attitude and energy derived from it, rather than other goals like social reform, legislation, or filling churches, was the purpose of religion. In Thomas' fellowships, "religion" no longer was necessarily located in social structures; the personal spiritual relationship with God was an end in itself. The fellowship itself was, for Thomas, the new incarnation of the spirit of Jesus.

Thomas' fellowship studies seemed to gain broad appeal across the conferences of the United Church. In an anonymous article entitled "Fellowship as a Method of Quest and Conquest," one minister praised the benefits of fellowship movements such as Corpus Christi Crusade founded by John Mackay of Manitoba College, and the United Church conference and Student Christian Movement fellowships.¹²⁴ In place of the mass efforts and mob reaction of the crusade, and the "obsolete" class meeting with its stereo-typed and uninspiring testimony, the fellowship method offered a definite programme of study, frank discussion, prayer, corporate worship, and specific projects, all in small groups which offered genuine inspiration and mutual instruction "along

¹²²BESS, "He Shall Reign," 26.

¹²³Ernest Thomas, "The Message of Dr. Maltby," NO (3 October 1928), 4.

¹²⁴A Minister, "Fellowship as a Method of Quest and Conquest," NO (20 January 1926), 7.

continuous, consecutive and progressive lines." The fellowships helped to deepen religious experience, but in the freedom, equality, and devotion to service that was the method of Jesus. In short, the fellowships promised a refined and modern technique of spiritual conversion, and of making Jesus real to the world.

The goal of recovering a mystical experience of Jesus in the group studies was echoed in other church programs, such as a new focus on worship and liturgy. New discussions of worship were occasioned in part by the need of the newly formed United Church to decide forms of worship and liturgy. But worship itself was also given new emphasis in terms of the new spiritual idealism. As one editorial in the CJRT queried, "[e]liminate from [worship] the sense of the sublime and what is left?"¹²⁵ The church stood for "the universal and eternal;" worship was therefore peculiar to its function and must make concrete expression of that universal truth in the corporate life of the people and its communion with God.

Thus the focus on a distinct spiritual reality gave a new emphasis to corporate worship in the church. When J. R. P. Sclater, the prominent minister at St. Andrew's Church, Toronto, gave his Lyman Beecher lectures on Practical Theology at Yale in 1927, his focus on worship was a striking departure from pre-war conceptions of "practical preaching." According to Sclater, public worship was "the chief of all the ordinary means for keeping alive the sense of the Unseen in the community."¹²⁶ In his lectures, Sclater set out an order of worship organized on the principle of alternation between "vision and response" that corresponded to Baillie's conception of revelation and discovery. Worship was concerned with approaching God, but it was also human response to the visionary "flash of divine Reality".¹²⁷ Sclater's proposed order of worship also portrayed worship

¹²⁵ed., "Is Worship a Lost Art," CJRT, 1, no. 5 (September-October, 1924), 370.

¹²⁶J. R. P. Sclater, The Public Worship of God (New York: George H. Doran, 1927), 17.

¹²⁷Sclater, 25-26.

primarily as a psychological experience, and sought to foster the ascent of emotions from fear to the love of God. The high point of that public worship, he argued, was not the expository preaching of Protestant tradition, but intercessory prayer.¹²⁸ Sermons "rounded off" the vision of God in a particular application aimed at showing God's glory and helping men to be good. Though acknowledging the need for sound doctrinal preaching about "the facts" of the Christian faith, Sclater described the best kind of preaching as a poetic appeal to individual emotions. Great preaching touched the "ever-hidden" spiritual "levers" of the soul so as to unleash "divine forces" and "transforming energy" in individual lives.¹²⁹

This focus on mystical worship reflected the combined assumptions of the new evangelism: that religion was concerned with the experience of a distinct spiritual reality, and that in the modern secular world the church's primary task was to depict that divine reality in sublime ways. Sclater's emphasis on worship and mystical assent assumed that ordinary modern people had little time to remember that life is lived before God. Likewise, John Moore suggested that in the modern practical age, whose saints were social workers, medical missionaries, and other technical experts, society still had need of the "mystical vision" that unified life and directed earthly labour toward service.¹³⁰ And to add to the attempt to envision spiritual reality, others drew discussion to the renewal of doctrinal preaching, lectionaries, sacraments, church architecture, and liturgical forms.¹³¹ Some also encouraged the use of drama or "pageants" in worship to make concrete expression of the truth, as

¹²⁸Sclater, 41-44.

¹²⁹Sclater, 86.

¹³⁰John Moore, "Behold, the Dreamer," NO, (1 September 1926), 4, 28.

¹³¹See, for example, ed., "What We Believe," NO (24 March 1926), 4; J. F. L. Macdonald, "A Lectionary for the United Church," and Robert M. Brodie, "Forms of Service," NO (24 March, 1926), 13; ed., "Is Worship a Lost Art," CJRT, 1, no. 5 (September-October, 1924), 370; Samuel P. Rose, "Some Uses of the Lord's Supper," NO (15 February 1928), 5, 19.

a way to attract dwindling attendance and for those unmoved by abstract doctrine or unfamiliar with the church.¹³² In all these cases, worship was seen as the unique occasion to encounter the reality of God in the midst of a secular world.

The concern with worship also reflected a new effort to recover the objective reality of God. According to H. F[rank] Leach, a United Church minister in Saskatchewan who studied psychology at the Manitoba University in the early 1920's,¹³³ the new emphasis on worship offered a free and objective experience of God. The Protestant tradition of worship, dominated by the sermon and the efforts of the preacher to change his parishioners, was no longer effective, and it led to "the preacher's personality obscuring God."¹³⁴ In place of that preacher-centred tradition, Leach cited the view of Willard Sperry, the modern evangelical dean of Harvard Divinity School and critic of an earlier liberal theology, that worship should be considered the adoration of God.¹³⁵ If the church failed to foster worship directed to the objective reality of God, it was dead at heart.

The goals of the "new evangelism" also were applied in religious education and in attempts to mobilize the lay members of the church with a new emphasis on the techniques for entering into spiritual life. In 1925 Rev. C. A. Myers, field secretary for the United Church's Religious Education Department and leader of the Standard Training Schools for church leadership throughout Ontario, urged that the task of educating modern children in the gospel required new methods to compete with modern wealth, amusements, technology, and materialism.¹³⁶ Myers' suggestion was to establish

¹³²"Editorial," CJRT, 1, no. 1 (January-February 1924), 3-4; Edward Moore, "Using Drama in the Church Service," NO (14 July 1926), 22.

¹³³"Who's Who in this Issue," CJRT, 4, no. 3 (May-June 1927), 280.

¹³⁴H. F. Leach, "Is Worship a Lost Art?" NO (4 April 1928), 7.

¹³⁵On Sperry, see William R. Hutchinson, The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism (New York: Oxford, 1982), 251-3.

¹³⁶Rev. Dr. C. A. Myers, "Teaching Religion to Childhood and Youth: An Old Task With a New Need," NO (10 June 1925), 9.

mid-week instruction classes, and to add religious instruction to "secular education" in public schools. John Moore added that religious education must appeal to the "instinct of the soul." It required restating Christianity to make it "intelligible, challengeable, and acceptable."¹³⁷ Citing John Dewey, Moore warned that religious education must not, lest it obstruct progress, impose an adult moral repressiveness on the liberation of youth's impulses "in original and novel ways." The solution, he argued, was to replace Old Testament legalism with the New Testament drama of youthful ideas and adventure for common people who could not meet the letter of the law. Jesus had begun a new adventure of spiritual perfection, declaring that "the Kingdom is within you." Accordingly, religious education should combine freedom for exploration and adventure with encouragement of a cohesive "commonwealth." It required "fearless application of knowledge" to the affairs of religious life and it must reorganize church life for the benefit of youth, rather than "middle-aged conservation."

The new technique for religious education came to focus, as Percy R. Hayward, the Baptist General Secretary of the Religious Education Council of Canada, stated pointedly, not merely on "peripheral" knowledge of Biblical facts, but on the process of developing the spiritual perspective that was central to character building.¹³⁸ In the progressive fashion of Dewey, Hayward added that this technique required that controls be limited, and assumed that religion could be demonstrated to be the natural, self-satisfying, and self-chosen basis of character. Like Thomas' fellowship studies, youth were to encounter the figures of the Bible, especially the person of Jesus, as attractive heroes, and they were to be presented, as Moore demonstrated in one study sermon, with such "anchors" of personal

¹³⁷Rev. John Moore, "Religion, Youth and the Church," NO (29 July 1925), 5-6.

¹³⁸Percy R. Hayward, "What is there in Religious Education?" CJRT, 1, no. 2 (March-April 1924), 124. The reference to Hayward here is occasioned by the fact that the United Church was a member of the Religious Education Association of Canada. However, Hayward's comments suggest that the themes of the "new evangelism" promulgated in the United Church extended beyond the United Church, especially to the moderately progressive Baptist Association.

religion as faith, courage, patience, and hope, to guide and liberate them to spiritual adventure.¹³⁹ They also were encouraged to commit themselves to "spiritual" moral living, including personal temperance, and to join service and training clubs like the Beaver Brotherhood.¹⁴⁰ The aim of such religious education was to convince young people, as Frank Langford, General Secretary of the United Church's Religious Education Department, pleaded, to "practice the presence of God" and to find happiness of life living the law of God and "in communion with God through His Word."¹⁴¹

Concern for the religious education of youth was complemented by new efforts to enlist lay participation in the mission of the church. In his address to the Ministerial Association of Vancouver, Rev. W. L. Macrae expressed the widespread concern about the drift away from the church especially by adult males.¹⁴² The cause of that drift, according to Macrae, was not poor preaching, but ineffective methods. The church needed, he urged, to enlist lay members in an active campaign for personal evangelism. Like the early church, the modern church, quickened by the Spirit, would grow by believers telling others around them of their personal passion for God.

Two main developments grew out of such ideas. First, a new round of lay conferences was initiated in larger Canadian cities under the theme of "Dominion and World Service" to enlist lay members in renewing the mission of church at home and abroad.¹⁴³ The Toronto conference, for example, was attended by 1000 laymen, and included a banquet and speeches by J. H. Gundy, secretary of the United Church Maintenance and Extension Fund, and J. R. P. Sclater, who urged

¹³⁹John Moore, "Anchors of the Soul," NO, (5 October 1927), 4, 24.

¹⁴⁰G. S. "Montreal and Ottawa Annual Conference," NO (27 June 1928), 21, 25; Norton F. Brand, "The Age of Organizations," NO (30 March 1927), 12, 22.

¹⁴¹Frank Langford, "Young People in the United Church; Devotional," NO, (5 May 1926), 24.

¹⁴²ed., NO (6 April 1927), 13.

¹⁴³ed., "Dominion and World Service," NO (13 October 1926), 1.

laymen's responsibility to support the work of church with their lives and money.¹⁴⁴ Similar rallies were held throughout the country, usually featuring banquets and urging lay members to support the church, with reportedly 2000 attendees in the Maritime conference and enthusiastic receptions in the west.¹⁴⁵ As W. B. Creighton noted, the main task for laymen set out by clerical leaders was that of supporting, and especially financing church activities.¹⁴⁶ Given the new emphasis on the strictly spiritual vision of the church and Christianity, there seemed little else that could be expected of lay members. Nevertheless, as Creighton also noted, it was hoped that the spiritual fellowship of the laymen's association would overcome the social stratification of the modern city through "a spiritual solidarity of the Church." And it would also "equalize the opportunities of spiritual education throughout the city and ...reach those untouched and underprivileged from a religious standpoint."¹⁴⁷

Secondly, the new emphasis on personal evangelism shaped the development of a new style of evangelistic outreach. During late 1927, D. N. McLachlan, General Secretary of the United Church's BESS, outlined the board's plan for such a focus. That plan, designed to strengthen evangelistic efforts, included a new emphasis on public worship, New Testament study, devotional reading, retreats, preaching missions with "accredited" preachers, and a new campaign of personalized "visitation" evangelism and conferences to train leaders in the new evangelism.¹⁴⁸ Though he acknowledged that Christianity ultimately entailed the task of saving man "in his entirety," McLachlan argued that shaping personal attitudes would transform society:

¹⁴⁴ed., "The Lay Association of Toronto," (15 June 1927), 27.

¹⁴⁵See reports in the NO as follows: ed., "The Church Moves Forward," (20 October 1926), 13; ed., "The West Maintaining the Record," (3 November 1926), 1.

¹⁴⁶ed., "The Lay Association of Toronto," Christian Guardian (15 June 1927), 27.

¹⁴⁷ed., "A New Movement in the Church," NO (2 March 1927), 25.

¹⁴⁸D. N. McLachlan, "Evangelism. Outlining the New Policy Recommended by the Board," NO (23 November 1927), 8.

Evangelism ... proceeds on the assumption that the individual is the key to the mass of men and that genuine social progress can be secured only as a result of the regeneration of the individual members of society. It assumes this also, that only the Gospel of Christ makes regeneration possible. It follows that individual regeneration and social improvement should proceed together.¹⁴⁹

As W. B. Creighton added in his editorial announcing the programme of "Promoting Personal Religion," evangelism indirectly would affect social, industrial, and political issues as the "fields in which the quickened life will find expression." A "new Pentecost," he claimed, was possible "only as the Church releases" a new and adventurous energy in the redemption of social, industrial and political life.¹⁵⁰ The new evangelism, it was hoped, would lead to a new, spiritualized society which fulfilled the highest aspirations of individuals. The social philosophy of Jesus, Creighton remarked in an earlier editorial, involved the two foci of "personality and fellowship." Jesus' method was to "bring personality to its highest capacity and then to bind these persons into a great human fellowship," as the only way to resolve the world's sin.¹⁵¹

By 1928 personal evangelism had become the new hope of the United Church for Christianizing Canadian society. The combination of approved preaching missions and personal contact was exemplified in a rally held in Hamilton, where American evangelist Gypsy Smith spoke to crowds numbering from 3000 to 7000, with follow-up personal visitations organized by the local churches.¹⁵² As Fred Middleton reported in his description of the BESS's programme, the new evangelism with its more discreet and personalized missions was a necessary departure from traditional revivalism since "the mass evangelism with which the last generation was familiar is now less

¹⁴⁹D. N. McLachlan, "Evangelism. Outlining the New Policy Recommended by the Board," NQ (23 November 1927), 8.

¹⁵⁰ed. "Promoting Personal Religion," NQ (2 May 1928), 1.

¹⁵¹ed. "A Page for Quiet Thought; A World of Brothers," NQ, (9 March 1927), 8.

¹⁵²W. S. D. "The United Church in the Hamilton Conference," NQ (31 October 1928), 25, 27.

effective in producing the fullness of the Christian life." The Spirit was guiding the Church "to methods more suited to changed conditions."¹⁵³ Those changed conditions were also identified at the 1928 General Council in Hamilton, whose theme "Maintaining the Spiritual Glow" reflected the focus of the United Church on personal evangelism and a distinctly spiritual experience in what now was seen as a secularized world.¹⁵⁴ In his address to the Council George Pidgeon noted the new problem:

In the days of Moody the ordinary man had the idea of a world of the spirit with its great realities, God and immortality, and the task of the evangelist was the comparatively easy one of leading people to accept that world as theirs. Today we have to make those realities real to thousands of people ere we can seek their acceptance.¹⁵⁵

In the light of that new secularism, noted by numerous other participants as well, the church needed a new and clear, though also modern, presentation of the Gospel message.

Thus, in their worship, evangelism, and apologetics, advocates of the "new evangelism" had responded to what they saw as the threat of secularization and historical relativism by attempting to distinguish a distinct spiritual reality that would assure both the reality of God and human freedom. Their solution, on the one hand, located the spiritual within subjective human consciousness of values, and divided the world between spiritual personality and natural structures. On the other hand, this distinction was made in the hope that the recovery of a realm of the spirit might enable modern man to transcend and transform the determined world of natural structures.

¹⁵³Fred C. Middleton, "Visitation Evangelism," NO (16 May 1928), 19. Middleton described this innovation as evangelism with a personal touch, in which laymen went out in pairs to visit potential adherents and present them with the claims of Christ and the Church.

¹⁵⁴ed., "Third General Council of the United Church; The Story of Its Spirit and Its Work," NO (26 September 1928), 13-15.

¹⁵⁵ed., "Third General Council of the United Church," 13-15.

III. Christianity, Culture, and the Limits of Personalism

Having located the divine in the human psyche, advocates of the new apologetic and the new evangelism still were left with a growing crisis of historicism: how could one claim, from the perspective of historically bound consciousness, an external objective reality, much less a transcendent God, in order to justify the validity of religion as well as the finality of Christ? And how did the claim to spiritual reality relate it to the structured world in such a way as to admit radical transformation by the gospel? These questions were especially persistent in issues involving home and foreign missions, the western humanist tradition, and social reform.

By 1925 most progressive Protestant leaders had accepted the principle of indigenization in foreign missions, particularly the axiom of "Christ, not culture," and "Christ, not Christianity."¹⁵⁶ In her report on the legacy of the Presbyterian Church's Women's Mission Society and its role in the new United Church, Janet MacGillivray captured that principle by claiming that the purpose of missions was "to implant the Christ, not of a Western setting, but the Christ of a universal trust."¹⁵⁷ Likewise, in home missions W. H. Pike promoted a vision of Canada as a "melting pot" in which the goal of the church was no longer to make "foreigners" British, but to minister to the "souls" of citizens in their own language, and to develop a common spiritual brotherhood that would unify Canada's diverse population into a new nation.¹⁵⁸ With its focus on a universal spiritual reality, the new evangelism gave hope that the church community might transcend cultural differences.

In the mid-1920's, however, the nationalist uprisings in China and India which peaked

¹⁵⁶Robert Wright, A World Mission; Canadian Protestantism and the Quest for a New International Order, 1918-1939 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 152.

¹⁵⁷Janet T. MacGillivray, "Women's Interest in World Missions Under the Presbyterian Church," NO, (10 June 1925), 29-31.

¹⁵⁸W. H. Pike, "'I Was A Stranger' in Canada," NO (3 March 1926), 6: ed., "A Church of All Nations," NO (28 March 1928), 12.

between 1925 and 1928 put this hope to the test. Especially in China, nationalist rebellion under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek was supported by Russian efforts to export Bolshevism. By 1927, most of the 321 Canadian Presbyterian, Methodist, and Anglican missionaries were forced to evacuate China.¹⁵⁹ These developments again stimulated questions about the validity of foreign missions and the meaning of indigenization.

In his interpretation of the challenge to Canadian foreign missions, J. L. Stewart, a missionary from Shanghai, claimed that the rebellion in China was led by students who were sympathetic to communism and supported by Russia. Mistakenly, he claimed, they regarded Christianity as an agent of western capitalism and imperialism.¹⁶⁰ For Stewart, the conflict in China had become an ideological contest between "Communism or Christianity," between the atheistic, materialistic Bolshevism of the Third International and Christian brotherhood. As Robert Wright notes, this scheme of interpretation led western missionaries to a superficial understanding of Chinese nationalist actions. They assumed, for example, that those fighting against communism were sympathetic to Christianity, and as a result they misread Chinese leaders like General Feng Yu-hsiang and Chiang Kai-Shek and briefly claimed them for Christianity, while those Chinese figures waffled between communism and nationalism in a pragmatic search for independence for their own culture.¹⁶¹

According to critics like W. B. Creighton, Stewart's interpretation also failed to recognize the validity of Chinese perceptions that missionaries were bearers of westernization. Creighton suggested that Chinese nationalism was a natural reaction against western capitalism and domination, with which

¹⁵⁹Wright, 53-55.

¹⁶⁰See the following articles in the NO by J. L. Stewart: "An Anti-Christian Crusade in China," (24 June 1925), 12; and "The Present Crisis in China. Communism or Christianity, Which?" (5 August 1925), 9-10.

¹⁶¹Wright, 53-55, 155.

Christianity was too closely intertwined.¹⁶² In a later editorial, he cited E. W. Wallace's 1925 report on "Chinese Christian Education" to the United Church's Board of Foreign Missions. According to Wallace, foreign governments from Britain, Germany and Japan had been funding or planning mission schools and hospitals for "peaceful penetration" of the west into China. Wallace warned that such actions created suspicion of the motives of missions.¹⁶³ Indeed, others suggested that Canadian missions were suspect because of their assumption of western values and their debt to Canadian corporations and wealthy businessmen in the Laymen's Missionary Movement.¹⁶⁴

On the basis of such criticism, progressive Protestants in Canada like Creighton urged Western Christians to join in the battle against nationalism and class warfare in favour of a universal body of Christ that encompassed all nations, races, classes confessing Christ, to "approximate the truth in behalf of community righteousness."¹⁶⁵ What had characterized the great teachers of Christianity, according to Creighton, was that they stood

on eternal realities and from that view point criticize the culture of their age. Christianity is seeking release from entanglement with current economics either of the conservative or radical school. The church insists on the spiritual values which must be conserved and by which conduct should be judged.¹⁶⁶

To that end, Wallace had urged that Christianity must "prove itself free from ulterior motives connected with imperialism or capitalism" by encouraging more Chinese control of their own education and missions, and it must repudiate the goal of transplanting western ideas and institutions

¹⁶²ed., "Christianity and Chinese Nationalism," NO (1 July 1925), 1.

¹⁶³ed. "Admit Activity is Anti-Christian," NO (22 July 1925), 4.

¹⁶⁴Alvyn J. Austin, Saving China: Canadian Missionaries in the Middle Kingdom, 1888-1959 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 100-102.

¹⁶⁵ed., NO, (9 September 1925).

¹⁶⁶ed., "Christianity and Chinese Nationalism," NO (1 July 1925), 1.

in China.¹⁶⁷ Disentangling Christianity from western culture and affirming the principle of freedom went hand in hand. As Ernest Thomas insisted, Asian Christians must be "free to work out their own synthesis, according to their own traditions."¹⁶⁸

Perhaps in answer to such challenges, and the charges levelled by J. Davidson Ketchum and S. H. Hooke, J. B. McLaurin, a veteran of the Indian field of foreign missions and spokesman for the Canadian Baptist Foreign Mission Board, defended foreign missions by elaborating the principle of indigenization further. Allegiance to Christ, he argued, was not incompatible with Indian patriotism, for Christ was the heart of the living gospel, and not just the expression of God by a particular people. While affirming the finality of Christ, he also urged that the message of Christ be divested of Western thoughts and forms that were not central to that message, and that prejudiced the Hindu mind against it. The task of missionaries was not to enforce western habits. Foreign missions required

a presentation of the Gospel that shall not hope to dazzle India with industrial or economic dreams; or strive to confine her in Western formularies of religious ideas, but, like Paul at Corinth, to know nothing amongst them but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.¹⁶⁹

Western missionaries must keep their role to a minimum in the recognition that their western culture made them least qualified to present the Gospel to the East. Indians must "present Christ as their Eastern eyes have seen Him." Only thus could the perceived conflict between Christianity and nationalism be solved.

Part of the dilemma in these debates was the great difficulty of distinguishing between Christianity and historical cultures. After attending a conference of the Canadian Student Volunteer Movement, Ernest Thomas reported that some participants had argued that religion was insulated from

¹⁶⁷ed. "Admit Activity is Anti-Christian," NO (22 July 1925), 4.

¹⁶⁸Ernest Thomas, "The Truth About Foreign Missions," NO, 9 December 1925), cited in Wright, 155.

¹⁶⁹J. B. McLaurin, "The Gospel in India," CJRT, 2, no. 2 (March-April, 1925), 152.

culture, history, and civilization, and that therefore Christian missions could present an unadulterated Christ. Others, however, argued that religion was inescapably a way of life rooted in particular civilizations, and that missions were therefore unavoidably part of an international clash of cultures and inescapably supported western capitalism.¹⁷⁰ At a subsequent SVM conference in Detroit in late 1927 attended by 258 Canadian students, some even suggested the possible value of non-Christian religions, questioning whether Christ was "the way, and not merely a way."¹⁷¹

In reply to such questions, Thomas sought middle ground. Christians, he pleaded, could not allow commerce, science, and politics to be the only voices of western culture; rather they must promote the spiritual values without which western culture would be far more destructive. But to preserve the validity of its witness, Christianity must Christianize and humanize its own culture to remove the contradiction in its dealings with other cultures, and present a wholly Christianized contact with those cultures.¹⁷² Such a method would require a long wait. In the meantime, the hope that Christ and spiritual values could be separated from culture, thereby preserving the legitimacy of an exclusive Christ, was the main theme of Canadian missionary leaders.

This strategy was exemplified by James Endicott (1865-1954), who was a missionary in China from 1893-1910, including during the Boxer Rebellion of the early 1900's, and subsequently served as Secretary of the United Church's Board of Foreign Missions.¹⁷³ His election as Moderator of the United Church from 1926-1928 indicated ongoing concern for missions and evangelism initiated

¹⁷⁰Ernest Thomas, "The Truth About Modern Missions; Shall We Promote Christianity or Western Civilization?" NO (9 December 1925), 6. Creighton reported on similar discussions held at the Student Volunteer Movement Convention held in Detroit during December 28, 1927-January 2, 1928 and attended by 258 Canadian students. ed., "The Students of North America," NO, (4 January 1928), 1.

¹⁷¹ed. "The Students of North America," NO (4 January 1928), 1. See also Ernest Thomas' report in "Young Life Facing a New World," NO (11 January 1928), 4, 15.

¹⁷²Thomas, "The Truth About Modern Missions," 6.

¹⁷³Toronto, United Church Archives, Biographical Files, "James Endicott."

during Pidgeon's tenure. In one speech to the Religious Education Association in Toronto in 1926, Endicott argued that religion alone could solve the problem of world unity. Endicott obviously identified religion with Christianity, and urged that the church could perform this unifying function only by setting its own house in order, and by being generous and catholic toward other people and religions. Christianity, he argued, needed neither defensiveness nor conquest, for it embodied universal truths that could draw from and fulfill all faiths without compromising itself.¹⁷⁴

Endicott thus suggested the validity and continuity of all religions as expressions of spiritual experience, even while claiming the universality of Christianity. After ordering the evacuation of missionaries from China, Endicott had nevertheless called for a sympathetic "seeing the basic good in the revolution."¹⁷⁵ China merely wanted the same freedoms that were divinely authorized in the west,- a claim that seemed self-evidently legitimate to Endicott. Accordingly, in their report to the General Council for 1927, Endicott and Jesse Arnup urged a policy of transferring control of foreign control to indigenous church members, "in line with the policy of the British Government."¹⁷⁶

Others went even further in calling for sympathy for non-Christian religions, and for collaboration with other religions against materialism and secularism. In his Wither Bound Missions? (1925), Daniel Fleming, the Presbyterian director of the Canadian School of Missions, had called missionaries to respond to the needs of others, including non-Christians, as they themselves defined those needs. Fleming's conciliatory view toward other religions, though not necessarily their equality with Christianity, gained growing acceptance even among moderates like John Mott and J. H. Oldham

¹⁷⁴James Endicott, "Religion and World Unity," NO, (24 March 1926), 5, 8.

¹⁷⁵Cited in Ernest Thomas, "China as the Moderator Sees it," NO (12 October 1925), 13-14.

¹⁷⁶UCC, "Foreign Missions," Yearbook, 1927 and Record of Proceedings of the Second General Council, 96-100; and "Foreign Missions," Yearbook, 1928 and Record of Proceedings of the Third General Council, 282.

throughout the International Missionary Council.¹⁷⁷ Meanwhile, according to Wright, more radical progressives abandoned the traditional evangelical premises of Protestant missions altogether, in the belief that religious expression was the product of local culture, and that Westerners "had an obligation to consider that salvation might not come exclusively through Jesus Christ."¹⁷⁸

Ironically, while attempting to defend the uniqueness of Christianity and the ideal of a universal "spiritual" church community distinct from "natural" cultural and political contexts, progressive Protestants nevertheless assumed western liberal views of the legitimate interest of indigenous peoples for their own cultural traditions and political structures.¹⁷⁹ In doing so, furthermore, they had identified "spiritual reality" with the western liberal values of freedom. But to what extent could the principle of freedom be reconciled with the exclusive claims of Christianity with respect to non-Christian faiths? This was the question raised by Egerton R. M. Brecken, who suggested that the rich cultural and religious heritage of China provided its own basis for Christian ethics. Yet if the Chinese had the capacity for "self-discovery," Brecken pondered, why try to bring Christian propaganda? Brecken's answer was that only the grace of God in Christ could fulfill the inherent potential of Chinese spirituality.¹⁸⁰

The debate over foreign missions would culminate in the famous International Missionary Conference in Jerusalem during 1928. In the meantime, the issues raised in the debate appeared also in the identity of the new evangelism and the neo-Kantian apologetic with the humanist tradition of western civilization. The devotion of prominent progressive Protestants like Sir Robert Falconer and H. P. Whidden to defending the humanities during the mid-1920's is well known. As Patricia Jasen,

¹⁷⁷Wright, 143, 168-169.

¹⁷⁸Wright, 165.

¹⁷⁹Wright, 55.

¹⁸⁰Egerton R. M. Brecken, "Towards Understanding the Chinese Puzzle," NQ, (28 October 1925), 8, 15.

and A. B. McKillop, have shown, the mid-1920's marked the transition from a moral interpretation of the humanities and their central role in the liberal arts curriculum of the Canadian universities, to a new scientific and critical treatment of literature and the arts.¹⁸¹ In response to this trend, Falconer and Whidden advocated a neo-Kantian defense of the humanities as the realm of distinctly human personality and values.

Whidden was a Baptist minister who, after serving as Member of Parliament for Brandon and President of Brandon College, became Chancellor of McMaster College in 1923. In a 1924 article in the CJRT Whidden pleaded the case for liberal arts in the spiritual development of humanity. His argument was classic Matthew Arnold: study of the arts and classics were important for bringing the mind into sympathy with the best there is in the experience of humanity.¹⁸² On the premise that man is a spiritual being and therefore must live for spiritual ends, Whidden argued that:

[w]hat mankind needs more than anything else is spiritual knowledge. We are getting knowledge fast... but most of it is applied to material things ... We need an increased power of salvation, and that must be a spiritual power. The mental side of man has been developed... while his spiritual side has been starved. What is needed now is a development of that spiritual side so that it will hold the rest of the new knowledge and make it safe.¹⁸³

The liberal arts, he argued, would help humanity to fuse the knowledge of science and literature in an appreciation of the "universal things in life," and in doing so they would help man to know "how he shall properly fill his place in the universe and understand what he must be in order to be a man." Only by sustaining such spiritual forces could modern civilization be saved. For Whidden, the

¹⁸¹Patricia J. Jasen, "The English-Canadian Liberal Arts Curriculum: An Intellectual History, 1800-1950," (Ph.d. dissertation, University of Manitoba, 1987), 60-75; Jasen, "Arnoldian Humanism, English Studies, and the Canadian University," Queen's Quarterly, 95, no. 3 (Autumn 1988), 551; A. B. McKillop, Contours of Canadian Thought (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 114-119.

¹⁸²H. P. Whidden, "What is Liberal Education?" CJRT, 1, no. 1 (January-February, 1924), 36-45. See also McKillop, 181.

¹⁸³H. P. Whidden, "What is Liberal Education?" CJRT, 1, no. 1 (January-February, 1924), 36-45.

traditional role of education as teaching humanity's moral obligation was best achieved through the liberal arts which witnessed to the highest spiritual consciousness in the western tradition.

A similar argument was made by Sir Robert Falconer, the president of the University of Toronto and one of Canada's most prominent defender of the humanities. Trained in Scotland and Germany during the 1890's, Falconer shared the Ritschlian theology and neo-Kantian philosophy of Morgan and Baillie.¹⁸⁴ Even more strongly than Whidden, Falconer argued in 1925 for the alliance of the classics and sciences in developing a "humanism" that would direct humanity's control over Nature into both power and a reverence for "the True, the Beautiful, and the Good."¹⁸⁵ In his Idealism in National Character (1920) Falconer defended both science and humanities: the humanities, to "recall the people to ancient and established truths," and science, to "turn their feet through the advance of science into ever-widening paths of liberty."¹⁸⁶

The pleas by Falconer and Whidden in support of the humanities reflected Matthew Arnold's attempt, in his Culture and Anarchy, to synthesize Christianity and classical culture. Arnold had argued that the Hellenic tradition of creative reason and the Hebraic tradition of moral order pursued a common purpose, namely the perfection of man in the knowledge and love of God.¹⁸⁷ Christianity had added nothing essentially new to these traditions, but offered a new source of inspiration in Jesus. And in answer to the modern search for order, Arnold had urged the synthesis of these traditions as a return to the instincts and forces which rule human life.¹⁸⁸ In a 1925 article, William Jordan

¹⁸⁴W. R. Taylor, "Sir Robert Falconer: III. Religion and Scholarship," University of Toronto Quarterly, 1, no. 1 (October, 1943), 161-164.

¹⁸⁵Sir Robert Falconer, "Humanism," The Hibbert Journal, 24 (1925-26), 123, 127, 131.

¹⁸⁶Cited in McKillop, 119-120.

¹⁸⁷Matthew Arnold, "Culture and Anarchy," in The Portable Matthew Arnold, Lionel Trilling, ed., (New York: Viking Press, 1949), 558-563.

¹⁸⁸Arnold, "Culture and Anarchy," 573.

"Christianized" Arnold's proposal, arguing that it was the synthesis of Hebraic and Hellenistic culture in Christianity, especially in the work of the apostle Paul, that had triumphed in bringing unity and progress to the classical world.¹⁸⁹ On the premise that religion and Christ affirmed the inherent values of human consciousness, the highest ideals of any religion, as Baillie had argued, were consistent with and fulfilled in Christianity.

As McKillop suggests, Whidden and Falconer saw in liberal education the spiritual authority that was essential for Canada in a new age of science. The liberal arts would prepare leaders with spiritual vision, and at the same time they would affirm and develop human creative freedom over nature.¹⁹⁰ In these ways, their defence of the liberal arts complemented the apologetics of Morgan and Baillie. But, as in the work of scholars like Andrew Macphail, Archibald MacMechan, and Maurice Hutton, the Arnoldian synthesis could easily dispense with Jesus and become a secularized humanist idealism.¹⁹¹ Furthermore, for all their efforts to distinguish Christianity from western civilization, the commitment of moderate progressive Protestants to the western tradition of the humanities could be seen as part of western Christianity's ongoing complicity, in Thomas's analysis, in western culture.

Criticisms of this synthesis of Christianity and classical humanism came in part from the development of more critical, historicist approaches to the humanities, and also from more utilitarian views that education should serve industry.¹⁹² But criticism also came from those Protestants seeking a sharper differentiation between Christ and western culture. In 1924, William R. Taylor, who

¹⁸⁹W. G. Jordan, "Hebraism and Hellenism in the Second Century B. C.," *CJRT*, 2, no. 5 (September-October, 1925), 338.

¹⁹⁰McKillop, 121.

¹⁹¹All three figures are examined by S. E. D. Shortt, *The Search for an Ideal: Six Canadian Intellectuals and their convictions in an age of transition, 1890-190* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976).

¹⁹²McKillop, 119-120.

had studied theology at Knox College and Semitics at University of Toronto before becoming head of the Department of Semitics at University College in 1924, offered a contrast to Jordan's synthesis of Hebraic and Hellenistic thought. Alexander the Great's empire, he argued, marked the height of Greek thought and progress, but also suffered from religious syncretism, pluralism, and growing atheism that undermined the old loyalties and restraints. Plato's search for the universal religion was answered finally by the Hebrews alone, in their highly developed moral and monotheistic religion. The Hebraic view, he argued, offered a view of man that was deeper and truer than that of the Greeks.¹⁹³

Another critic was William Manson, professor of Systematic Theology at Knox College until 1925. In a 1924 review, Manson welcomed a new study of modern poetry, suggesting that poetry deals with fundamental spiritual issues of life:

the soul's intuitive perception of values and realities which mere scientific and utilitarian analysis ignores and omits, aims at a higher interpretation and reconstruction of experience, and ministers to 'the universal longing for a perfect world.'¹⁹⁴

Manson thus seemed to echo the Arnoldian view that the humanities had the task of teaching a moral tradition and spiritual values. In 1925, however, Manson asserted the radical exclusiveness of Christianity in a series of comments in the CJRT on Jesus' preaching of the Kingdom of God. Jesus, Manson noted, had called for repentance and for identification with him in an "immediate spiritual communion" that could not be comprehended in particular human theories.¹⁹⁵ What the Sermon on the Mount called for was not Arnold's "sweetness and light," but the "saltness and light" of a unique and decidedly non-Greek spirit of self-sacrificing service and fidelity to the revealed truths of God.

¹⁹³W. R. Taylor, "Hellenism and the Wisdom Literature," CJRT, 1, no. 6 (November-December, 1924), 491-498.

¹⁹⁴William Manson, "review of 'The Soul of Modern Poetry,' by R. H. Strachan," CJRT, 1, no. 2 (March-April 1924), 174-75.

¹⁹⁵William Manson, "From An Expositor's Notebook," CJRT, 2, no. 3 (May-June 1925), 235-236.

What the Christian Church has to impart is not a general culture such as Matthew Arnold desiderated, but a serene and untroubled testimony to the highest truths as revealed through Christ and the Spirit. Jews require signs and Greeks demand philosophy, but the Church's 'word of the cross' is the real answer of God to men. It is the real proof of divine omnipotence and the ultimate solution of our intellectual questionings.¹⁹⁶

Manson here suggested a turn of the tables to portray Christ as radically distinct from, and in tension with, the anthropocentric humanism of Arnold's synthesis.

While Taylor and Manson challenged the identity of western humanist values with Christ, others questioned whether the new apologetic could support its claim to a unique, universal spiritual reality on the grounds of critical science. In short, could the new apologetic support its ontological claim to a unique reality, or did it merely affirm a historically relative western consciousness? Like the Italian neo-Kantian Benedetto Croce, John Baillie had claimed the consciousness of a world of "timeless and absolute meaning" which might preserve a role for God and for human purposeful freedom beyond mechanical nature.¹⁹⁷ But citing Croce, Baillie conceded the inescapable historicity of that consciousness:

religious judgements being what they are, and making claim to objective truth as they undoubtedly do, it is psychologically an impossible feat, as well as logically a self-contradictory desire, not to make one's own fundamental religious conviction the criterion of religious truth. If we believe them to be true (as we must do, if they are really convictions), then we are, ipso facto, making them the criterion. And, once again, what other criterion is at all conceivable? Moreover, if one does not set aside one's conscience in seeking to surprise the secret of beauty, why then should one have to lay aside one's faith in seeking for 'religious truth'?¹⁹⁸

Like Augustine's credo ut intelligam, Baillie thus suggested that claims to knowledge of God invariably rested on consciousness's experience of faith. But Baillie's was a distinctly modern,

¹⁹⁶Manson, "From An Expositor's Notebook," 235-236.

¹⁹⁷Ernst Breisach, Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 280-281.

¹⁹⁸Baillie, The Interpretation of Religion, 122-123.

Kantian version of the primacy of faith that took human consciousness as its starting point, and hence could not avoid the historically self-conscious "hermeneutic of suspicion" of all claims to objective reality.

While Baillie and Morgan had claimed that religion was a distinct form of consciousness, its location within the psyche also left unresolved its relationship to modern social sciences, especially psychology. In 1925, Frank Leach argued that psychology had a vital role to play in religion. If religion was rooted in humanity's "structural mental organization," and if it concerned the realization of human personality, then psychology could serve both to disclose the mental processes involved in religion and the "therapeutic" value of religion.¹⁹⁹

Ernest Scott and William Morgan, however, were wary of such suggestions that psychology and spiritual reality might intersect. In an article in the CJRT entitled "Some Doubts About Psychology," Scott defended the claim that, though religious experience was located in human consciousness, it was impervious to examination by the science of psychology.²⁰⁰ Though not entirely opposed to the study of psychology, Scott argued that the new psychology of religion treated the mind as a mechanism and presumed that it could, by empirical observation, explain the mind's experience of ultimate spiritual reality in religion. Psychology failed to question the reality behind the mechanism. "'An engine gives you power - but what is the power which it calls into action?'" While psychology only observed the external mechanical world, Scott argued, religious experience of the mysterious power of the Spirit puts one into contact with "a higher world of reality." Science was appropriate only when its subject was defined by "definite law."²⁰¹ But "'Life is free and incalculable," he claimed, and therefore a "science of history, of religion, of thought or will or

¹⁹⁹Frank Leach, "The Preacher and the Psychology of Religion," NO (4 November 1925), 6.

²⁰⁰E. F. Scott, "Some Doubts About Psychology," CJRT, 1, no. 2 (April 1924).

²⁰¹Scott, "Some Doubts About Psychology," 102.

emotion, is a contradiction in terms," for the scientific treatment of these left out their central, defining features. At best, psychology could only describe the external conditions of spiritual life, thereby helping to eliminate external factors so as to clearly define the permanent features of religious experience.

Scott's insistence on a sharp ontological distinction between spirit and the mechanical world of nature was affirmed by William Morgan. Despite the new metaphysical claims by scientists like J. Arthur Thompson to a teleological force in nature, argued Morgan, others like Arthur Eddington had warned that nature gives no knowledge of the purposiveness of that force. Science must work strictly by the investigation of facts. And in this case, science and religion had nothing to say to one another.²⁰² Consequently, Morgan concluded, there was not yet a philosophical system that could relate religion to the world of nature. "Of a Christian philosophy," he declared, "we have hardly more than fragments."²⁰³ The ultimate structure of the universe remained unanswered.

Not surprisingly, some progressives found this irresolution untenable. In a review of Thompson's Science and Religion (1925), Walter T. Brown of Victoria College complained that the central weakness of Thompson's work was its failure to "define the relation between science and religion other than to hold that, while separate, they must be united."²⁰⁴ In reaction to this attempt to separate religion and science, some progressive Protestants would seek to claim the "reality" of the spiritual within the world by appealing to a new evolutionary view of God. In a lecture entitled "Evolution and Immortality," William Taylor argued that God was "transcendent" in the sense that he was eternally present in the world. God, according to Taylor, was the conscious will that was the

²⁰²Morgan, The Nature and Right of Religion, 116-120.

²⁰³Morgan, "Religion and Philosophy," 452.

²⁰⁴W. T. Brown, review of Science and Religion. By J. Arthur Thompson. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. CJRT, Vol. 2, No. 6 (November-December, 1925), 455-56.

creative force within the universe.²⁰⁵ Rather than a static ontological object, the world was organic and in process, and humanity was the highest peak of that creative process. And since humans were moral, conscious persons, God must be likewise.

Taylor here offered a theistic version of Huxley's "biological religion" similar to Henri Bergson's theory of creative evolution, and to the views of Hooke and Ketchum. Through the mid-1920's, physicists like Arthur Eddington and J. Arthur Thompson argued that new theories of relativity, thermodynamics, and the structure of the atom displayed an immaterial essence to natural reality. One Canadian commentator claimed that this "newer outlook" finally had identified God as the conscious, willing energy and force within the processes of nature.²⁰⁶ Similarly, Alfred North Whitehead's works on Science and the Modern World (1925) and Religion in the Making (1926) portrayed nature as an expanding organic process driven by God understood as the "principle of concretion."²⁰⁷ According to this principle, reality consisted of "emergents," with God's being going out from unity in itself to be realized in the world, in human consciousness, and ultimately in the diverse unity of reality.

This renewed organic idealism would gain popularity among some progressive Protestants near the end of the 1920's. To some extent, it was suggested already in Baillie's appeal to Croce, who regarded life as an "onrushing process," with human subjects standing as participants within that process.²⁰⁸ Indeed, Baillie's confident claim to a new moral idealism marks a transition point from Morgan's sharp neo-Kantian dualism to the new idealism of science.

²⁰⁵W. R. Taylor, "Evolution and Immortality," CJRT, 2, no. 1 (November-December 1925), 447-448.

²⁰⁶M. C. MacKinnon, "The Newer Outlook," NQ (2 March 1927), 18.

²⁰⁷See the announcement "Among the Books," NQ (27 October 1926), 14, and A. S. Tuttle, "God in His Creative Activity," NQ (25 April 1928), 4.

²⁰⁸Breisach, 327-328.

A much different response was offered, however, in George Brett's historicized approach to the sciences. According to Brett, then professor of Philosophy and director of the new Psychology department at University of Toronto,²⁰⁹ the wariness of science expressed by Scott and Morgan was based on a misunderstanding of science. Since all science arose out of experiential practice, it could not claim to explain the causes of events or to grasp transcendent objects or ontological realities; at best, it could offer only descriptions of phenomena. Life was indeed "free." While people still "calculate" scientifically for pragmatic purposes, such calculation did not claim total explanation:

The very essence of a claim to be scientific in this century is this renunciation of explanation ... Science explains only in the sense that it describes accurately, tabulates what uniformities it can discover, justifies those beliefs which ask for reasons, and for the rest is not moved by those things which do not concern it.²¹⁰

Science was not "art," which Brett defined as the individual synthesis and appreciation of particular situations, but the descriptive analysis of the elements of experience. And in this sense, it was possible to have "sciences" of all of human life.

While conceding that science was limited to description, Brett pressed on to challenge the new apologetic at its root. All claims to truth about life, including human motives, must have a standard of truth, he argued, but "[w]hat is the search for a criterion except scientific method?"²¹¹ Even though it was merely descriptive, science must be able to test the claims to spiritual reality made by the new apologists.

Like his criticism of the "new idealism" promoted by Hooke and Ketchum in 1923,²¹² Brett now challenged the neo-Kantian claim to infer from subjective consciousness the objective reality of

²⁰⁹John A. Irving, "The Achievement of George Sydney Brett," University of Toronto Quarterly, 14, no. 4 (July 1945), 341.

²¹⁰G. S. Brett, "Some Beliefs About Psychology," CJRT, 1, no. 6 (November-December 1924), 476.

²¹¹Brett, "Some Beliefs About Psychology," 476.

²¹²G. S. Brett, "A Woman in Philosophy," CF, 3, no. 31 (April 1923), 212-213.

a transcendent God. In another review essay of works on the development of science, Brett rejected attempts to reconcile science and religion that claimed that the uncertainty of modern science about the nature of reality left open the possibility of an unknown spiritual universe at the heart of reality.²¹³ Here too, he replied, the argument from something unknown could hardly establish an ontological reality. In Brett's consistent historicism, critical science could make no claims to ontological reality; the world could only be described as events in relation to the subject's experience.²¹⁴ As Brett told the faculty at Trinity College in 1927, "the quest for the philosopher's stone or the elixir of life has now been cast into oblivion."²¹⁵ By 1929, Brett would turn this criticism upon John Baillie's neo-Kantian apologetic for the reality of God based on moral consciousness.²¹⁶

In place of the neo-Kantian apologetic, Brett called for a more organic unity between the humanities and science that recognized that scientific thought was historically contextualized, and also that the humanities and ideals could no longer be isolated from the social and psychological study of their historical context.²¹⁷ Reality could only be known by its consequences. Hence, whatever claims Christianity could make were dependent on its ability to transform lives in the world.²¹⁸ While some continuing Protestants would take up this challenge, Brett's criticism seemed also to revive an entirely naturalized understanding of the world such as that reflected in S. H. Hooke's appeal to Huxley's evolutionary naturalism. For colleagues of Brett like R. M. MacIver, the attempt

²¹³G. S. Brett, "The Evolution of Orthodoxy," CJRT 3, no. 2 (March-April, 1926), 97.

²¹⁴Brett, "A Woman in Philosophy," 212-213.

²¹⁵Brett, "The Evolution of Orthodoxy," 99.

²¹⁶G. S. Brett, "'The Interpretation of Religion'," CJRT, 6, no. 2 (March-April 1929), 94.

²¹⁷G. S. Brett, "The History of Science as a factor of Modern Education," Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, XIX, 1925, sec. II, 39, cited in Irving, "The Achievement of George Brett," 355-356.

²¹⁸Brett, "The Evolution of Orthodoxy," 97.

to reconcile God and the world would be replaced with the search for a "Dance of Life" that would reconcile human freedom with nature.²¹⁹

Doubts like those raised by Brett would continue to plague "enlightened evangelicals" through the mid-1920's, pressing progressive Protestants to search for some resolution of the relationship between spirit and nature. Walter T. Brown, professor of Ethics and later principle at Victoria College, struggled during the mid-1920's with resolving the tension between God's immanence and his transcendence.²²⁰ And Richard Roberts, who arrived at the American Presbyterian Church in Montreal in 1921, and moved to Toronto's Sherbourne Street United Church in 1927, attempted to balance both immanence and transcendence, as a provisional attempt to remain both evangelical in his belief about the Personhood and transcendence of God and the uniqueness of the incarnation and redemption, yet also modern in his view of the world based on God's immanence in nature.²²¹ By 1928, however, defenders of the neo-Kantian apologetic like Ernest Scott, and the editors of the CJRT, would conclude that an impasse had been arrived at in historical study of the Bible.²²²

IV. Conclusion

Progressive Protestants' efforts during the 1920's to reconstruct a new, modern evangelicalism helped to sustain Biblical scholarship and ongoing theological and philosophical debate, and particularly the traditions of experiential evangelicalism, neo-Kantian idealism, and the Scottish tradition of moderate critical theology in Canada. Also, the location of this progressive Protestantism in such institutions as a "national" church, federated universities, and cross-disciplinary journals like the CJRT, meant that

²¹⁹R. M. MacIver, "The Dance of Life," CF, 4, no. 42 (March 1924), 172-174.

²²⁰Walter T. Brown, "The Transcendence of God," CJRT, 1., no.3 (May-June, 1924), 194-195.

²²¹Gauvreau, 267-268.

²²²ed., "Has Historical Study Failed?" CJRT, 5, no. 3 (May-June 1928), 175.

"religion" could be both distinct, and yet remain in close proximity and discussion with the broader community of scholarly debate.

Though pivotal in sustaining these traditions, the combination of neo-Kantian apologetics and the "new evangelism" was significantly different from pre-war progressive evangelicalism and nineteenth-century "historical theology."²²³ Against the background of a world that was assumed to be secular, the primary concern of apologists for the new evangelism was to distinguish a divine spiritual reality from their historical and structural context. By claiming to locate that spiritual reality in the subjective experience of human values and the internal "personality" of Jesus, they simultaneously divided the world into spiritual and natural realities, and claimed the primacy and freedom of both divine and human personality.

Such an arrangement left its own problems. First, even as it anticipated that spiritual renewal would transform society, it also conceded the secularization of the natural and social sciences and the legitimacy of their treatment of the structured world in terms of purely natural causes. The church would, as E. H. Oliver suggested, act as the conscience of the nation, but like the federation of the Protestant seminaries with public universities, it would do so only by moral influence rather than direct engagement in social structures and the sciences.²²⁴ Secondly, the Kantian procedure of starting from human consciousness, and the assumed validity of critical science, left the new apologetic open to a "hermeneutic of suspicion" that it offered no more than relative, distinctly western, human aspirations, and the anxious middle class effort to defend a dimming hope in both divine reality and human goodness and freedom in the face of an increasingly complex and mechanical

²²³Gauvreau, 268, 282-290.

²²⁴E. H. Oliver, "The Place and Work of the United Church in the Life of Canada," NO (10 June 1925), 19-20.

world.²²⁵

But could the neo-Kantian apologetic from human values affirm the authentic reality of God and the uniquely transforming impact of the gospel? In his review of Baillie's The Interpretation of Religion, George Brett would note Baillie's failure to discuss the problem of evil.²²⁶ Consideration of social systems and norms that were evil, he suggested, might have enabled Baillie to distinguish religion, and presumably the objective reality of God, from human morality more clearly. To do so, however, would have destroyed the new apologetic by questioning the assumed validity of moral values. Brett's suggestion would be taken up more sharply by later Protestant critics of liberal Protestant optimism. In a much later work, H. Richard Niebuhr would describe the gospel of old liberalism as a "God without wrath bringing a people without sin into a Kingdom without judgement through a Christ without a Cross."²²⁷ Already in 1927, Niebuhr criticized the combination of theology and psychology as a "sterile union." Psychology, including the subjective starting point of the neo-Kantian apologetic, had displaced the object of religion with the subject, and so obscured the reality of God.

The net result of psychologizing about religion has been the apparent subjectivization of religion. Psychology has substituted religious experience for revelation, auto-suggestion for communion with God in prayer and mysticism, sublimation of the instincts for devotion, reflexes for the soul, and group consciousness of the ideal wish-fulfillment for God.²²⁸

The project of liberal theology from Kant through Schleiermacher and the nineteenth century had

²²⁵Jackson Lears, No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), xi. See also Roderick Nash, The Nervous Generation: American Thought, 1917-1930 (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1970), 2-3, 40.

²²⁶Brett, "'The Interpretation of Religion'," 94.

²²⁷H. Richard Niebuhr, The Kingdom of God in America (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1953), 191-192.

²²⁸H. Richard Niebuhr, "Theology and Psychology: A Sterile Union," Christian Century, 44, pt. 1 (January 13, 1927), 47-48.

therefore been a "blind alley" in theology that replaced the reality of God with the idea of God.

Even before it was published, John Baillie conceded in the preface to his The Interpretation of Religion (1928) that the neo-Kantian apologetic was dubious, and that his thought was moving in different directions.²²⁹ In another article in 1928 Baillie described the new secular humanism of Walter Lippmann as bankrupt, since it lacked reference to a transcendent superhuman reality. For Baillie, the need to recover belief in a transcendent God was now the prerequisite to a realistic assessment of the world and the call to moral obedience.²³⁰ Despite its tenuousness, the neo-Kantian apologetic had provided an important transition to this more radical "second phase" of modern Protestantism. As the work of Scott and Manson indicate, the "second search" for the person of Jesus opened a new period of modern Biblical studies. More broadly, the distinction between spiritual and temporal realities had taken the first step toward reclaiming a transcendent God who was other than the human subject. And this distinction had also suggested an ambiguous and potentially dynamic relationship between Christianity and Canadian culture. With their social criticism of Canadian society, their search for a distinct spiritual reality, and their identification of the gospel in terms of moral meaning, mainline Canadian Protestants examined their own complicity in Canadian society, and posited a new tension between Christianity and "secular" western civilization.

²²⁹Baillie, Interpretation of Religion, viii.

²³⁰John Baillie, "The Predicament of Humanism," CJRT, 8, no. 2 (March-April 1931), 109-118.

Chapter 4: Freedom and Grace

In 1926 Richard Roberts wrote that the need of the times was for a modern, yet transcendent evangel brought into the world through the ministry of the church. The primary task of the church, he claimed, was "of the prophetic order," for it was to transmit a revelation that would kindle "a longing and a passion for the City of God that will accomplish its own purpose in the world of today."¹ Roberts' comments reflect the concerns of a second phase of mainline Protestant efforts to reconstruct a modern "enlightened evangelicalism" in Canada during the 1920's. The central feature of that second phase was an attempt to move beyond the historicist and anthropocentric limits of the neo-Kantian apologetic to claim the ontic reality of a transcendent God whose own spiritual presence in the world would initiate the Kingdom of God which modern western society manifestly had failed to establish.

This "second phase" overlapped with the construction of the "new evangelism" during the mid-1920's to 1930, but also provided the roots of the new theologies of grace that mainline Protestants would develop further during the 1930's. Though this second phase grew out of, and in various ways bore the legacy of the neo-Kantian apologetic and the new evangelism, it included several developments upon the first phase of reconstruction. First, it was developed by a new generation of clergyman-scholars, including Richard Roberts, John Dow, John Line, John Shaw, and Walter Bryden. With the exception of Roberts, members of this new generation received their training, like John Baillie, during the turbulent early 1900's, and were more deeply influenced by new currents of theology and philosophy than the more deeply Kantian generation of the first phase of post-war reconstruction. Also, in contrast to the entrenched Protestant leadership at the close of World War

¹Richard Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society (New York: Macmillan, 1926), 183.

I, members of the second generation spent their early careers as pastors during the early 1900's and war-time. Their impression of the devastating impact of industrial capitalism and the tragedy of the war, of the disillusionment of their parishioners, of the reality of humanity's failures and sin, and the difficulties of their pastoral task of affirming the reality and claims of God would reverberate throughout their later work.

Secondly, even prior to John Baillie's change of direction between 1928 and 1930, this second generation attempted to move beyond neo-Kantian personal idealism with a renewed theocentrism that emphasized the transcendence of God and divine grace in salvation and faith. Though they continued to believe that God was active in experience, they were disillusioned with human nature and secularized western civilization, and hence they turned their critical suspicion on liberal Protestantism and its identity of religion with the humanist moral values of the western tradition. In developing this criticism, they drew especially from the work of British "radical evangelicals" like James Denney and P. T. Forsyth, and German scholars like Wilhelm Herrmann and Rudolf Otto who were among the teachers of Karl Barth.

The complement to this theocentrism, thirdly, was their deepening criticism of western humanist culture and capitalist society. Convinced that western civilization had become secularized, they now suspected merely human values and the structured mechanisms of society and nature as potential threats to the free and transformed life of the spirit that would come only by the apocalyptic entry of the divine into history.

Together, fourthly, their new emphasis on a transcendent, sovereign God, human sin, the eschatological dimensions of Christ as the entry of divine grace into the world, and the unique role of the Church, recalled the classic doctrines of St. Augustine. Indeed, Roberts' portrayal of the tension between the "divine community" of the church and secularized western culture was one of several modern versions of Augustine's vision of the relationship between God's Kingdom and the

world that this new generation would apply to describe a revolutionary relationship between Christianity and Canadian civilization. With their modern interpretations of classic Augustinian doctrines, the new generation of clergymen-scholars were on their way toward "neo-orthodoxy" even before their encounter with Karl Barth's crisis theology in the English edition of The Word of God and the Word of Man (1928).

From their continued commitment to a critical perspective, however, epistemological questions and the nature of revelation would remain the central problems for modern Protestants. As Roberts himself described it, the central dilemma for modern "liberal evangelicals" was the difficulty of speaking of a transcendent God from within experience.² The perpetual wonder of Christianity, he quoted Thomas Carlyle, was "[t]hat a man stand there and speak of spiritual things to men."³ Indeed, how could one speak of transcendent divinity from within the bounds of secular historical structures?

It was in their answers to this question, and their subsequent interpretations of the relationship between God and the world, that the differences in this new generation would appear by the early 1930's. Roberts, Line, and Dow were closest to neo-Kantian personal idealism. In arguing that the transcendent spirit must yet be located, in accordance with critical thought, within experience, they attempted to synthesize the theistic evolutionism of Eucken, Thompson, and Whitehead with an apocalyptic interpretation of Jesus as the irruption of a new divine order in the world. Consequently, they identified the antithesis between God's Kingdom and the world with a conflict within the world between a divine spirit unique to both divine and human personality and identified with grace and freedom, against the established order of law in the structured world. In contrast to this revised neo-Kantian idealism, William Manson and Walter Bryden followed the lead of James Denney in

²Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 11; and "The Theological Dilemma in America," The Hibbert Journal, Vol. 25 (1926-27), 141.

³Richard Roberts, "The Preacher as Interpreter," Canadian Journal of Religious Thought (CJRT), Vol. 3, no. 2 (March-April, 1926), 108.

proceeding from Biblical studies and historic church's witness to the risen, transcendent Christ of the Church. Bryden would come to identify the antithesis more radically between a transcendent God and the historical-natural world. Though both distinguished between spirit and law, Bryden offered a more radical differentiation between the divine and the world. By the early 1930's, their different views of where the boundary of transcendent grace and natural life met, and thus where the kingdom of divine grace was to be located, would divide this new generation in a manner resembling the famous parting of ways between Barth and Emil Brunner.

I. The Crisis Generation

The main figures in this new generation entered their careers at the center of the mainline Protestant churches during the 1920's. After pastoral work in Britain, and New York's Congregationalist Church of the Pilgrims (1917-21), and Montreal's American Presbyterian Church (1921-27), Richard Roberts moved in 1927 to Sherbourne Street United Church (1927-38) in Toronto. Here he quickly became one of the most popular and prolific preachers in the United Church, and served as its moderator in 1934-36. William Manson served only a brief tenure as Professor of Theology at Knox College during the early twentieth century until returning to Scotland in 1925. His replacement as Professor of New Testament Literature and Exegesis was John Dow, a young Scottish clergyman-scholar whose 1923 Cunningham Lectures, published in 1927 as Jesus and the Human Conflict, along with his replacement of Manson as editor and writer of "The Preacher's Page" in the Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, won him instant acclaim. Dow joined the rest of the Knox faculty in moving to the United Church and to the new theological faculty at Emmanuel College, where he was a colleague of John Hugh Michael in New Testament Literature, and where he would become a leading United Church theologian and author of This is Our Faith (1943), a commentary on the United Church's first official Statement of Faith. John M. Shaw, also born and educated in Scotland, first came to

Presbyterian College (Pine Hill), Halifax in 1914. Between 1927 and 1929 he taught at Auburn Theological Seminary in New York, until his appointment in 1929 as William Morgan's successor at Queen's Theological College in Kingston.⁴

Walter Bryden and John Line both received their undergraduate training in Canada, though Bryden was the only Canadian-born scholar in the group. After several pastoral charges in the Presbyterian Church, Bryden began to teach part-time in Church History at the reconstituted Knox College in 1925 until his full-time appointment in 1927. Bryden would go on to teach Systematic Theology and Philosophy and History of Religion, becoming the dominant theologian in the Presbyterian Church until the 1950's and the leading proponent of Karl Barth's ideas in Canada. John Line began his teaching career during the 1920's at Mount Allison College and Pine Hill seminary, moving to Victoria College in 1927 as Professor of Philosophy and History of Religion.⁵ Line would be a founding member and the leading theologian of the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order during the 1930's, and in the late 1930's he would move to Emmanuel College as Professor of Systematic Theology and Philosophy of Religion.

The background and training of these new scholars displays the intersection of two general trends. First, with the partial exception of Line, they all were trained in British neo-Kantian forms of idealism, Scottish reverent criticism of the Bible, and moderately progressive evangelical Calvinism. That training occurred during a crucial period of transition in which the personal idealism of H. R. Mackintosh and A. S. Pringle-Pattison and the Biblical theology of James Denney offered new departures from nineteenth century idealism and liberal Protestantism. Secondly, nearly all of them came to their scholarly careers after serving as parish pastors during a period of growing

⁴Toronto, United Church Archives (UCA), Biographical Files, "John Mackintosh Shaw."

⁵UCA, Biographical Files, "John Line," clipping entitled "Toronto Conference Minutes 1971."

disillusionment. More specifically, as we shall see, they served rural, working class, or student groups for whom the optimism of progressive evangelicalism and the humanism of liberal Protestantism offered little to sustain faith in God or the hope of transforming western social structures.

The one partial exception to these trends was John Line (1885-1970), since his higher education did not include direct British influences. Born in High Wycombe, England in 1885, Line left school at age thirteen to become a carpenter. In 1903, at age eighteen, he became a Methodist probationer and missionary to Newfoundland, where he was ordained in 1905. He began his studies at Victoria College in 1918, followed by seminary studies at Wesley College, Montreal.⁶ In both places, it is likely that he encountered the ideas of progressive Protestants like S. H. Hooke and J. Davidson Ketchum at Victoria, and those of Richard Roberts, S. P. Rose, and William A. Gifford at Montreal. In his Inspiration and Modern Criticism, Line referred to an eclectic variety of scholars that included Americans William James and William Newton Clarke, who was the "progressive orthodox" Baptist teacher of Harry Emerson Fosdick,⁷ as well as James Denney and the German philosopher Rudolph Eucken.

Except for Line, the major figures of this new generation had close ties to British and Ritschlian theology. Like John Baillie, Manson was born and trained in British Ritschlian theology, but was especially a proponent of James Denney's ideas. After returning to Scotland in 1925, Manson would become a prominent leader in the twentieth century "Biblical Theology" movement, but prior to that move he would be an important mentor of Walter Bryden.⁸ John M. Shaw was born in Scotland in 1879, and was educated first in Philosophy at Edinburgh University and then in Divinity at New College, Edinburgh while spending summers at Marburg and Tübingen in 1904-1906, where

⁶UCA, Biographical Files, "John Line," clipping entitled "Toronto Conference Minutes 1971."

⁷William R. Hutchinson, The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism (New York: Oxford, 1976), 117-119.

⁸Brevard S. Childs, Biblical Theology in Crisis (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970), 24.

he undoubtedly encountered the work of Adolf von Harnack first hand. He served several pastorships, including three years assisting the United Free Church's Alexander Whyte, before moving to Presbyterian College (Pine Hill), Halifax in 1914, and to Queen's Theological Seminary in 1929. As we shall see, his writings in the late 1920's would show the influence of Denney, the Congregationalist P. T. Forsyth, and Harnack. John Dow studied at St. Andrew's University, and then also at New College, Edinburgh in the years following World War I. Besides winning prizes in Latin and Greek as well as New Testament, he also was president of the Student Christian Union and served for a year as Warden of the New College Settlement project.⁹ After establishing a reputation as an outstanding preacher in the United Free Church, Dow was appointed to Knox with high recommendations from leading Scottish personal idealists like H. R. MacKintosh and H. A. A. Kennedy, and from J. R. P. Selater of Toronto's Old St. Andrew's Church.¹⁰ His invitation in 1925 to give the Macdonald of Ferintosh lectures on the atonement, in succession to MacKintosh and Denney, suggests something of his theological pedigree.

Walter Bryden was born in rural Galt, Ontario in 1883, where he was a member of Galt's conservative Knox Presbyterian Church. After graduating in 1906 from the University of Toronto with a degree in Philosophy and Psychology, he began his seminary training at Knox College, and also completed his Masters degree in Psychology. Prefatorial recommendations to Bryden's The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul by J. Edgar McFadyen, the leading neo-Kantian philosopher then at University of Toronto, and by William Manson, indicate Bryden's training in neo-Kantian and Ritschlian thought during the time of its transition away from metaphysical absolutism toward personal idealism. From 1907 to 1908 Bryden studied at the Free Church's Glasgow College in Scotland, where he came under

⁹"The New Professor for Knox College," New Outlook (NO) (9 September 1925), 4.

¹⁰UCA, Biological Files, "John Dow," clipping entitled "Toronto Conference Minutes 1964;" "The New Professor for Knox College," NO (9 September 1925), 4.

the lasting influence of James Denney. Following a tour to Strasbourg, Bryden entered the Presbyterian ministry, serving in rural pastorates in Lethbridge, Alberta; Melfort, Saskatchewan; and Woodville, Ontario, before beginning his career in Church History in 1925 at the reorganized Knox College.¹¹

Richard Roberts was older than others in this second phase. Born in 1874 in North Wales, Roberts was raised in the unique Welsh tradition of evangelical Calvinism which stressed, like earlier Puritan theologians, the primacy of experiencing divine grace over doctrine.¹² After initial interest in math and science, Roberts entered the Theological College at Bala, North Wales in 1894, thereby following in the footsteps of his father who had left his quarry job to enter seminary.¹³ Bala had been the Welsh center of evangelical crusades by Wesley and Whitefield. There Roberts encountered, and rejected, the Keswick holiness movement on account of its lack of a "generous doctrine of Grace," and instead became involved in "social" evangelistic missions in urban centers and in missions to colliery villages in Treharris.¹⁴ He also became secretary of the local chapter of Kier Hardie's Independent Labour Party. In 1900, some years after his ordination, he transferred to London's Presbyterian Church of England. While in England, he was active in the Student Christian Movement, and during World War I, in the pacifist Fellowship of Reconciliation. Due to his pacifism, Roberts was pressured in 1915 to resign from Crouch Hill Presbyterian Church where he had served since 1910, following which he moved to New York.

In most of these cases, the pastoral experiences of this new generation contributed to their

¹¹Joseph C. McLelland, "Walter Bryden: 'By Circumstance and By God'," in Called to Witness, Profiles of Canadian Presbyterians, Vol. 2, W. Stanford Reid, ed. (Hamilton: Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1980), 119-120.

¹²UCA, Finding Aid 118. See also UCA, transcript entitled "Richard Roberts," by Gwen Norman, p. 1-2.

¹³Norman, 19-20.

¹⁴Richard Roberts, The Renaissance of Faith (London: Cassell, 1912), 103. Norman, 20-26.

disillusionment with western culture and their search elsewhere for the reality of God. Few were as explicit about this disillusionment as Richard Roberts. Like William Blake, whose prophetic poetry Roberts took as his model, Roberts' pastoral work among coal miners in Wales left him thoroughly disenchanted with western civilization and its capitalist social structure.¹⁵ Already in 1912 Roberts concluded that vital faith was in eclipse in the modern world, the results of which could be seen in a loss of respect for one's fellow-man, and a subsequent loss of social, economic, and political morality.¹⁶ Unguided by the creative energy of spiritual life, the modern world was satiated with petty materialist selfishness and enslaved to self-imposed natural laws in the name of scientific mastery over nature and the pursuit of wealth. Because the traditional conception of God was no longer credible, the ordinary "Man in the Street" had become a practicing atheist for whom modern western Christianity was "insolvent."¹⁷ As he later noted in his first major publication in Canada, the pessimism, searching agnosticism, and "spiritual desolation" of modern culture was reflected in the works of late nineteenth-century writers like Friedrich Nietzsche and Omar Khayyam. Here, Roberts claimed, could be found "the last term of a protracted dissolution of faith" that left western humanity with nothing to believe in but themselves.¹⁸

According to Roberts, modern culture's rationalism and materialism gradually had eliminated God from the world, only to end in an "apotheosis of egoism" which made a god of the self. In 1918, inspired by Blake's Jerusalem, Roberts concluded that European society could not be considered any more than nominally Christian: the high ideals of its rationalized "natural religion," followed by

¹⁵UCA, Biographical Files, "Richard Roberts," newspaper clipping, "Centennial Celebration at Historic Sherbourne Street Church," The Toronto Star (April 18, 1987), by Donald Jones.

¹⁶Roberts, The Renaissance of Faith, 18-24, 45-46, 67-75. See also Roberts, "The Ethics of William Blake," 665.

¹⁷Roberts, The Renaissance of Faith, 5-9, 16-17.

¹⁸Richard Roberts, "The Doctrine of God," Hibbert Journal, Vol. 23 (1924-25), 21.

destructive global war, showed that European civilization was "first-rate paganism," but not Christianity.¹⁹

Modern Christianity, Roberts charged, was partly to blame for this apotheosis. Both Calvinist legalism and Methodist introspection had accepted the premises of Enlightenment rationalism and its separation of reason and natural religion from authentic divine revelation. Having surrendered the creative and intuitive direction of faith, modern Protestants had reduced Christianity to Pharisaic rational and legal abstractions. The God that they envisioned was merely a benevolent emergency "accessory" to human hopes and purposes, and was therefore an abstraction made in man's own image,-- in Blake's words, "an apotheosis of the 'natural' man."²⁰ Secularized idealism's immanent "First Cause" or "Life Force," and Matthew Arnold's "stream of tendency not ourselves which makes for righteousness," were vague and mechanical gods envisioned in Stoic-like terms of human rational logic, in contrast to a God who was a transcendent and therefore free, moral personality.²¹ As he argued in an article on "The Doctrine of God," the modern conception of God offered no credible alternative nor effective transformation of the prevailing trend of egoism and unbelief:

[i]t was, of course, politic to keep up a nodding acquaintance with Him at the weekend so that He might be accessible when we really needed Him. But any sense of God as the inscrutable and transcendental end of life; any profound, creative, transfiguring conception of Him; any feeling of startled wonder and reverence in the presence of His handiwork and the vast processes of His Providence, was far to seek."²²

In contrast to a personal, transcendent God, the modern abstract, legalized divinity could have no practical, moral meaning to the "Man in the Street," for he could not relate to such a God as an

¹⁹Roberts, "The Ethics of William Blake," 666.

²⁰Roberts, "The Ethics of William Blake," 665.

²¹Roberts, The Renaissance of Faith, 15-24.

²²Roberts, "The Doctrine of God," 24.

"other" person.²³ Worst of all, for Roberts, modern Christianity lacked authentic divine grace. Its translation of the gospel into eternal moral laws ignored the divinity and worth of each person and lacked Jesus' forgiveness and compassion for sinners, effectively eviscerating the gospel "so that it preached a Christianity in which logic had displaced faith and law had obscured grace."²⁴ The "despotic" God of Calvinism was a corruption of the original Protestant hope of free, unmediated grace and self-sacrificing forgiveness, and demonstrated a lack of confidence in "genuine Christian experience."²⁵ Modern Christianity was reduced to a culture of church attendance and to a department of life in which success was measured in the business-like terms of membership numbers, institutional organization, and social respectability.²⁶ Its worship, meanwhile, offered only "tepid, cheap, sensationalism" and shallow sentimentalities, while losing sight of the living eternity in the midst of reality and of "truth in the inward parts."²⁷ In the absence of authentic, experiential grace, Roberts argued, Christianity itself had become secularized, and in its impoverished legalism it accepted "the world-order as it was," even though it thereby justified capitalist exploitation of workers and nationalistic world wars.²⁸

Thus Roberts' work of the 1920's was rooted in a thorough disillusionment with modern western culture, and with modern Christianity's entanglement in the status quo. The two main themes of that disillusionment were inextricably related: his commitment to the life of the spirit -- understood

²³Roberts, Renascence of Faith, 15-24.

²⁴Roberts, "The Ethics of William Blake," 667.

²⁵Roberts, "The Doctrine of God," 29; Roberts, Renascence of Faith, 84-85.

²⁶Roberts, Renascence of Faith, 89-92.

²⁷Roberts, "Placarding Jesus Christ the Crucified," NO (21 September 1927), 5, 26; Roberts, "The Ethics of William Blake," 668.

²⁸Richard Roberts, "The Word Became Flesh; Sermon preached on the opening Sunday of his ministry in Sherbourne Street United Church, Toronto, on the evening of January 2," NO, (19 January, 1927), 4, 24. See also Roberts, "The Ethics of William Blake," 665-668.

in terms of a radical Christian idealism inspired by William Blake's romantic iconoclasm and embodied in Roberts' absolute pacifism during World War I -- lead him to conclude that modern western civilization had become secularized, while this conclusion also sharpened his insistence that God be seen as "the inscrutable and transcendental end of life."²⁹

Though few matched Roberts' extensive criticism of modern culture, others in this "second phase" shared his disillusionment. Like Roberts, Walter Bryden's early pastoral work, especially among coal-miners in Lethbridge, lead him to sympathize with the radical labour movement, including the International Workers of the World and the Western Miners' Federation. Bryden claimed to have learned a great deal about the gospel and the reality of the modern church's relation to capitalist social structures from its Marxist critics.³⁰ While discovering this social realism, Bryden also developed an emphasis on the exclusively "spiritual" working of Christ. As he later reported, his work in the rural side-currents of the pastorate taught him to test his own life "by the inwardness of things rather than by the outwardness of conventions which after all do not matter."³¹ For Bryden, this inwardness referred to the experience of a wholly transcendent God who reveals himself, not in cultural forms or rational speculation, but by breaking into history and laying immediate claim on the will to surrender to Him. That transcendent yet direct revelation was the only grounds for belief in a modern world where people no longer accepted the authority of traditional theological forms.

The early works of Shaw and Dow also reflected their profound disillusionment with western culture and progressive hopes for progress. Shaw's preparatory paper on "The War and Divine Providence" for the Presbyterian Church's Commission on The Church and the War, pointed to the

²⁹Roberts, "The Doctrine of God," 24.

³⁰John Vissers, "The Conception of Revelation in the Theology of Walter W. Bryden" (University of Toronto: unpublished Ph.d. dissertation, 1988), 61-62, 98 [fn 73].

³¹W. W. Bryden, "The Triumph of Reality, an address delivered at the Spring Convocation of Montreal College, 1929," Separated Unto the Gospel, Donald V. Wade, ed. (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1956), 131.

tension between divine Providence and the tragic reality of history. Rather than a threat to faith, however, Shaw declared that the tragedy of history was a revelation of God's judgement on modern society's failure to apply Christianity to its national and international life.³² During his student years during the war and his work at the New College Settlement, John Dow no doubt also confronted the reality of suffering and the disillusionment of western civilization. His first major publication, Jesus and the Human Conflict (1928), focused on the twin themes of the paradox between God's high moral demands and the reality of human failure and suffering, and the apocalyptic hope of the Bible which lay in the infusion of Christ into the midst of human suffering.³³ This apocalypticism, according to Dow, was rooted in consciousness of injustice in the world and despair of the present order, and the hope of a new order in which righteousness and freedom from toil and pain would be restored.

Conscious as they were of the secularization of modern culture, Roberts and his colleagues were also sensitive to J. Grescham Machen's challenge to choose between Christianity and modern secular naturalism. Shaw's Essentials and Non-Essentials of the Christian Faith (1928), written while he was at Auburn, was a response to J. Grescham Machen's call for a clear break between Christianity and modernism, and to William Jennings Bryan pressure at the World's Fundamentalist Interdenominational Convention at Texas in 1923 to call for eliminating the teaching of evolution from public schools.³⁴ Although Shaw rejected fundamentalists' "medieval" reaction against modern scholarship, he nevertheless agreed in principle that the times required the Church to state the "foundations" or essentials of Christianity, and to have a right perspective on Christian faith and the

³²UCA, Library, pamphlet entitled "The War and Divine Providence" prepared for the General Assembly's Commission on the War and the Spiritual Life of the Church, by J. M. Shaw.

³³John Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1927), 11.

³⁴John Mackintosh Shaw, Essentials and Non-Essentials of the Christian Faith (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928), 5.

true mission and unity of the Church.³⁵ Even further, he was sympathetic to Machen's protest against a modern naturalistic outlook that denied the entry of the creative power of God into the world, and that was destructive of Christianity. And while he disputed fundamentalists' treatment of the "essentials" of Christianity, he agreed with their claims to the centrality of the atonement and resurrection of Christ, the objective reality and personality of God, and the miraculous spiritual presence and action of God in the world.³⁶

Similarly, though he rejected what he regarded as their reactionism, Roberts agreed with fundamentalists that the modern evolutionary cosmology implied an immanent rather than a transcendent God, and though evangelical liberals claimed to preserve the traditional faith, these different ways of understanding God seemed logically irreconcilable. He also agreed that only a transcendent God could be seen as a personal, free, and moral God, and only such a God would motivate the common man's "belief in his own personality and power of initiative" and call him to ameliorative action in the world.³⁷ From their heightened sense of the secularization of modern society and the tragedy of human history, then, Roberts and his colleagues began to place a new emphasis on God's transcendence. In contrast to the post-millennial progressive hopes for building God's Kingdom on earth, and the fourth-century Constantinian hopes for Christendom, they began to reclaim Augustine's famous "theology of history." Their Augustinian revival had several dimensions. First, their rejection of fundamentalist reaction and premillennialism paralleled Augustine's assertion, against both chiliastic despair and pagan critics, of the "sacred" meaning of historical events in the

³⁵Shaw, Essentials and Non-Essentials of the Christian Faith, v.

³⁶Shaw, Essentials and Non-Essentials of the Christian Faith, 101-112, 137-57, 168-85.

³⁷Roberts, "The Theological Dilemma in America," 141; The Renaissance of Faith, 112.

economy and progress of God's redemptive purpose.³⁸ Despite the appearance of crisis, Augustine reaffirmed God's sovereignty over history, and despite the mystery of God's ways, he argued that God's rule of history accorded with his justice and grace. Augustine had turned the tables on imperial theology: rather than the instrument of God's favour, he portrayed Rome, and indeed all human institutions, as subject to God's just judgement on account of the moral depravity of humanity. Yet he also affirmed a teleological view of history in which the course of events was preserved and directed by God for the sake of his redemptive purpose, to be completed in an unpredictable but certain eschatological future.

As they reclaimed an Augustinian emphasis on a transcendent, sovereign God, they also reclaimed his view of the interim tension in world history between two cities defined by their relationship to God.³⁹ Roberts now could apply Augustine's depiction of the antithesis between the City of God and the City of Man to contemporary life: the central idea of Augustine's City of God, he claimed, was that the church was "a divine society living in a world organized without God."⁴⁰ Roberts added that Augustine identified the worldly city of man with "the common secular mass," while the heavenly city was the community of the redeemed, the pilgrim city "whose eyes are turned heavenward." It was especially this perception of antithesis, cast in terms of the juxtaposition between the transcendent reality of God and the historical-structural world, between grace and law, and between the divine community of the church and modern secular society, that Roberts and his colleagues would take from Augustine.

³⁸Alister E. McGrath, "Augustine of Hippo," Historians of the Christian Tradition: Their Methodology and Influence on Western Thought, Michael Bauman and Martin I. Klauber, eds. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 82-85.

³⁹St. Augustine, City of God, Gerald G. Walsh, Demetrius B. Zema, Grace Monahan, Daniel J. Honan, trans. (Garden City: Image Books, 1958), XIV, 28.

⁴⁰Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 109.

This revival of Augustine's "theology of history," however, would also be problematic, especially from the critical perspective that "enlightened evangelicals," including Roberts and his colleagues, retained. As Jeffrey Barton Russell notes, the particular way that Augustine defined the relationship between the City of God and the City of Man was premised on a Platonic chain of being that collapsed "ontological" and "moral" categories by identifying God and the good with spirit, and evil with the material, temporal world.⁴¹ This Platonic hierarchy rendered human life and the historical-structural world deeply ambiguous. While earthly realities and structures were on the one hand parts of God's good creation, in the Platonic ontology they were closer to the nothingness of evil than the pure spiritual reality of divinity. Applied to human nature, the Platonic ontology suggested a dualist anthropology in which the "spiritual" was inherent in the structure of human being, particularly in an inner moral consciousness or soul, while the structured dimension of human life, especially of the state, were assumed to be inherently "worldly" and evil. Hence, regenerated believers in the City of God were to be pilgrims anticipating escape from the world of flesh and temporality.

As we have seen in Chapter 1, this Platonic ontological dualism was woven into the roots of eighteenth and nineteenth century evangelicalism, and was reconstructed in Kantian idealism to locate spiritual reality in experience. Likewise, as they borrowed Augustine's "theology of history" in order to reclaim the distinction between a transcendent God and the world, Roberts and his colleagues translated his Platonic understanding of the antithesis between the two cities into the modern neo-Kantian distinction between spirit and historical-structural phenomena. It was from this framework, for instance, that Roberts and Bryden both had distinguished transcendent divinity from external forms or rational logic, and associated the reality of God with an apocalyptic divine entry into the "inner" life of the creative spirit. Furthermore, their modern attempt to locate the divine spirit and the City of God was exacerbated by critical historical consciousness. The problem for modern man,

⁴¹Jeffrey Barton Russell, A History of Medieval Christianity (Arlington Heights: Harlan Davidson, 1968), 53-54.

Roberts wrote in 1912, was "so to organise his life that the grace of God may find easy way - leave through him to the world beyond."⁴² Again in 1926, in the wake of Machen's challenge, Roberts noted that the central dilemma for "evangelical liberals" was the struggle to articulate both the immanence and transcendence of God.⁴³ In a remarkable coincidence, both Line and Bryden wrote their Master's theses and published their first books in 1925 on the topic of the nature of revelation, with Line writing on Inspiration and Modern Criticism (1925) and Bryden on The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul (1925). This topic was appropriate, for in beginning their careers during the mid-1920's, this new generation had stepped into the midst of the search for spiritual reality then gripping the mainline Protestant churches. Even while they sought to recover a transcendent God for the modern world, then, the problem for "enlightened evangelicals" remained how God and his Kingdom were to be located from within the matrix of history.

II. The Spirit in the World

The initial response developed by Roberts, Dow, Line, and Shaw was closest to the neo-Kantian apologetic of Morgan and Baillie. The central themes of their solution were suggested by Roberts already in 1912. What was needed in response to the modern spiritual crisis, according to Roberts, was a "sane otherworldliness" that would recover the vision of a God who was transcendent and personal, but who also was a spiritual force present within the world.⁴⁴ Notably, he also called this "sane otherworldliness" an "idealism in the making." While asserting the radical otherness of divine reality, Roberts, Line, and Dow identified this spiritual reality, in keeping with modern critical thought, with an emerging spirituality within historical experience. Though they appealed to

⁴²Roberts, The Renaissance of Faith, 91.

⁴³See Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 11; and "The Theological Dilemma in America," 141.

⁴⁴Roberts, The Renaissance of Faith, 112.

Augustine's emphasis on a transcendent God and the tension between the cities of God and Man, they historicized what Roberts called Augustine's static "neo-Platonism" by defining the antithesis as a conflict between spirit and nature entirely within the historical process.⁴⁵ Hence they defined the tension between the two cities in "vitalistic" terms as a dynamic process in which the divine spirit emerged within the world and pressed beyond the age of mechanical nature to a revolutionary and eschatological age of spirit and freedom within history.

Roberts' plea for a "sane otherworldliness" echoed the call for an "enlightened evangelicalism," and indicated his insistence on locating the transcendent God within experience, in accordance with modern critical thought and in contrast to fundamentalist supernaturalism. In his first major publications in Canada, such as The New Man and the Divine Society (1926), Roberts acknowledged the challenge of fundamentalism and the problem of identifying the transcendent from within the world. While agreeing that God must be seen as transcendent, he argued that God was known only as he was experienced in the world. Similarly, he wrote elsewhere in 1926 that, while the Incarnation meant God coming down rather than "up from the ranks" to intervene in the world, yet Jesus was human as well as God, and must therefore participate fully in the natural processes of life, rather than being the product of miraculous birth.⁴⁶ Caught between God's transcendence and his immanence, evangelical liberals were, Roberts pleaded, in a "cleft stick." In this dilemma, Roberts claimed to follow a "provisional dualism" that would affirm both God's transcendence, articulated in doctrines of inspiration, revelation, incarnation, redemption, and grace, and God's immanence in the indwelling Christ, the new man, and the coming of the Kingdom of God through the evolutionary process.

Despite professing a provisional dualism, Roberts' insistence that God must be known from

⁴⁵Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 107.

⁴⁶Roberts, "The Theological Dilemma in America," 141-42.

experience, and that he be understood in relation to natural life, indicated his commitment to modern critical realism. The recovery of a transcendent God, Roberts insisted, must be in terms of modern discoveries and the experimental method of science.⁴⁷ In order to proceed from the facts of experience, Roberts claimed that divine reality could be demonstrated by its "value" for survival: even agnostic scientists implicitly assumed that there must be a purposeful, transcendently ordered universe,⁴⁸ while the fact that the common man falls to his knees in prayer, "sending an S.O.S. into the unknown,"⁴⁹ demonstrated the continued value of belief in God.

In his Inspiration and Modern Criticism (1925), John Line followed a similar functional and phenomenological method. Citing the examples of W. N. Clarke as well as James Denney, Line proposed to bypass traditional metaphysical arguments about Biblical inspiration, and to consider inspiration by the value and impact of Jesus and Scripture on their audience. Line described his approach as a "pragmatic and experiential" proof for inspiration that began with the positive "facts of experience," rather than with "apodeictic [sic]" judgments that began from metaphysical doctrine.⁵⁰ According to Line, this method was consistent with modern critical thought, which he welcomed for its respect for epistemology and its method of separating fallacy from certain, essential truth. Critical scholarship had restored the Bible for modern reasonable men, he claimed, by locating revelation firmly in a set of human documents that were within the sphere of natural development and the process of history.⁵¹

⁴⁷Roberts, "The Doctrine of God," 26-27.

⁴⁸Richard Roberts, The High Road to Christ: A Popular Essay in Restatement (London: Cassel, 1912), 10-14. Roberts, "The Doctrine of God," 24-25.

⁴⁹Richard Roberts, The Christian God (New York: MacMillan, 1929), 11-12.

⁵⁰John Line, Inspiration and Modern Criticism (London: Epworth, 1925), 7, 141-42.

⁵¹Line, Inspiration and Modern Criticism, 47-56.

As a complement to their critical method, Roberts and his colleagues also insisted that God and religion, to have any meaning, must be related to life in the world. As Roberts pleaded in introducing his The New Man and the Divine Society, religion could no longer be regarded as lying "outside the world of 'nature'."

If religion is not a manifestation of life, then it is nothing; and if it is a manifestation of life, then it must stand somehow in an organic relation to the rest of life; and the religious life becomes a part of the subject matter of biology.⁵²

Only when the divine was located organically within life could History be seen as "the divinely-impelled but blundering search of the unseeing child for its Father, and Revelation as the search of the Father for His purblind child."⁵³ And only then could religious experience be the actual "meeting of the divinely-quickenened longing for God with God's own unceasing self-giving to man."

In proceeding from experience, Roberts and his colleagues effectively started from the familiar assumption of divine immanence and a neo-Kantian idealist interpretation of the relation between God and humanity. A pivotal cog in that interpretation was their description of humanity's status as image-bearers of God in terms of the identity of God and human nature in the classic analogia entis. According to Roberts, human intelligence was "of a piece with the intelligence of God."⁵⁴ Similarly, Line claimed that humanity's divine identity derived from God breathing his spirit into man. "Our pristine rational and moral nature," he claimed, "is the stamp we have received from Him."⁵⁵

It was this assumed identity of human personality with divine spirit that Roberts and his colleagues used to justify faith in a transcendent divine reality that was present in the world. The unknown transcendent Somebody, Roberts declared in 1924, could only be cast in terms analogous

⁵²Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 6.

⁵³Roberts, "The Theological Dilemma in America," 147.

⁵⁴Roberts, The High Road to Christ, 37-38.

⁵⁵Line, Inspiration and Modern Criticism, 130.

to human experience. Hence, all thought of God was necessarily "anthropomorphic."⁵⁶ Already in 1912 Roberts had argued that the "naturalist" interpretations of human personality in terms of behaviourist and physical causes offered in sociology and psychology could not account for the dynamic instincts, the "loves, hopes, longings," that stir the human soul.⁵⁷ Human personality was "the sovereign sanctity," and the instinctive spiritual intuitions of conscience were as authentic as physical instincts. It was, he wrote, "at least as logical to infer from these instinctive activities and tendencies the existence of a spiritual universe to which they seem to point as it is to attribute them to brain processes about which we can only speculate."⁵⁸ Conscience, he argued further, was both the "native, elemental, [and] primitive" essence of human nature, and the "echo of a living voice clanging through the crust of things from some remote hidden world."⁵⁹ The human conscience and its instinctive religious impulse, therefore, could be taken as the revelation and action of the transcendent God toward humanity.

For John Dow, this identity of human and divine nature also justified the hope that the order in history ultimately must conform to humanity's own moral intuitions and ideals. As Job assumed amid his suffering, Dow claimed, it was clear that

God's ways should be justifiable to the mind of man....He believes that the Divine Will cannot violate His own moral principles, that spiritual vision in man cannot conflict with the heavenly realities, that the truth of Jahweh is akin to the promptings of his own breast.⁶⁰

Job's "prophetic" resolution of the problem of suffering affirmed the moral rightness of history under

⁵⁶Richard Roberts, "Imago Dei," CJRT, Vol. 2, No. 5 (September-October, 1925), 328.

⁵⁷Roberts, The Renaissance of Faith, 119.

⁵⁸Roberts, The Renaissance of Faith, 76-79, 120; Roberts, "The Ethics of William Blake," 669.

⁵⁹Roberts, The Renaissance of Faith, 123.

⁶⁰Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 37.

God's government, but also the fact that man's status as image-bearer meant that "the dictates of enlightened moral sense and the Divine Will must ultimately correspond, that God and man are mutually intelligible and capable of understanding fellowship."⁶¹

While these arguments echoed the neo-Kantian apologetic of Morgan and Baillie, Roberts and his colleagues attempted to move beyond the epistemological limits of human values to claim the reality of a transcendent divine spirit distinct from nature in experience. This claim was the core of John Shaw's response to fundamentalism in his Essentials and Non-Essentials of the Christian Faith (1928). While Shaw agreed that God must be understood as transcendent in answer to secular naturalism, he objected to fundamentalists' "medieval" rejection of modern scholarship, arguing that most modern "liberal" scholarship provided a path through the transient to bring out the permanent and essential religious experience of Christianity in sharper relief.⁶² As an alternative to both naturalistic modernism and fundamentalism, then, Shaw advocated a "Liberal Evangelicalism" that he claimed provided a modern, yet vital gospel that appealed to both heart and reason. In a systematic response to the "five points" of fundamentalism, he argued that the vital essentials of Christianity were convictions rooted in the experience of the living Spirit and an attitude to the Person of Jesus, rather than transitory doctrinal formulations.⁶³ Like Augustine, Shaw thus claimed that experience of the Spirit of Christ was first a matter of the heart, and thus of love and will, rather than intellect. As Denney had declared, the fundamental Christian confession and basis of unity could be reduced to "Jesus is Lord."⁶⁴ Like Denney and P. T. Forsyth, Shaw thus distinguished between the experience

⁶¹Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 37.

⁶²Shaw, Essentials and Non-Essentials of the Christian Faith, 9-11.

⁶³Shaw, Essentials and Non-Essentials of the Christian Faith, v-vi, 8. The five "fundamentals" referred to here include the inerrancy of Scripture, the Virgin birth, substitutionary atonement, the miraculous character of Christ and his work, and the resurrection of Christ.

⁶⁴Shaw, Essentials and Non-Essentials of the Christian Faith, 14-18.

of the living reality of God and secondary human doctrines and historical forms.

Despite his critique of fundamentalism and its claims to the centrality of doctrines concerning the Virgin birth and an inerrant Scripture, Shaw professed his sympathy for what he took as the "essence" of fundamentalism in its spiritual view of life. In keeping with the Scottish tradition of moderate reverent criticism, Shaw argued that inspiration, for example, was an internal personal encounter, while it was conveyed in the "earthen vessels" of historically contextualized life.⁶⁵ Also, though he objected to a merely legalistic, doctrinal interpretation, he agreed with Machen that the atonement and the resurrection of Christ were central to Christianity. Contrary to modern interpreters like Harnack, who reduced the gospel to morality and a merely "subjective" experience of union with the Fatherhood of God, Shaw, like Denney and Forsyth, maintained that the objective reality of human sin, God's restoration of right relations by taking on the suffering of sin himself in Christ, the actual resurrection of Christ as the life-giving Spirit, were essential truths without which the gospel would be meaningless.⁶⁶

According to Shaw, however, the broader controversy between supernaturalism and naturalism regarding the reality of miracles was rooted in a false distinction between an external deistic God and a mechanistic, self-sufficient system of nature.⁶⁷ In contrast, Shaw claimed that God was constantly present as the conscious creative source of order in the "organism" of nature. In the work of Jesus, therefore, miracles and revelation were woven together as "natural manifestations" of his ministry of unveiling a new level of spiritual powers in a world of sin.⁶⁸ God was both transcendent, insofar as the present world did not exhaust his purpose, but also perpetually present in the world and free

⁶⁵Shaw, Essentials and Non-Essentials of the Christian Faith, 43-50.

⁶⁶Shaw, Essentials and Non-Essentials of the Christian Faith, 101-112, 137-57.

⁶⁷Shaw, Essentials and Non-Essentials of the Christian Faith, 168.

⁶⁸Shaw, Essentials and Non-Essentials of the Christian Faith, 168-84.

direct the world according to his will. This affirmation of a living, free, acting God, as Harnack noted in What is Christianity?, meant, not the fundamentalist distinction between nature and the supernatural, but a distinction between a spiritual and naturalistic view of the universe.⁶⁹

A similar attempt to articulate such an organic view of the relationship between a transcendent spiritual reality and nature was evident in Line's view of Biblical inspiration. Like Denney, Line claimed that the critical work of Wrede, Weiss, and Schweitzer, had disclosed something "more" in the Gospel than merely particular historical conditions, for in the person of Jesus the Gospel presented an unparalleled moral and religious life, testifying to the "divine presence and action" in history.⁷⁰ In turn, he argued, the apostles were inspired by their experience of Jesus, who had stimulated their innate spirit to recognize and record him as a revelation of the Reality of God. Inspiration was therefore a logical syllogism: "(1) Christ the Inspiration of the New Testament; (2) New Testament Inspiration an example of the realization and action of the Divine in man."⁷¹

Though he claimed that this syllogism synthesized traditional and modern views of inspiration, Line's synthesis clearly subordinated the traditional to modern views. The traditional view, he argued, was otherworldly and defined inspiration as the "external" and static work of a despotic, transcendent God.⁷² The modern "immanent" view, by contrast, saw inspiration as a dynamic, mystical experience of the spiritual within nature and in the human soul. Inspiration, or the presence of divine spirit, was therefore organic with life and arose from the very nature of humans: "Men can be inspired because of what they are; external impacts could not produce the experience were its fundamentals not

⁶⁹Shaw, Essentials and Non-Essentials of the Christian Faith, 184-5.

⁷⁰Line, Inspiration and Modern Criticism, 21-47, 90, 105.

⁷¹Line, Inspiration and Modern Criticism, 137, 142.

⁷²Line, Inspiration and Modern Criticism, 104, 125.

inherent in men's nature."⁷³ Even while distinguishing spirit from external nature, Line thus identified "inspiration" as a process that was rooted in the structure of human nature, particularly in the analogia entis. And conversely, he argued citing Friedrich Schleiermacher, divine immanence and internal revelation meant that human life and the realization of humanity's highest values would be centered "in the consciousness and feeling of God."⁷⁴

Placing inspiration in a broader ontology, Line also claimed that idealism and modern science provided a new understanding of transcendence in which God was the infinite Universal Reality or Immanent Spiritual Presence, and personal consciousness was but one finite "moment in the being of the Eternal."⁷⁵ Following vitalist philosophers like Rudolf Eucken and Henri Bergson, Line claimed that inspiration could be identified with an instinctive consciousness of inner spiritual reality that was distinct from physical matter, and that participated in a divine spirit which transcended subject and object distinctions, and which gradually was coming to realization in its triumph over nature.⁷⁶

This idealist and spiritualized view of experience, Line claimed, combined the ideas of Augustine and Hegel in placing faith before understanding, making life an "adventure of knowledge" leading up to the "conquering spiritual life." This spiritualized view also distinguished, yet reconciled natural and revealed religion, for it meant that "the presence of God in life is now less the incoming of a Being from another sphere than the discovery of greater depths in the world men know;..."⁷⁷ Citing W. N. Clarke and William James, Line declared that inspired consciousness was not an "alien energy" in conflict with human personality, but "the realization and exercise of the deeper and

⁷³Line, Inspiration and Modern Criticism, 131.

⁷⁴Line, Inspiration and Modern Criticism, 129.

⁷⁵Line, Inspiration and Modern Criticism, 128.

⁷⁶Line, Inspiration and Modern Criticism, 105-106.

⁷⁷Line, Inspiration and Modern Criticism, 129.

essential self."⁷⁸ Eternity was set in man's heart as the innate energies of "the divine image in man," which in turn were quickened by outward "divine voices in nature and common life."⁷⁹ The inner sources of spiritual experience and the sources of the spirit in external objects were both "up-wellings of that universal Power to which men are akin; it is one movement without and within, deep ever calling unto deep."

While Line developed his idealist reconciliation of the immanent and transcendent in response to questions concerning Biblical inspiration, Dow did so in an apocalyptic interpretation of history in his Jesus and the Human Conflict (1927). With an idealized version of Augustine's antithesis, Dow interpreted the history of Israel as a moral struggle between worldliness and spirituality in a progressive preparation for the Kingdom of God. According to Dow, history was rooted in personal moral contact with a righteous God, and conversely, humanity's relation to God was intrinsically historical, for moral responsibility was a lived reality.⁸⁰ The moral character of history also entailed the exaltation of personality as the unit of moral relationship with God, and it gave meaning to the suffering and disillusionment of experience as stimulants to a higher, spiritual faith in the God beyond the world.

Within this moral interpretation of history, Dow claimed that the apocalypticism was "the heart of Hebrew hope."⁸¹ But Hebrew apocalypticism, in contrast to premillennialism, was not the expectation of a future external judgement and destruction that despaired of the present universe and regarded God as remote and withholding his grace. Rather, Hebrew apocalypticism expressed faith in a God who "unveils Himself here and now" as the irrupting inner force of history. According to

⁷⁸Line, Inspiration and Modern Criticism, 108.

⁷⁹Line, Inspiration and Modern Criticism, 108-110.

⁸⁰Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 13-14, 27.

⁸¹Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 6.

Dow, God enters into history to govern and direct history, to reveal His will in the world as the force behind nature and in the soul, and to seek the spiritual reconciliation and liberation of humanity through fellowship with himself.⁸² For Dow, the apocalypse was primarily an "inner" personal revelation of spiritual reality that was epitomized in the emergence of the Incarnation of Jesus.

This theory of spiritual emergence was developed most fully by Roberts into a vitalist interpretation of the relationship between God and history that consciously emulated, but obviously revised Augustine. In a series of works that included The New Man and the Divine Society (1926), The Christian God (1929), and The Spirit of God and the Faith of Today (1930), Roberts claimed to resolve the tension between immanence and transcendence, and between mechanistic science and religion, with a "biological" interpretation that located God in the evolutionary processes of life and history.⁸³

In earlier works, Roberts had attempted to relate "spiritual intuitions" to a transcendent divine world, but also to emphasize God's initiative in spiritual communication. Communication between God and humanity, he argued, was a dual movement of "God in search of man and man in search of God."⁸⁴ In prayer, for example, it was "not we who by our prayers set the machinery of the spiritual world in motion; our prayers are but a part of a movement which began with God" and returns to that eternal home.⁸⁵ Spiritual intuitions pointed to humanity's participation in a larger reality beyond the natural world:

we came out from God and have a destiny in God. Our life is continuous with the life of the Eternal Spirit, and the strivings and the beckonings of our soul are simply the welling up within us of the Eternal Spirit, Who is for ever endeavouring to force

⁸²Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 13, 16, 29, 34, 58.

⁸³Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society.

⁸⁴Roberts, "The Theological Dilemma in America," 147.

⁸⁵Roberts, The Renaissance of Faith, 151.

up our inner life to the level of His own, helping us to shatter the bondage of sense and to realise our true ideal.⁸⁶

Moral and spiritual intuitions, Roberts claimed, were "parts of a new thing which was superimposed upon nature -- that new thing which lifted man out of the state of mere animalism" and raised him into a spiritual "superman."⁸⁷

For Roberts, then, the divine initiative came from a God who was transcendent, but who was also an immanent creative force welling up in the evolutionary process, and especially, as William Blake had suggested, in the "Minute Particular" of individual persons. The intuitions and imagination of conscience were the response of the human spirit to God's Spirit, pointing to "something without and beyond itself."⁸⁸ More broadly, as Blake also had suggested, the creative process of evolution was the out-working of the divine spirit in the world.⁸⁹ Roberts could still quote with approval Edward Caird's idealist definition of God as "'a self-determining Principle manifested in a development which includes both nature and man."⁹⁰ But he also drew extensively on the theories of "creative evolution" and "emergent evolution" proposed by Henri Bergson, J. S. Thomson, and C. Lloyd Morgan, to describe the presence of the divine spirit within the natural world. Already in 1912 he had argued that Bergson's critique of the immutability of natural law suggested that God was active within the world, and yet "God immanent operates beyond and above His own laws."⁹¹ Though known only through faith, God was present in the world as the free and creative spiritual source who

⁸⁶Roberts, The Renaissance of Faith, 121-22.

⁸⁷Roberts, The Renaissance of Faith, 124.

⁸⁸Roberts, The Renaissance of Faith, 118.

⁸⁹Roberts, "The Ethics of William Blake," 661.

⁹⁰Roberts, "Imago Dei," 325.

⁹¹Roberts, The Renaissance of Faith, 149.

was directing the world in a process of becoming.⁹² Furthermore, Eucken showed the whole man involved in natural processes of life, but also saw man as "more than narrowly human. He sees in him the emergence of something superhuman, divine."

Eucken's vitalist philosophy, according to Roberts, was "essentially the gospel of the supremacy of the spiritual life."⁹³ In another instance, he argued that vitalism was consistent with the New Testament portrayal of God in terms of both a Judaic theology of a transcendent God, and a Hellenic emphasis on the indwelling "vitalistic" presence of Christ in man.⁹⁴ While claiming that these could be reconciled, he argued that modern thought must proceed from Hellenistic "vitalism" which located the divine spirit within human personality and offered a "spiritual" interpretation of history.⁹⁵

By the mid-1920's, then, Roberts' use of vitalism, Dow's "inner" apocalypticism, and Line's idealism converged in a vision of the "emergent evolution" of spiritual reality. In The New Man and the Divine Society Roberts argued that Christianity could be seen as "continuing the development of life as evolutionary biology has revealed it to us."⁹⁶ According to Roberts, the divine creative process of evolution had reached its high point in human personality, and further evolution would consist of "psychical" evolution. Impelled by the presence of divine spirit, evolution now was pushing the spiritual powers of humans to a new epoch beyond the mere sense life, from which would emerge a new race of "supermen" who, like Christ, lived in the fullness of spiritual life as "at once a real

⁹²Roberts, The High Road to Christ, 22-28; "The Theological Dilemma in America," 147.

⁹³Roberts, The Renaissance of Faith, 113.

⁹⁴Roberts, "The Theological Dilemma in America," 143.

⁹⁵Roberts, "Imago Dei," 328-29.

⁹⁶Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 8.

individual and a real society."⁹⁷ Here was a spiritualized historicism that, though repudiating Nietzsche's worship of the will to power, considered his portrayal of the development of human personality as identical to the New Testament.⁹⁸

While depicting the presence of God within history as a vital force, Roberts and Dow still insisted that this process of spiritual evolution not be reduced to a monistic and merely "natural" process like the "biological religion" of Julian Huxley and S. H. Hooke, for to do so would be to vitiate the reality and need for a distinct personal God. Instead, they interpreted Augustine's antithesis of sin and grace, and specifically his ontological dualism of world and spirit, as a conflict within the temporal world. How was it possible, Roberts queried, that history manifested both sin and the reality of a transcendent God? At one level, he replied, history revealed a record of human folly in public and political events, and thus in the structures of law and force. At another level, the "truer 'history'" of small quiet groups where "men acquired wisdom and knowledge" and where "men have lived and loved," could be found the culture of the human spirit and the self-manifestation of God.⁹⁹ Thus, there were two levels or orders in history: the natural or worldly order of law and force, and the spiritual order of moral freedom and personal fellowship.

It was in terms of an "Hellenic" interpretation of the New Testament, and the two levels of history, that Roberts and his colleagues identified the significance of Christ as the unique Incarnation of an emergent spiritual reality in the world. Though this focus on the Incarnation echoed Morgan and Baillie, Dow and Roberts especially emphasized the Christ of the Cross as a demonstration, according to Roberts, of the revolutionary "divine logic of life" in which self-sacrificing, suffering love

⁹⁷Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 23-26; The Renascence of Faith, 119.

⁹⁸Roberts, The Renascence of Faith, 125-27.

⁹⁹Roberts, "Imago Dei," 330-31.

triumphed over secular axioms of power, law, and success.¹⁰⁰ The Cross signified the crisis between world and spirit, and the triumph of Jesus' faith and love even in death displayed the coming of "Kingdom and the Power and the Glory."¹⁰¹

This interpretation of Jesus as the Incarnation of a new order reflected a disillusionment with the nineteenth-century liberal search for an historical Jesus, and a concern to recover a Christ of the church and positive Biblical theology, that paralleled the efforts of James Denney in Britain and the "crisis theologians" in continental Europe after 1920.¹⁰² Though they assumed the validity of the historical critical method, they also sought to claim, like Line, "something more" in a Jesus who entered into history, but as a transcendent reality. As Roberts had argued already in 1909, neither the historical record nor the limits of Jesus' own thought-forms could support either orthodox claims for Jesus' miraculous nature and the universal sufficiency of his death or liberal claims that Jesus' teachings provided an all-sufficient eternal rule of life.¹⁰³ Historical criticism had recovered, albeit tenuously, the "Galilean Jesus," he wrote in another work, but Christians sought something "more" than the historical minutiae of Jesus' life.¹⁰⁴ As he would again argue in the mid-1920's, though the eventfulness of the Incarnation was a necessary starting point for a modern understanding of Christ based on "fact" rather than doctrine, Jesus could not be grasped merely in terms of the natural man.¹⁰⁵ "The supreme need of the hour," he declared in 1909, "is the disengagement of religion

¹⁰⁰John Dow, "The Preacher's Page: The Christ and the World Forces," CJRT, Vol. 3, No. 2 (March-April 1926), 147.

¹⁰¹Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 81.

¹⁰²Carl E. Braaten, New Directions in Theology Today, Volume II: History and Hermeneutics (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), 59.

¹⁰³Richard Roberts, "Jesus or Christ? A Rejoinder," The Hibbert Journal, Vol. 8 (1909-1910), 84-85, 92.

¹⁰⁴Roberts, The Renaissance of Faith, 156-62.

¹⁰⁵Roberts, The Christian God, 35.

from its dependence on historical personalities."¹⁰⁶ Though historical event was the mode of divine revelation, it was necessary, as Eucken had suggested, to get "beneath what is temporal and local and accidental," in order to recover the transcendent figure of Jesus.¹⁰⁷

Like the question of God's immanence and transcendence, however, the problem of how Christ could be seen as both a culmination of emergent evolution and yet the embodiment of a new order was, as Roberts acknowledged, a paradox. On the one hand, Jesus was a supernatural, miraculous mystery, "a word as from other worlds than ours;" yet he was also a word present in the world and the "incarnation of the immanent spirit of humanity, the starting-point of a new phase in human development."¹⁰⁸ The question of Jesus again displayed the "cleft stick" of evangelical liberalism, and in his attempt at a "provisional dualism" Roberts claimed to leave unresolved the "metaphysical" question whether Jesus came "down from the throne," or evolved "up from the ranks." Likewise for John Line, the Incarnation seemed anomalous. If God was within humans by way of innate inspiration, then Christ was unique only in degree, but not in essence, from other great human expressions. But if Christ was radically unique, then the Incarnation and the New Testament inspired record were altogether different, miraculous, and unapproachable.¹⁰⁹ John Dow tried simply to assert both sides. Like Denney, he argued that Christ was a radically unique reality who entered apocalyptically into the world from beyond. Christ did not "repeat an ancestor," he declared in the CJRT; rather, "[h]e is a new creation."¹¹⁰ Yet he also insisted that the "apocalypse" of the

¹⁰⁶Roberts, "Jesus or Christ? A Rejoinder," 101.

¹⁰⁷Roberts, The Renaissance of Faith, 174; Roberts, The Christian God, 35.

¹⁰⁸Roberts, "'The Word Became Flesh,'" 4, 24; Roberts, The Renaissance of Faith, 189.

¹⁰⁹Line, Inspiration and Modern Criticism, 138.

¹¹⁰John Dow, "The Preacher's Page: The Christ and the World Forces," CJRT, Vol. 3, No. 2 (March-April 1926), 147.

Incarnation was not a "supernatural event" or something "superadded" to life, but rather arose out of, and surpassed, mundane "human and spiritual qualities."¹¹¹ Behind their Christology, then, was an unresolved ontological ambiguity whereby spiritual truth, though located in experience, was distinct from the external structures of historical persons and experience. In Christ, as Roberts claimed, Scripture spoke a Word of God directly to human conscience; though critical history tenuously affirmed that Jesus was a real historical person, religion could survive even if Jesus never lived.¹¹²

In any case, Roberts and his colleagues bypassed this ontological ambiguity by interpreting Christ in terms of a spiritual apocalyptic. Though they shared E. F. Scott's rejection of Schweitzer's confinement of Jesus to the apocalyptic Jewish thought of his day, unlike Scott they reclaimed and reinterpreted the apocalyptic dimension of Jesus as the entry of the transcendent divine into the world. Jesus, according to Dow, had brought revolutionary meaning to the Jewish expectation of a "national" or earthly apocalypse. His "Messianic method" was to disclose, by his personality and acts of love, the presence of the Father coming into history to fulfill the ultimate hope of the apocalyptic kingdom.¹¹³ Beneath the apostles' mistaken apocalyptic expectations of an earthly kingdom of God, Jesus represented a more profound spiritual apocalypse which was distinct from the externalities of law, and which transformed those externalities into "a kingdom of spiritual ends within."

As part of this spiritualized apocalyptic, they also emphasized the Christ witnessed to in the faith of the church, rather than historical data. While evading questions about the physical resurrection on the grounds that physical evidence was for those who "believe not," Dow argued that the greater significance of the resurrection was the continued spiritual reality of Jesus in the consciousness and the energy of "new life" which the early church witnessed to. The early church identified this energy

¹¹¹Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 16, 43.

¹¹²Roberts, The High Road to Christ, 59.

¹¹³Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 87-89, 130-31.

with the power they had encountered in Jesus, and it was this power which united the early church against the world.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, it was this spiritually-risen, and thereby superior Christ that provided the continuity between the historical Jesus, the risen Christ, and the historic Christian church.

From his phenomenological approach, Line similarly argued that the faith and witness of the New Testament writers was inspired by the "dynamical" impact of Jesus' personality on them, compelling them to recognize him as an incomparable divine reality.¹¹⁵ As he wrote in a 1925 article, the Christ of the New Testament church was continuous with the Jesus of history and the real experience of his life and resurrection, and with the spiritual energy that he unleashed.¹¹⁶ The New Testament Christology was therefore an "apotheosis" Christology that rendered irrelevant the ontological question of whether Jesus had become, or always was, divine. The primitive apotheosis Christology was a pragmatic interpretation based, not on later metaphysical concerns, but on the practical and spiritual concerns of searching men, and their realization of God through the experience of Jesus' personal life and teaching.¹¹⁷ Jesus saved, by offering certainty and hope, and therefor was considered the Saviour.

As Carl Braaten notes, this treatment of the Incarnation and Cross as a moral revelation minimized the significance of the event,-- the unique "happening" and cosmic impact --, of the cross.¹¹⁸ For Roberts and his colleagues, Christ was not a uniquely divine saviour, but different only in degree to humans who also were innately spiritual. The significance of Jesus' work, therefore, was

¹¹⁴Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 299-301.

¹¹⁵Line, Inspiration and Modern Criticism, 113-118.

¹¹⁶John Line. "The Beginnings of Christological Doctrine," CJRT, Vol. 2, No. 3 (May-June 1925), 211-21.

¹¹⁷Line, "The Beginnings of Christological Doctrine," 218.

¹¹⁸Braaten, 15.

to bring to light the potential within humans. Here Roberts and his colleagues retained the idealist interpretation of the atonement forged during the nineteenth century. According to Roberts, sin could not be rectified through a "legal" payment, for sin lay in the human failure to listen to the "living voice" of the spirit that echoed in conscience.¹¹⁹ The problem of sin, as Blake had suggested, was that humans do not live up to the divine self. Sin therefore was a "state of the soul," a divided self, rather than the negation of the innate divine nature of humans.¹²⁰ By 1926, Roberts further defined sin as "anti-social behaviour" that obstructed spiritual progress toward freedom.¹²¹ The solution to sin, in turn, was not achieved in the judgements of a despotic God, but in changing the soul's state through personal and social healing.

According to Dow therefore, the cross revealed God's justice transmuted into love. Jesus' death was not a "mechanical" or "magical" act of substitutionary atonement, but an "ethical" act of bearing humanity's sins to the point of death, so as to move his oppressors to penitence. This "personal mediation" revealed the higher ideal of suffering love that seeks to restore humanity to God.¹²² The cross resolved the awful paradox that humanity could not attain the infinite perfection it is called to, by showing that God's holy judgement and justice was transposed in Christ to the higher principle of loving pardon.¹²³ Thus the cross showed God to be more than merely a holy and just God, but a loving and self-giving Father "stooping to share with man his bitter cup of sin and

¹¹⁹Roberts, The Renaissance of Faith, 123.

¹²⁰Roberts, "The Ethics of William Blake," 661.

¹²¹Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 35. See also Richard Roberts, "The Preacher as Interpreter," CJRT, Vol. 3, No. 2 (March-April 1926), 105.

¹²²Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 253-54.

¹²³John Dow, "The Preacher's Page; The Cry for Justice," CJRT, Vol. 3, No. 5 (September-October 1926), 426.

woe" so as to reconcile the world to him.¹²⁴ It was ironic, of course, that Dow and his colleagues had identified "the world" with an order of law and mechanism. If this order of law was opposed to spiritual grace, then so also the Old Testament creator and just God who upheld his law seemed also to be in tension with the New Testament redeeming God of love.

This idealist treatment preserved the nineteenth-century romantic interpretation of the atonement, though Roberts and his colleagues now stressed that the method of atonement was that of the free internal work of the spirit in renewing the divine potential of individuals. On this point, Roberts rejected Augustine's emphasis on God's initiative in the doctrine of predestination, which he claimed threatened to "rob grace of the freedom and the spontaneity" that it had in the conversion experience of apostles like Paul.¹²⁵ Redemption was to be achieved, not by external improvements and covenantal nurture or moral training, as Horace Bushnell had suggested, but by the internalization of God's moral demands through the inward work and emergence of humanity's true divine self.¹²⁶

"Just as water seeks and finds its own level," Roberts wrote,

so the spiritual-moral impulse in man may be regarded as the endeavour of the moral nature of the Creator to find its own level in His creatures....The moral sense in us is not merely the mirror of the divine moral nature; it is continuous with it.... The advance and ascent of the moral sense in the individual and in the race is simply the water of God's holy love forcing itself up to its own level in mankind.¹²⁷

Redemption came in the transformation of the inward conscience through the invasion of God's spirit.

The meaning of Jesus' apocalyptic work, as the British Presbyterian John Oman had declared, was the mediation of the free, transcendent God to human affairs and thus the breaking in of the divine

¹²⁴Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 220, 236, 447; Dow, "The Preacher's Page: Love and Trouble," CJRT, Vol. 4, No. 3 (May-June 1927), 263.

¹²⁵Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 112.

¹²⁶Roberts, The Renascence of Faith, 132-33.

¹²⁷Roberts, The Renascence of Faith, 191-92.

order into the world, "if men will only suffer it to break into their hearts."¹²⁸

From their emphasis on the moral impact and value of Jesus, Roberts concluded in his The Christian God (1929) that the Incarnation was a "grand anomaly." The Incarnation and the Cross marked the "irruption" of man's true spirit and history, signifying both the "high-water mark of human relations and of human aspiration," and the "the force from without, the new power, the new principle sent to transform the world."¹²⁹ The anomaly of Christ was that he broke across what Roberts had taken to be the two orders of history. The good news of the gospel, therefore, was that in Jesus the spiritual had entered fully into human history: Jesus was "the disclosure of the human future; he is the true superman, the man-beyond-man who is to come."¹³⁰ Or as Dow put it, Jesus was "a new Apocalypse, a revelation of what life can be, transformed by contact with God."¹³¹ As Roberts emphasized in popular sermons such as his inaugural sermon at Sherbourne Street United Church, the Incarnation was the heart of the gospel and the answer to humanity's search for the transcendent. Jesus was "the Word made flesh" who answered the Greek "guess to the mystery of things" in Stoic logos theory. In Jesus "eternity is translated into time, heaven is brought to earth, God comes down into the human crowds; the invisible is clothed in common clay; the unknown is made common, familiar knowledge."¹³²

The combination of emergent idealism and spiritual apocalypticism in the work of Roberts and his colleagues culminated in a translation of Augustine's distinction between a transcendent sovereign God and the temporal order of history into an antithesis, as Roberts defined it, between the divine

¹²⁸Roberts, The Renascence of Faith, 149.

¹²⁹Roberts, The Christian God, 68-69; see also Renascence of Faith, 183.

¹³⁰Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 78.

¹³¹Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 84.

¹³²Roberts, "'The Word Became Flesh,' 4, 24.

creative spirit of freedom and the material forces of law and conservation, within the evolutionary process. According to Roberts, the underlying divine impulses of nature were the goals of free human personality and a free, cooperative society.¹³³ These twin goals of the "new man" and the "divine society" were inextricable. Righteousness, therefore, consisted in "those types of conduct that make for the solidarity and strength of the group.... Social behaviour is righteousness; anti-social behaviour is sin."¹³⁴ And true society, according to Roberts, consisted of free, voluntary association based on common interest. This free society, however was obstructed by those "sinful" social institutions, like the state and the nation, with which individuals are associated merely by accident of birth. Such associations employed the powers of force, authoritarian law, and economics to impose order, but an order which conserved vested interests, the status quo, and a "herd-mentality" rather than further development of the moral impulses for freedom and voluntary fellowship.¹³⁵ Like Ernest Thomas, Roberts had become suspicious of the "systems" that modern society had created. In his contribution to Whither Christianity (1927), a collection edited by Lynn Harold Hough and famous for its new departures by other young contributors like Reinhold Niebuhr, Roberts once more appealed to Blake's ironic criticism of the illusions of modern mechanisms and systems. As Blake's work suggested, rational systems lacked the poetic, prophetic eye for seeing the whole of reality and the presence of the eternal in the particulars of life.¹³⁶ In short, systems were part of nature, and were the embodiment of forces opposed to the spirit.

The spiritual order of freedom, according to Roberts, transcended and would supersede this

¹³³Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 26, 31.

¹³⁴Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 35.

¹³⁵Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 41-50.

¹³⁶Richard Roberts, "Wheels and Systems; A Plea For Another Theology," in Whither Christianity?, Lynn Harold Haugh, ed. (New York: Harper, 1927), 41-44.

natural order of causal relations. As he wrote already in 1912, the fact that "[t]he higher order may under certain conditions break across the lower order and confound the best-laid anticipations of the historian" indicated that God had not "surrendered His sovereignty to His machinery."¹³⁷ Since history was the product of personalities whose fundamental identity was free spiritual and moral life, it could not ultimately be bound by laws. As Roberts claimed,

[i]t becomes perilous to speak of laws in connection with history; or at least it makes the inferior order of history liable at any time to be disturbed by the interaction of the free will of man and the free will of God....Where God and man meet in intimacy one never knows what may happen.¹³⁸

In his transcendence, God was free to intervene in the natural course of history rather than being bound by law.¹³⁹ And in the same way that God superseded history, so humans, in the new life of the spirit, might achieve a life of freedom which would culminate in a super-humanity.

In his interpretation of Old Testament Israel, John Dow drew a similar antithesis which identified sin with the order of material reality, law, and the structures of conservation, while grace was identified with spirit and freedom. Despite being called to spiritual development, he explained, Israel's tendency was to seek consolation in worldly forms and man-made utopias, such as nationalistic kingdoms or legalistic temple-orders, and as a result they tended to conserve the status quo for the sake of vested interests.¹⁴⁰ As Dow wrote in his "Preacher's Page" column in the CJRT, Israel had distorted God's call to spiritual growth and communion into man-made institutions and a self-made "Jerusalem" which came to be opposed to the spirit.¹⁴¹ Humanity always builds his

¹³⁷Roberts, The Renaissance of Faith, 149.

¹³⁸Roberts, The Renaissance of Faith, 150.

¹³⁹Roberts, "The Doctrine of God," 30.

¹⁴⁰Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 23-25.

¹⁴¹John Dow, "The Preacher's Page: The Christ and the World Forces," CJRT, Vol. 3, No. 2 (March-April 1926), 147.

shrines where he confronts God in the world, but then takes these to be final. The instinct to crystallize the holy in worldly forms was natural for "creatures of place and time," as was the attempt to build "premature heavens" that promised easy, man-made solutions or refuges from the realities of sin and suffering in the world. But in doing so, man lost sight of the spiritual reality in experience, and his sacred Jerusalems consequently became fallen cities and idols. Except for those prophetic "religious idealists" who staked their faith on "unseen and eternal verities," Israel failed to realize that "the Kingdom is not of this world,"-- that history was first of all a "moral process" of spiritual progress into fellowship with God.¹⁴²

Thus, in their version of Augustine's antithesis, Roberts and Dow portrayed the course of history as an evolutionary process arising out of conflict between what the British Christian Marxist John Macmurray called conservative law and creative spiritual progress.¹⁴³ Nature, Roberts claimed, was striving to produce "some free and independent individual" who could, by the superiority of spirit over nature, bring "his environment increasingly under control and ...push the frontiers of his environment ever farther into the unknown....the end of the process of evolution is freedom."¹⁴⁴ But if genuine progress of freedom and fellowship were to be achieved, the techniques of state-building and legal authority, the control of industry and commerce for private material gain, and the materialist ideologies of both capitalism and communism must be discarded.¹⁴⁵ According to Roberts, progress would have to begin with toleration and with education that cultivated independent minds and the powers of critical valuation. Dow was less sanguine about the process of spiritual progress, warning that nature inherently opposed change and humans naturally sought to preserve their comfort in

¹⁴²Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 23, 27.

¹⁴³Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 58.

¹⁴⁴Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 30.

¹⁴⁵Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 51-54, 61, 64.

existing institutions which drown out the sacred flame of life. Reminiscent of E. H. Oliver's war-time declaration, Dow compared progress to the Promethean grasp for fire: "civilization is wrenched from the jealous hands of the gods of the old order. Progress has to battle its way through the forces of conservatism."¹⁴⁶ Progress came only through conflict, by the "noble violence" and heroic sacrifice of "great souls" who challenged the powers that be, and whose self-sacrifice went beyond the law society.

Here was a modern apocalypticism to motivate a new generation of Christian revolutionists. For both Roberts and Dow, redemption meant the liberation of humanity from conservative law and institutions in a future-oriented quest for the free life of the spirit and the potential divinity of man that would have its fulfillment in some unknown eschatological destiny within the historical process.¹⁴⁷ The "sense of the holy," as Rudolf Otto called it, and the utopian hope of the free society, acted as the "lure of a city of God" which propelled humanity on the path of emergent evolution to transcend himself and the sense-life of the "material-temporal order" with an other-worldly end for life.¹⁴⁸ The Kingdom of God, according to Roberts, was the eschatological presence and future realization of freedom, rather than either an absolute moral order or the restoration of a normative creation order. In a history divided between past law and future freedom, it was the future freedom of the life of the spirit that gave meaning and hope for history.

The antithesis of freedom against law posed by Dow, Line, and Roberts was the product of a new attempt to sharpen the distinction between spiritual and secular reality, but in distinctly modern terms. Their vision of spiritual progress located Augustine's interpretation of the moral tension between God and a fallen world entirely within the historical process. In adapting Augustine's

¹⁴⁶Dow, "The Preacher's Page: The Christ and the World Forces," 147.

¹⁴⁷Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 69-73.

¹⁴⁸Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 36, 40, 71-74.

ontological duality of spirit and nature, their views preserved and built on the foundation of the neo-Kantian apologetic of Baillie and Morgan. Nevertheless, they also introduced several new concerns. In contrast to Baillie and Morgan, their attempts to emphasize the reality of sin and a deeper criticism of secular culture, as well as God's initiative in grace, placed the orders of spirit and nature in sharp conflict with each other, such that nature and spirit, law and freedom, and state and church were no longer complementary, but rather were polarized. This antithesis suggested the grounds for a resumption of radical social criticism that would emerge in the early 1930's. Also, their understanding of this relationship seems more thoroughly historicized, -- indeed, their attempt to relate religion to "biological" life suggested a reconciliation of Huxley's "biological religion" advocated by S. H. Hooke with the personal idealism and a unique spiritual reality suggested by Morgan and Baillie. Despite assuming the presence and initiative of a transcendent God, their critical method confined their purview to historical experience and excluded fixed reference points, and in fact anathematized law. Identified with spirit and freedom, divine immanence, Roberts suggested, by definition must have its activity in the open-ended process of evolution.¹⁴⁹

This vitalist apocalypticism, however, contained several crucial problems. As historian of science Erwin Hiebert explains, the vitalist use of modern physics began from the outset with an idealist ontology which asserted that spirituality was built into structure of nature, especially in human personality.¹⁵⁰ While this essentially neo-Kantian assumption was necessary to validate their critical method and immanent theology, it nevertheless was central in their translation of the Augustinian distinction between a transcendent God and the world to a distinction between spiritual and structured reality within the world. In turn, this ontological duality vitiated their claims that humanity was yet

¹⁴⁹Roberts, "The Theological Dilemma in America," 144.

¹⁵⁰Erwin N. Hiebert, "Modern Physics and Christian Faith," God & Nature: Historical Essays on the Encounter between Christianity and Science, David C. Lindberg and Ronald Numbers, eds. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), 424-47.

in the process of moving historically from sense life to spiritual life, since the inherent spirituality of humanity assumed in the analogia entis meant that spirituality was ontologically given. This analogia entis also would vitiate claims to the unique nature and need of Christ's redemptive work, reducing Christ to an Incarnational signpost of the trend of emergent evolution. Finally, their interpretation of the antithesis as an ontological distinction between spirit and nature began from the problem of a fallen world. Hence their vision of the emergence of spirit was a view of redemption as superseding law in the name of freedom that fundamentally denied creation order. Ultimately, their opposition of spirit against structure and freedom against law would leave unresolved the practical questions involved in the relationship between the Christian community and the social order, and between faith and science.

III. Mysticism and Grace

On many issues, like their critique of modern culture, the primacy of experience, the unique spiritual reality of Christ, and the continuity between Christ and the early church, William Manson and Walter Bryden shared the views of Roberts, Dow, and Line. Nevertheless, Manson and Bryden departed from the attempt to synthesize an apocalyptic view of Christ with an idealist ontology. Following more thoroughly James Denney's exclusive focus on Christ and the Bible, they took their point of departure from the Biblical witness to a radically unique transcendent Christ. This emphasis on unique divine grace and sovereignty also reflected a more radical criticism of the western humanist tradition, including the liberal Protestant confidence in the analogia entis to provide a "natural" bridge from humanity to a transcendent God. Instead, Manson and Bryden began to locate the Augustinian antithesis not so much between external nature and internal spiritual reality, but between the historical-structural world and the radically transcendent reality of God. This development beyond personal idealism unwittingly paralleled, and eventually would coalesce with the direction taken by Karl Barth.

While making these departures, however, the legacy of the neo-Kantian critical perspective remained in the work of Manson and Bryden in two important ways. First, while they reinterpreted the antithesis in a sharper distinction between the divine and the world, they preserved the ontological distinction between divine spirit over against a mechanical natural world, identifying the work of the spirit with grace and freedom, and nature with law. Secondly, their emphasis on experience reflected their continued assumption, though muted, of the methods of critical thought. Even while Manson and Bryden sought to overcome that perspective, Bryden especially would continue to struggle with the problem of critical suspicion about claims to knowledge of God.

William Manson's participation in Canadian scholarship was relatively brief, since he returned to Scotland in 1925 just as theological debate in Canada was heating up. During that brief tenure, however, he displayed the transition from Ritschlian and personal idealist ideas to a sharper polarization of spiritual reality and the structured world, and in doing so he opened the path that Bryden would follow more fully. This transition was demonstrated in the subtle contrast between Manson's publications in 1924 and 1925. Manson's 1924 works indicated his affinity with the neo-Kantian view of human values, and with E. F. Scott's emphasis on the moral personality of Jesus. As noted in Chapter 3, Manson wrote in a 1924 review that poetry expressed "the soul's intuitive perception of values and realities which mere scientific and utilitarian analysis ignores and omits," and aimed at a higher interpretation and reconstruction of experience.¹⁵¹ This Arnoldian view of the humanities as teaching moral tradition and spiritual values was also evident in Manson's neo-Kantian emphasis on the personality of Jesus in the first issue of the CJRT. Manson criticized both Harnack's "liberal" interpretation of Jesus as merely a teacher of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and Schweitzer's "eschatological" view of a lacuna between Jesus' Messianic "illusions" and the

¹⁵¹William Manson, "review of 'The Soul of Modern Poetry,' by R. H. Strachan," CJRT, 1, no. 2 (March-April 1924), 174-75.

early church's claim to the risen Christ. Like Dow and Line, Manson argued that the moral personality of Jesus not only revealed a divine ethic, but also justified Jesus' claim to be the Messiah and risen Lord.¹⁵² In turn, the early church's witness was the product of its revolutionary experience of Jesus' personality and his continued living presence in the early church.

Though similar to Roberts, Dow, and Line, however, Manson would take these emphases on the risen Christ and Christ's witness to himself in new directions. His emerging Christocentrism was evident in his increasingly sharp distinction, after 1924, between the claims of Christ and the "values" of western humanism. In a series of comments in the CJRT on Jesus' preaching of the Kingdom of God, Manson noted that Jesus had called for repentance and for identification with him in "immediate spiritual communion."¹⁵³ Here Manson began to challenge the Arnoldian view of the humanities with the radical uniqueness of Jesus, arguing that the spiritual significance of Jesus could not be comprehended in particular human theories. Like James Denney, Manson had begun to suggest that Christianity was fundamentally problematic to the modern mind of science, idealism, and historicism, and that God's revelation came at his initiative from outside of humans, by way of a unique Christ, Scripture, and the Spirit. The fact of Christ, as Denney had put it, was more than history: it was the eternal in the present.¹⁵⁴ What the Sermon on the Mount called for, then, according to Manson, was not Arnold's "sweetness and light" of general culture, but "saltness and light," meaning a spirit of self-sacrificing service and fidelity to the revealed truths of God.¹⁵⁵ In a sharp break from nineteenth-century idealism, Manson thus set Christ and Christianity in tension with the anthropocentric

¹⁵²William Manson, "Foundations Which are not Removed," CJRT, 1, no. 1 (January-February, 1924), 16-22.

¹⁵³William Manson, "From An Expositor's Notebook," CJRT, 2, no. 3 (May-June 1925), 235-236.

¹⁵⁴James Denney, "The Atonement and the Modern Mind," The Expositor, 6th Series, Vol. 8 (1903), 97; and Denney, "Christianity and the Historical Christ," The Expositor, 8th Series, Vol. 5 (1913), 20.

¹⁵⁵William Manson, "From An Expositor's Notebook," CJRT, 2, no. 3 (May-June 1925), 235-236.

humanism of Arnold's synthesis.

Manson's subsequent work would help to initiate the twentieth-century "Biblical Theology" movement and its use of historical inquiry for developing a renewal of positive Biblical doctrine.¹⁵⁶ In his 1925 inaugural lecture series at New College in Edinburgh, he insisted that genuine insight into the New Testament must begin with determination to "give its text a chance."¹⁵⁷ Again like Denney, he assumed the validity of historical criticism, but rejected the interpretations of comparative religion and psychology which, like Ernst Troeltsch's principle of analogy from contemporary experience, arbitrarily rejected the uniqueness of Christ and gave all forms of consciousness an identical, but naturalized value. The a priori decision to deny the unique claims about Christ was, Manson declared, "not a science of reality, but sheer nihilism."¹⁵⁸

Manson's point of departure from the living Christ and the Biblical text contrasted sharply with the insistence of Roberts, Dow, and Line of beginning with the critical scientific method and their appeal to the analogia entis to provide a bridge between humanity and God. According to Manson, it was not first the critical method, but only "the Christian mind," forged in the interaction between the spirit-guided church and the Biblical canon in which it found Christ, that had "the sole proper access to the New Testament."¹⁵⁹ Though he insisted on the necessity of the historical Christ and the value of historical criticism, Manson even more than Roberts and his colleagues began from the position that Christ could only be understood from within the faith, or more properly from the living Christ which directed the church to hear the word of God in Scripture. Historical criticism of the

¹⁵⁶Brevard S. Childs, Biblical Theology in Crisis (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970), 24.

¹⁵⁷William Manson, "New Testament Criticism in Relation to the Christian Religion, I," The Expository Times, 37 (1925-1926), 171.

¹⁵⁸See also Manson, "Foundations Which are not Removed," 16-22.

¹⁵⁹Manson, "New Testament Criticism in Relation to the Christian Religion, I," 172.

Bible, therefore, must proceed by recognizing the "peculiar sanctity" with which the historic church had invested the Bible.¹⁶⁰ And theology must begin with taking the Bible as the "just norm of Christian truth" because it was here that the Church, infused with the living Christ, had always found "the redeeming love of God."

Thus Manson attempted to start his theology from the living Christ of the church, later described as the Christ of the "kerygma," who could only be known from within the faith given by Christ's spirit. Manson was moving to a position that Karl Barth would later make famous as "church dogmatics." For Manson, this recovery of Augustine's credo ut intelligim meant that the unique and transcendent living Christ, rather than the critical method and the immanent spirit, was the premise of Christian theology. In that case, as Denney had argued, the authority of the Bible lay not in its words or historical forms as such, but in the Word of God which comes through the testimony of Bible and authenticates itself to the believer's own consciousness by the inward witness of the Spirit.¹⁶¹

Finally, Manson also followed Denney in breaking from the liberal, idealist view of Jesus as merely a moral revelation. Denney argued that the resurrected and living Christ was the actual object of faith for Christianity, and that the atonement was the distinguishing feature of Christianity.¹⁶² In a return to a more traditional view of atonement, Denney argued that the atonement challenged all liberal claims to natural merit that neglected the radical impact of sin on man's constitutional status as God's image bearers, for in the atonement God actually bore the cost of redemption himself. For

¹⁶⁰Manson, "New Testament Criticism in Relation to the Christian Religion, I," 171-172.

¹⁶¹I. Howard Marshall, "James Denney," in Creative Minds in Contemporary Theology, Philip E. Hughes, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 207-8.

¹⁶²James Denney, "The Atonement and the Modern Mind," 81-87.

Denney, ultimate reality was to be found in the grace of God's sin-bearing, sacrificial love in Christ.¹⁶³ Similarly, Manson argued that the early church's apocalypticism and Paul's doctrines of sin and justification were expressions of the fact that "'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.'"¹⁶⁴ Paul's teachings were not a redirection, but "the central, summit wave of the movement," for they began with the central "datum" of primitive Christian experience, the Cross of Christ.¹⁶⁵ And the Cross was not only a moral symbol of suffering love, but the unique work of a supernatural Christ, and thus the unique in-breaking of the purpose of a transcendent God into the world that linked the personal Jesus to the risen Christ and the infusion of a new, transforming power of the Kingdom of God. Jesus was therefore not just the historical origin, but the "eternal centre" of Christianity.¹⁶⁶ As he added in a footnote, "by history we transcend history," for the historical Jesus was also the transcendent, living Christ.

By 1925, then, Manson was moving beyond a neo-Kantian apologetic based on human values and an immanent, evolutionary spirit. In the light of the Biblical and historic church's witness to the living Christ, and the reality of human sin, that optimistic apology had become impossible. In its place he suggested the rediscovery of the "world-displacing, world-renewing Kingdom of God, for which apocalyptists looked."¹⁶⁷ While Roberts and Dow used similar language, the Kingdom in Manson's view was not an emergent irruption, but arrived as a radically transcendent word and spirit of God which struck at the hearts of believers. Though not yet influenced directly by Karl Barth,

¹⁶³Marshall, "James Denney," 219.

¹⁶⁴William Manson, "New Testament Criticism in Relation to the Christian Religion, II," The Expository Times, 38 (1925-1926), 231.

¹⁶⁵Manson, "New Testament Criticism in Relation to the Christian Religion, II," 232.

¹⁶⁶Manson, "New Testament Criticism in Relation to the Christian Religion, I," 173.

¹⁶⁷Manson, "New Testament Criticism in Relation to the Christian Religion, II," 231.

Manson was moving along similar paths to what one author has described as Barth's view of the "triumph of grace" in the exclusive work of a transcendent God.¹⁶⁸

When Manson left Canada in 1925, his mantle of advocating Denney's views was taken up by Walter Bryden. By the time that he began to teach part-time at Knox, Walter Bryden had rejected both the Princetonian conservatism of Knox College principal William McLaren, and the neo-Kantian personal idealism of T. B. Kilpatrick in Pastoral Theology, J. E. McFadyen in Old Testament and H. A. A. Kennedy in New Testament.¹⁶⁹ During his studies at the Free Church's Glasgow College from 1907 to 1908, he had come under the influence of Scottish theologians like T. M. Lindsay, then principal of Glasgow College, and James Denney. As John Vissers notes, Lindsay regarded the emphases of Benjamin Warfield and J. Grescham Machen on Biblical literalism, infallibility, and an obscure original autograph, as an untenable and rationalistic scholasticism that contrasted with the actual Reformed distinction between the Word and written Scripture.¹⁷⁰ Lindsey's assertion of this distinction and his concern to reclaim the Reformed tradition, both of which would be central themes for Bryden, suggested a way to affirm both a moderate Biblical criticism and the primacy of the authority of the living Word of God.

Even more important for Bryden was James Denney, whom Bryden described in 1943 as "the prince of Scottish theologians."¹⁷¹ Denney, according to Bryden, had challenged the attempt of liberals to make God meet the requirements of man through their questioning of the incarnation and atonement. Denney's insistence on a modern, but positive evangelical understanding of God's

¹⁶⁸G. C. Berkhouwer, The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956).

¹⁶⁹Vissers, 47-9.

¹⁷⁰Vissers, 51-3.

¹⁷¹W. W. Bryden, The Significance of the Westminster Confession of Faith (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1943), 27.

transcendent grace which entered experience in the living Christ, and his insistence on the radical distinctiveness of the gospel, reverberated throughout Bryden's understanding of his own ministry. His development, during his pastorate, of what he regarded as the inward and direct experience of an inbreaking God in contrast to cultural forms reflected Denney's claims to the uniqueness and immediacy of a living Christ and a distinct transcendent God.¹⁷² Similarly, Bryden's collection of sermons, under the title Separated Unto the Gospel, emphasized preaching a completely unique and living Word to a faithful remnant people of God. As James Smart suggested in his introduction to that collection, Bryden's work was that of an evangelist who sought the recovery of classic Calvinist doctrines concerning sin and redemption as part of his emphasis on reliance on the word of God alone.¹⁷³

Bryden's early work examined here, however, displays the ambiguities of his turn from neo-Kantian personalism to a modern Christocentric evangelicalism. His first major publication, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul (1925), offered a mystical evangelicalism that identified Christianity exclusively with the experience of the living Christ distinguished from all "natural" realities. His main argument was that the apostle Paul's witness was continuous with that of the earliest church, and that the root of that witness was Paul's actual experience of the risen Christ. The prefatory comments of Bryden's two main sponsors, however, indicate the ambiguity of his argument. In his forward, J. E. McFadyen, a leading neo-Kantian idealist who in 1925 moved from Knox College to the United Free Church College in Glasgow, described Bryden's work as a study of the inward soul and religious experience of Paul as his character was "moulded and controlled by the spirit of Jesus."¹⁷⁴ Manson's

¹⁷²Bryden, "The Triumph of Reality," 131.

¹⁷³James D. Smart, "The Evangelist as Theologian," Separated Unto the Gospel, Donald V. Wade, ed. (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1956), vii.

¹⁷⁴J. E. McFadyen, "Forward," W. W. Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul (London: James Clarke & Co., 1925), 7.

introduction, meanwhile, welcomed Bryden's challenge to the nineteenth century search for the historical Jesus and his argument that Paul's theology was not a redirection, but rather was continuous with historical Christianity and rooted in his experience of the spirit of Christ.¹⁷⁵ Together, these comments indicate Bryden's struggle to move beyond the introspection and anthropocentrism of neo-Kantian apologetics to claim the transcendent origin of the spirit of Jesus.

Throughout his 1925 work, Bryden distinguished his mystical evangelicalism from both Princetonian fundamentalism and modernism. Fundamentalists, he warned, placed their hope in the external letter of the gospel and in certain creeds as the test of faith, rather than in the substance of the new life of the gospel.¹⁷⁶ He was most critical, however, of the modernist and idealist assumptions of what he called liberal evangelicalism. In contrast to John Line's treatment of the nature of inspiration, Bryden repudiated the idealist tradition which depicted the spirit of Jesus in terms of "certain ethical and spiritual qualities of the mind and soul" of Jesus.¹⁷⁷ The common liberal view, he argued, defined Jesus merely in terms of the highest of human values, thereby subjecting God to man and identifying the divine spirit with something in the world.¹⁷⁸ In contrast to both fundamentalism and liberal modernism, Bryden began with the immediate reality of Christ, arguing that Paul and the early church experienced in faith the immediate "strange Presence" of the Spirit of the risen Christ, which in turn initiated a truly new life in the believer.¹⁷⁹

Central to his critique of fundamentalism and modernism was Bryden's insistence, as he would

¹⁷⁵W. Manson, "Introductory Note," W. W. Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul (London: James Clarke & Co, 1925), 5.

¹⁷⁶Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 57.

¹⁷⁷Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 13.

¹⁷⁸Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 13, 49.

¹⁷⁹Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 20.

indicate in a 1929 article titled "the Triumph of Reality," on the ontic reality of the unique spirit of Christ, and thus the God who came to humanity in Christ.¹⁸⁰ Though he later would become more critical of mysticism, Bryden argued in 1925 that Christianity was "the religion of the Spirit," and as such it must be both radically mystical and thoroughly realistic.¹⁸¹ In broad terms, Bryden's mystical realism challenged the self-sufficiency of the "natural" world. Critical science, he claimed, could neither "explain" the universe nor offer a solution to its sin. That solution came only from beyond in the revelation of a transcendent Christ and his Incarnation, death, and resurrection in the soul. The entry of God's own spirit into the world constituted a new reality, -- "a violation of all the laws of natural development, and a contradiction to all ordinary sense."¹⁸² And its presence in the soul illumined consciousness to the reality of God, forgiveness, and freedom from the "severe bondage of either traditional or external guidance."¹⁸³ The Spirit of God and its gift of freedom, therefore, should be the most important factor in a "realistic world."

For Bryden, therefore, faith was an immediate, internal, and free spiritual experience of a divine other. Faith came not "from objective demonstrations of spiritual beliefs nor from the lead of subjective idealism," nor was it to be procured from the "busy-ness of Church life."¹⁸⁴ Though matters of doctrine and moral conduct clearly were important, indeed were inseparable from faith, they were subordinate to the living spirit and the new communion with God brought by the spirit's presence in the soul to make God's will one's own free will.¹⁸⁵ Justification by faith therefore meant simply

¹⁸⁰Bryden, "The Triumph of Reality," 132.

¹⁸¹Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 200.

¹⁸²Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 241.

¹⁸³Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 184.

¹⁸⁴Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 84.

¹⁸⁵Bryden The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 86-88.

the experiential conviction that in the Cross "we discover ourselves in fellowship with what God Himself is, and we become empowered with His power."¹⁸⁶

Bryden's mystical realism included a distinction between spirit and external phenomena that seemed similar to that suggested by Roberts, Dow, and Line. Like them, Bryden attempted to move beyond the limits of what he considered to be mere historical criticism. To be sure, he professed the "highest respect" for modern science: in discoveries like that of evolution, modern science revealed the exacting and dynamic laws of the material world, and it had gained considerable understanding of the moral and spiritual history of humanity.¹⁸⁷ On one side, then, Bryden's mystical realism proceeded from a critical perspective on human life, and he assumed that the Spirit of Jesus must be a "fact" of experience.¹⁸⁸ But faith was not simply a matter of intellectually accepting an historical Jesus, nor was there any indication of celebration of Jesus' moral qualities or a moral programme in the New Testament.¹⁸⁹ Without dismissing the "fact" of Jesus, Bryden argued that historical critical methods could not disclose the real faith and living Christ within Christians, for the significance of Jesus could only be grasped by the internal "point of contact" established by the spirit in faith.¹⁹⁰ As Bryden put it, recognition of the "fact" of the Incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ "will produce conditions of mind and soul which in themselves are the essence of true faith, conditions to which God seems to respond. The fact itself will unfold in its richer elements to the enquiring sincerity of our spirits."¹⁹¹ Thus the historic fact of Jesus lead on to something greater in the

¹⁸⁶Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 75.

¹⁸⁷Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 242.

¹⁸⁸Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 13, 49.

¹⁸⁹Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 76-78.

¹⁹⁰Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 35, 159.

¹⁹¹Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 159.

restoration of personal communion between God and humans through the spirit.

Though similar to those of Roberts, Dow, and E. F. Scott, Bryden's efforts to reach beyond the historical fact of Jesus to a "more than" earthly Jesus stretched the distinction between spiritual and historical-structural reality. He stated this most sharply in his rejection of idealist claims to divine immanence and the analogia entis, and his insistence on distinguishing the spirit of Jesus from all merely human avenues to God. According to Bryden, there could be no connection of Christianity with other world religions, nor with human values, for God did not entrust true religion to be "manufactured" by man.¹⁹² The distinctiveness of the spirit meant that it was even "hidden," as Martin Luther had suggested, in Christians who, like the New Testament Corinthians, were far from perfect and yet who were united in Christ with the church.¹⁹³ Faith's experience of the spirit of Christ was solely the work of God intruding upon humanity from without. Therefore the life of the spirit was sui generis, known only as it was recognized by faith, and its impact brought a revolutionary transformation of human nature. Quoting Wilhelm Herrmann's Communion With God, he described the Christian life as a paradox: in the process of transformation by the spirit, God "slays us, yet makes us alive[.]"¹⁹⁴

In asserting the uniqueness and hidden-ness of Christ, Bryden also rejected the neo-Kantian version of the analogia entis that Roberts, Dow, and Line had claimed as the premise of their recovery of spiritual reality. "While it is a most encouraging truth," Bryden wrote,

to know that man is made in the image of God, it is proving nothing less than paralysis to our whole religious life to infer our conception of the character of God from even the highest traits of character to be discovered in man. All merely intellectual or inferential search after God inevitably tends to anthropomorphism on the one hand, or, if scientific, to a kind of pantheism on the other; and there would

¹⁹²Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 35.

¹⁹³Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 35.

¹⁹⁴Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 170.

seem but one way of escaping such fallacious conceptions of God: there must be possible a spiritual achievement of the soul of man over and independent of, its purely psychical self, by which it wins direct access to the very Spirit of God and thereby knows Him.¹⁹⁵

Thus Bryden attempted to repudiate claims to the likeness of humans to God or any inherent continuity between human psyche and spiritual reality.

Bryden's challenge to the principles of divine immanence and the analogia entis suggested a location of Augustine's antithesis that cut between humanity and the transcendent reality of God. Both modernism and the various forms of fundamentalism, according to Bryden, mistakenly identified "spirit" with an ontic substance in the world, particularly in the essence of human nature, leaving in question whether Christianity was "spiritual or material."¹⁹⁶ Instead of this ontological dualism within experience, Bryden proposed to interpret the antithesis in a way that emphasized a moral distinction between a transcendent divine spirit and all life that remained untransformed by that spirit:

'Spiritual life' for Paul apparently meant all life or any aspect of it as touched and transformed by the Spirit of God; whereas that of the flesh included all life, the physical passions and excesses, of course, but also mental life and moral idealism and achievement, even religion, not so touched and transformed. It may be claimed without apology that this Pauline distinction has still force in true Christian experience.¹⁹⁷

From this distinction, Bryden went on to suggest that the roots of Christianity could not be immanent, for they lay not in something "purely organic with life and its movements," but with something inscrutably and creatively new from a transcendent source entirely beyond the world.

Despite his emphasis on the otherness of Christ, Bryden nevertheless interpreted the classic doctrines of Christianity in what he called "experimental" and "psychological" terms. While calling for a recovery of the traditional recognition of sin, repentance, and reconciliation with God, he

¹⁹⁵Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 55.

¹⁹⁶Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 48-49.

¹⁹⁷Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 48.

interpreted these as "phases of soul-life," that function psychologically rather than theologically.¹⁹⁸ Paul's theology of the atonement, for example, had rejected an "earthly" interpretation of Christ's death as a requirement for the satisfaction of God's law. In contrast to Roberts and his colleagues, Bryden gave relatively little emphasis to the historical Incarnation and Cross. Although he affirmed the Incarnation as an event that enabled the world to "see God in terms of supremely true human personality," he argued that the mere historic facts of Christ's life, death and resurrection, "do not reveal their full significances as mere historic facts; but they become essentially spiritual processes which function in man's salvation."¹⁹⁹ For Paul, the meaning of the Cross surpassed historic fact and "became instead of a historical conception, altogether a spiritual, mystically realized, and living reality."²⁰⁰

Thus Bryden gave priority to the living, active Christ who superseded the historical Jesus, and who was the instrument in the "spiritual processes" of immediate personal communion with God.²⁰¹ Though a revelation in history was necessary, he concluded, Christianity also required a "recurring revelation in every individual soul, if that soul is to know truth -- God."²⁰² Thus the "real" significance of Christ was not his "earthly" life and death under the law, but his role in the ""spiritual processes" by which man became conscious of God's judgement against his sin and the release of new creative sources of life that gave liberty from the law."²⁰³

As an internal reality, Bryden also identified the spirit with freedom in contrast to law. Since

¹⁹⁸Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 173, 179.

¹⁹⁹Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 177-178, 181.

²⁰⁰Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 181.

²⁰¹Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 160.

²⁰²Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 253.

²⁰³Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 177-9.

faith was knowledge born out of a love for God that was stirred by the spirit, the life of the spirit was characterized by an ethic of self-sacrificing love.²⁰⁴ As the work of the spirit, this ethic included liberty, for by its very nature it was "ethical" and thereby "free" insofar as it lived under the guidance of spirit rather than Mosaic law.²⁰⁵ The freedom brought by faith, then, included both freedom from the "power of the law" to condemn man for sin, but also freedom from the external authority of law.²⁰⁶

Bryden's psychological mysticism attempted to translate the neo-Kantian dualism of spirit and matter into a sharper distinction between a transcendent God and sinful humans, and to invert the paradox between transcendence and immanence suggested by Roberts, for while Roberts took his departure from the side of immanence, Bryden claimed the side of transcendent initiative. But while defining the antithesis as a moral struggle between divine grace and unregenerate life, he nevertheless retained the neo-Kantian and Platonic ontological categories that interpreted God and divine grace with a radically other spirit, while identifying historical-natural structures with sin. Consequently, he sought to challenge any claim that structures might create the conditions of faith and the Kingdom, for faith was fundamentally, as Augustine had described it, a matter of the inner moral self responding to God in the love given by God himself.²⁰⁷ It is no surprise, then, that in 1929 he would welcome Karl Barth's description of God's complete otherness and sovereign will as "the heart and soul of Calvinism."²⁰⁸

Despite his challenge to liberal modernism, however, Bryden's "psychological" approach

²⁰⁴Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 114-6.

²⁰⁵Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 123, 125.

²⁰⁶Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 171.

²⁰⁷Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 109-115.

²⁰⁸Bryden, "The Triumph of Reality," 135.

reflected his own commitment to reconciling his assertion of a transcendent spirit with the demands of critical, experiential knowledge. He did so by locating the experience of God's spirit particularly in the human psyche. In his 1929 address to graduating divinity students, he urged that the preacher must have a "mental" gospel, meaning that the preacher must not preach merely accepted, external legalism or dogma, but must come to his own decisions about the gospel freely, "with ourselves before God."²⁰⁹ "True beliefs," he declared "are the issues of one's whole being as wrought upon by circumstance and God."²¹⁰ The truth of the gospel came only in the process of the experiences of life. And the first step in the disclosure of true religion was the experience of "awe," as Rudolf Otto called it in his Idea of the Holy, that arose from the recognition that there is something in Jesus Christ which eludes us and haunts us as the "ultimately real."²¹¹ Though the primacy of this experience did not require abandoning the judgements of the historic church, he told the prospective preachers, the gospel must be "your own" in the sense that "it must become truth to you as if God spake it in your soul."²¹²

Notably, Bryden hailed Friedrich Schleiermacher as "the father of modern theology," and likened him to John Calvin in the sense that his definition of religion as "creaturely feeling for the Infinite" had the same roots as Calvin's "feeling of insignificance before the glory and sovereignty of God."²¹³ Though Bryden later would become far more critical of the anthropocentric and romantic evangelicalism that Schleiermacher symbolized, his reference to Schleiermacher in the 1920's demonstrates that his own attempt to recover the transcendent reality was undertaken from a "post-

²⁰⁹Bryden, "The Triumph of Reality," 138.

²¹⁰Bryden, "The Triumph of Reality," 135.

²¹¹Bryden, "The Triumph of Reality," 142.

²¹²Bryden, "The Triumph of Reality," 139.

²¹³Bryden, "The Triumph of Reality," 138.

critical" perspective.

Bryden conceded that the question of how vital knowledge of God was gained, or how this experience of Christ was mediated "within the soul," was the most difficult problem of Christian experience.²¹⁴ Here again was the problem of how modern man, from the assumptions of critical method and historical self-consciousness, could claim a revelation from a God who was distinct and transcendent from the world. Though he would continue to seek a solution through the 1930's, his rather pragmatic answer in 1925 was that, though an impenetrable mystery, the psychological experience of the eternal spirit was incomparably greater than the value of the historic Jesus. Behind this pragmatic answer, Bryden assumed a Christian existentialism that he ascribed to the apostle Paul. Paul, he claimed, was both a mystic and a realist, for he accepted himself and the realities of world of affairs and human nature, including human interests and sin, but he also held a "pure Mysticism" which recognized the reality of God and direct communion with God through the Spirit.²¹⁵

Bryden thus assumed and juxtaposed two different realities, namely the "mechanical" world of nature governed by law, and the ultimate reality of a transcendent, free, and sovereign spirit of God. Though it worked internally, spiritual reality broke in upon individuals "along the road of life" to revolutionize their lives.²¹⁶ The experience of spiritual reality in the soul was not separate from human intellectual, emotional, or moral life, for these were the ways in which humans functioned, as well as expressed their deepest experiences.²¹⁷ And conversely, the experiences of life conditioned people to open-ness to the spirit, for it took all of life, including its sorrows and its joys, to "make a

²¹⁴Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 158.

²¹⁵Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 200, 237-38, 240.

²¹⁶Bryden, "The Triumph of Reality," 131-32.

²¹⁷Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 239.

message of God true."²¹⁸ In particular, it was poor and oppressed people who were more likely to experience this grace. As Fyodor Dostoevsky's The Brothers Karamazov suggested, according to Bryden, the tragedies of life should be accepted as among God's "kindest gifts," for it is to these that the transforming spirit of God responds. The circumstances of life, even its tragedies, were part of the process of revelation that enabled believers to acknowledge God's righteous judgements.

The entry of the divine spirit into the experience of the soul, then, revolutionized the whole human character to a new ethic of free, suffering love. Though seemingly an "unearthly" and impracticable ethic, it was for Jesus and the apostles the "normal" consciousness of righteousness.²¹⁹ The Christian life was a radical contradiction to the natural man and life under law, for it demanded the surrender not merely of life, but of one's own Ego to the ruling motive of the spirit. Taking Jesus' temptations as symbolic elimination of the merely natural life, Bryden argued that even the highest ideals and achievements of the human "spirit" were anti-thetical to the spirit of God.²²⁰ Faith and self-sacrifice were identical, for self-sacrifice was first of all self-abandonment to the adventure of the way of Jesus. Hence the life of the spirit brought victory and transcendence over oneself and the achievement of a higher life which was characterized by freedom from the law and a life moulded by Christ.²²¹

IV. The Spirit and the World

Despite their significant differences, Bryden's mystical existentialism and the spiritual vitalism of Roberts, Dow, and Line each culminated in a dynamic but also ambiguous tension between God's

²¹⁸Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 252.

²¹⁹Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 211.

²²⁰Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 213, 217-18.

²²¹Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 179, 215.

Kingdom and the historical-structural world. In contrast to Augustine's otherworldly destiny for the City of God, both interpretations expected the Kingdom to come to earth in an revolutionary eschatological spiritual order. But with their Augustinian distinction between two orders of history, both sharply repudiated any attempts to bring the Kingdom through legislation or structured techniques, insisting instead on the free working of the spirit. Thus their visions of the antithesis lead them both to thoroughly critique the Church's entanglement with western culture, and to minimize the significance of structural change in the "mechanical" secular order in favour of the free work of the spirit. Here the subtle differences between their views became apparent, for while Bryden identified that spirit with the exclusive intrusion of the spirit of Christ which called for the entire surrender of the "natural" self, Roberts and his colleagues identified that spirit with the realization of the highest human values, and accordingly called for more extensive human moral striving.

Their departure from Augustine's otherworldly eschatology was most explicit in Roberts' revision of Augustine. Augustine's "neo-Platonism," according to Roberts, had removed the exercise of grace from the world, and had failed to clearly define the relation of the heavenly community to its life on earth.²²² Since it involved human life, the City of God could not consistently be a "world-fleeing communion of saints." But on the other hand, the life of the communion of saints on earth needed to be distinguished more sharply from its entanglement in institutional powers and machinery like those of the state and the organized church, since such institutional organization belonged to the earthly city.

Roberts' comments included several important themes, but it first of all rejected Augustine's portrayal of the Church as a "pilgrim" community passing through the earth on its way to an otherworldly eternity, in favour of a Church and Kingdom whose task and destiny was within history. The coming of Christ, according to Roberts, marked the entry of the "Kingdom of Grace" into the

²²²Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 110.

world.²²³ The Incarnation, Dow also argued, meant that God had not abandoned the world, but rather had turned to "face Jerusalem and die," thereby entering into the battle against sin in the world.²²⁴ The "second law" of the Kingdom of God, after the first of finding God the Father, was therefore not to abandon the world or to expect some miraculous escape, but "to have faith in the power of the spiritual in man, to reverence the nature that he shares with God and exercise it to the fullest stretch."²²⁵ The Kingdom of God was not a future consummation, nor was it to be realized through some "premature heaven" of escape from the world. Like Bryden's view of spiritual reality breaking in upon individuals "along the road of life," Dow argued that Jesus met humans, not "on the clouds of heaven," but amid the sorrows of life, and it was here that the reality of the spirit of suffering love was to have its impact against the world.²²⁶

For Dow and Roberts, as well as Bryden, the antithesis was a conflict that entered into the historical process. The Kingdom of God was a revolutionary spiritual order of freedom and love set in tension against the world of law and force in contemporary western civilization.²²⁷ As Dow put it, the entry of the Kingdom in the Incarnation was the beginning of a "conflagration," or a "moral warfare." In his indictment of the temple money-changers, Jesus had called for the abolition of the "whole of the old order with its rottenness and corruption."²²⁸ Likewise, against the worldliness of western civilization, Dow argued in comments on the apocalyptic books of Daniel and Revelation that the Kingdom of God presented the truly "human kingdom," insofar as it challenged the beastly

²²³Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 82-87, 95.

²²⁴Dow, "The Preacher's Page: The Christ and the World Forces," 147. See also Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 150.

²²⁵Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 134.

²²⁶John Dow, "The Preacher's Page: On the Road," CJRT, Vol. 4, No. 3 (May-June 1927), 264.

²²⁷Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 89-95.

²²⁸Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 274-75.

kingdoms of the world with a kingdom which preserved human interests in justice and pity to the oppressed.²²⁹

Bryden's interpretation of this conflict was less anthropocentric, but portrayed an even more radical conflict in which the Kingdom appeared as a spiritual tangent entering into the historical order. The Kingdom, Bryden insisted, came not by human building, but as a "gift" of divine grace given in the now.²³⁰ The Kingdom was first of all spiritual, and it came as the Spirit operated through faith and transformed human character. As noted earlier, the radical impact of that spirit meant not merely the affirmation of the "truly human," but the "slaying" of natural humanity while restoring humanity's true life. Nonetheless, Bryden expected that the experience of spiritual reality would have an authentic impact on life, since it could not be separated from the intellectual, moral, economic, and political life in which humans functioned.²³¹

The defining feature of the Kingdom of God, for Bryden as well as for Roberts, Dow, and Line, was Christ's spirit of self-sacrificing and suffering love. But their different views of God's grace lead to different views of the significance of that spirit of love. For Bryden, the ethic of suffering love was essential, since it was only from the experience of God's suffering love in the spirit of Christ that man was reconciled to communion with God and the Kingdom achieved.²³² Roberts and Dow added a greater emphasis on human moral striving that contrasted with Bryden's emphasis on exclusive divine initiative and the sufficiency of Christ. Forgiveness, they argued, could only be experienced by participating in the divine spirit of forgiveness, and so by taking up the burden of

²²⁹John Dow, "The Preacher's Page: 'One Like the Son of Man,' and 'A Lamb as it had been Slain,'" CJRT, Vol. 4, No. 4 (July-August 1927), 352. See also Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 265-66.

²³⁰Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 90-96, 105.

²³¹Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 239.

²³²Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 114-16.

conquering sin in the world.²³³ Devotion to the Kingdom of God, Dow added, meant participation in the Cross, for in an evil world the challenge posed by the Kingdom would bring suffering to the faithful.²³⁴ The way of the Cross must be endured by all believers, but it also held the hope of overcoming suffering, -- not merely by escape from suffering, but by serving God's purpose of divine love and mercy in the midst of suffering. Thus the cross was not once and for all,-- a "passing moment in God's economy,"-- but the spirit of self-sacrifice which was to characterize the Kingdom.²³⁵ The Cross was therefore the permanent norm of the Kingdom of God in the natural world.

As Roberts' critique of Augustine suggested, these interpretations of a revolutionary, spiritual Kingdom criticized the entanglement of Christianity in the historic institutions of "secular" western civilization. According to Dow, the early church's expectation of a second coming, the post-Pauline Hellenistic interpretation of Christianity as a sacramental mystery religion, and the Constantinian union of church and state for the sake of worldly power, all compromised the spirit with legal institutions or external forms.²³⁶ Early Christianity's use of Greek philosophy also corrupted the free, ethical life of the spirit into rigid intellectual systems of theological forms that entangled it in false scientific dogmas, literalism, and legalism.²³⁷ Western Christianity, according to Dow, was a continuation of adulterated Constantinian Christianity: "Christ has not been King, but an ally of kings, useful on certain occasions, but discarded at will."²³⁸

²³³Roberts, The Renascence of Faith, 198-203.

²³⁴Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 277.

²³⁵Dow, "The Preacher's Page: 'One Like the Son of Man,' and 'A Lamb as it had been Slain,'" 352.

²³⁶Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 290.

²³⁷Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 318-19.

²³⁸Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 315.

Roberts was especially critical of this entanglement of Christianity in western institutions like the state. Since the Constantinian era, he argued, the necessity of living in the temporal world and seeking to influence the life of the world had lead the church naively to ally itself with the state and borrow its worldly methods of power. Instead of remaining a spiritual community that might penetrate and transform the world of power relations, the church had in fact surrendered itself to the empire.²³⁹ In subsequent centuries, the church's pursuit of the "societas perfecta" ironically came to absorb and control the political powers of the earthly city, leaving the church itself a secular institution. Though the intent of the Medieval church for a societas perfecta was right, he argued, its failure lay in its use of the methods of power and war, "the final court of appeal within the temporal realm," to achieve spiritual ends. "After all," he declared, "it is not possible to serve God by the arts of Mars or the artifices of Mammon."²⁴⁰ Throughout history, in fact, the alliance of Christianity with the powers of the state and capitalist wealth had arrested the church's supernatural spirit and prophetic voice, leading it to hypocritical complicity in the status quo.²⁴¹

Bryden's criticisms also questioned the middle class social identity of modern Protestantism. The church's focus on youth and the respectable classes, he claimed, neglected "the outcast portion of humanity" who, by their circumstances, were most in need of, and open to, the gospel of divine grace.²⁴² In a later work, Bryden would argue that the church had become dependent on the middle classes who gained their wealth from capitalist economic system that now was under question.²⁴³ In fact, he argued already in 1925, the church had demonstrated little spiritual influence over the

²³⁹Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 102-106.

²⁴⁰Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 161.

²⁴¹Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 219-21; Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 223.

²⁴²Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 248-50.

²⁴³Bryden, Why I Remain a Presbyterian, 113-14.

"respectable" middle classes "whose habits have become fixed," and who indicated little vital interest in the church, but nevertheless displaced the life of the spirit with the poverty of institutional machinery. Consequently, the location of Christianity in the centre of the social strata, Bryden concluded, tended to produce a "Judaized" Christianity in which "regulations, laws and conventions have been the motive to right living rather than the Spirit which gave direction and impetus to the life of Paul."²⁴⁴ In the absence of spiritual vitality, modern Protestantism had shifted its focus to the methods, conventions, and regulations of natural society.

In contrast to its current middle class identity, Bryden pleaded for a closer identity of Christianity with "the outcast of humanity." In part, he was concerned that its identity with the middle classes had lost it the participation and interest of the labouring classes.²⁴⁵ Furthermore, Bryden believed that the it was among the old, the young, and the "outcast,"-- those who lived with uncertainty,-- that the comfort and hope of the gospel was most received.²⁴⁶ Later he would add that the spirit moved more authentically in the hearts of such common folk who "by circumstances have literally been compelled to put their trust in God," and therefore were forced to "wait and pray." Their experience of the tragedy of life gave rise to a sincere spiritual life that did not appear in "worldly, prayerless men."²⁴⁷

These criticisms involved more than a call for social reform of western institutions, for it reaffirmed Augustine's identity of the Kingdom of God with spiritual reality over against the structured world. While identifying it with "common humanity," the Kingdom of God was antithetical to formal social structures. "Even amelioration of human pain and sorrow," Dow argued, "was

²⁴⁴Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 251-52.

²⁴⁵Bryden, Why I Remained a Presbyterian, 113-14.

²⁴⁶Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 251.

²⁴⁷Bryden, Why I Remained a Presbyterian, 146.

beginning at the wrong end," for such hopes appealed for a special release from suffering on human terms and refused life on God's plan. Human efforts to create the triumph of God by organization, he warned, "are the instruments of Satan. Man wants to organize spirit, and that is beyond his powers. It is his superlative impiety. Who can box up the west wind or harvest a perfume into barns?"²⁴⁸ Such efforts were "the kingdom of man, not the Kingdom of God." The Messianic method, according to Dow, offered no scheme or order for worldly transformation, no interest in politics or world order, and no attempt to work by institutions, externals, or force.²⁴⁹

This rejection of any efforts to accomplish God's Kingdom by "worldly" institutions or programs was reiterated by Roberts. Redemption, Roberts argued, was not a matter of changing opinions or moral legislation, or of enticing people into church membership, or constructing its formal external government. The extensive programs of church growth, entertainment for public worship, and social service were, according to Roberts, "ploughing the sands" of futility in their failure to extend a vital gospel that transformed lives.²⁵⁰ Roberts was even more suspicious of the state, which he portrayed as an inherently unredeemable worldly institution that was to be surpassed by grace rather than restored to any God-given authority. It had evolved out of tribal society as an association for power, and the pursuit of power remained the fundamental character even of democratic states, as was evident in the modern western states' war-time behaviour and absolutist tendency in its all-encompassing regulation.²⁵¹ Though he admitted the need for social institutions, and even for government authority, he was wary of their infringement on freedom, and he regarded them as parts of merely a "provisional and transitory stage in the development of human society," to be put off in

²⁴⁸Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 57, 100.

²⁴⁹Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 42, 87, 101, 125.

²⁵⁰Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 201-2; The Renaissance of Faith, 209, 213.

²⁵¹Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 162-63.

the process of social evolution to a society of cooperation.²⁵²

Bryden likewise offered little support for liberal Protestant projects like social reform and church union. Though he welcomed growing awareness of the social and ethical implications of the gospel, he was suspicious of these efforts to attract church membership.²⁵³ And in dismissing plans for church union, he suggested that Paul would have been unimpressed with the current fascination for "religio-political adventures."²⁵⁴ Such machinery seemed a poor substitute for the more urgent priority of the knowledge of a transcendent God and the preaching of the gospel, and they suggested to Bryden that modern Christianity had failed to discover the spiritual roots of religion in the human soul.²⁵⁵ It was difficult, Bryden suggested, to find the reality of Christ at the center of the modern Christianity's emphasis on programs for increasing membership and social reform, or its educational techniques.

In contrast to such worldly methods, Roberts argued, the Church's foundation in the spirit of suffering love represented "a higher type of life and a consequent higher method of social organization."²⁵⁶ As Dow put it, the secret to the Kingdom was "world-negation by the triumph of the Spirit," and its method was "renewal by infection, redemption by inspiration, salvation by rebirth."²⁵⁷ And as Bryden argued, since it was lead by the spirit, the Kingdom life of the spirit must be an internal and free ethic rather than a matter of external law or authority.²⁵⁸

²⁵²Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 263-64.

²⁵³Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 48, 54-56, 60.

²⁵⁴Roberts, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 80.

²⁵⁵Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 60, 247-48.

²⁵⁶Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 164.

²⁵⁷Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 45, 111.

²⁵⁸Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 125.

These criticisms of the progressive evangelical agenda characterized in the United Church were parts of an attempt to recover the uniquely "spiritual" work of God in redemption. The battle of the antithesis was first of all a spiritual battle which, as Dow put it, "cuts to the quick of conscience."²⁵⁹ Contrary to human attempts to prescribe and impose man-made utopias by law and force, the Kingdom of God was a moral reality achieved through the encounter of the individual conscience with the cross and God's still small voice.²⁶⁰ The Kingdom could only come by the internal revolution of repentance, spiritual renewal, and the acquisition of the mind and spirit of Christ. And this renewal meant "spiritual autonomy," or liberation from law and ritual and the triumph of freedom of conscience and spiritual discernment.²⁶¹ The Kingdom of God was a spiritual dynamic that, set in the midst of life through faith, provided the power through which "life transforms itself."²⁶²

Bryden linked this freedom of the spirit with community. The divine ethic of suffering love, he suggested, could be described as "considerateness," and was expressed in sincere "communion" that recognized one's communal responsibility and concern for the "infinite gain or loss" of every individual soul. Communion, therefore, was the fruit of authentic Christianity.²⁶³ But while he expected "consideration" to be expressed in all dimensions of human life, the very nature of that consideration and community was emphatically qualified by freedom. Freedom in the spirit of Christ had superseded the external authority of God in the law.²⁶⁴

Despite their criticism of the historic western church, they nevertheless held that the the church

²⁵⁹Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 274.

²⁶⁰Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 57, 70.

²⁶¹Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 106-107, 114.

²⁶²Dow, "The Preacher's Page: The Christ and the World Forces," 149; Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 84.

²⁶³Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 121.

²⁶⁴Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 171.

was the primary instrument through which the spiritual Kingdom entered and transformed the world. Quoting the Church of England's Bishop Gore, Roberts described the church was "the projection and the prolongation of the Incarnation into history."²⁶⁵ As such, it was called to embody the life of freedom in the "divine commonwealth" and to be the "redemptive community" committed to suffering love in the world.²⁶⁶ As Roberts put it, the Church was to be a "colony of heaven" in the world:

the church fulfills its own purpose in the measure in which it evokes its own quality of life -- the life of the spirit -- and its own social temper in the secular society which lies about it. It was to fulfil its mission by its preaching, its teaching and the witness of its own inner life and behavior. It was the strategy of 'peaceful penetration.' It was no part of its program to capture the political machinery of the Empire and to use it for its own ends; it was rather to kindle the life of the spirit in the people of the Empire, so that the Empire itself might become a Kingdom of Heaven, and its machinery consecrated to the ends of that Kingdom. In the event, the Church would become the Empire and the Empire the Church; and both the Empire and the Church would be fused and resolved into a new society which would be both Empire and Church and yet neither.²⁶⁷

By exercising its spiritual power through shaping opinion and hearts, the Church was to "teach the world the meaning and practice of love," and thereby "bring the whole of life under the rule of God."²⁶⁸

This vision of the Church's place in the world, and of its spiritual methods, culminated in a renewed emphasis on preaching as the primary method of the Church's agency for the Kingdom of God. In Bryden's case, preaching the gospel and the ethic of love were closely related: given the primacy of the spirit and the quality of freedom, God's Kingdom was to be communicated primarily by preaching the gospel of grace, out of "consideration" for humanity's primary need of real

²⁶⁵Roberts, The Renaissance of Faith, 207; The New Man and the Divine Society, 102.

²⁶⁶Roberts, The Renaissance of Faith, 207; The New Man and the Divine Society, 89-95. Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 265.

²⁶⁷Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 165-66.

²⁶⁸Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 154, 176. See also Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 175-76.

knowledge of God.²⁶⁹ Hence, the central task of the church, according to Bryden, was "communicating living knowledge of God -- the very spirit and nature of God -- to other human souls" through preaching of the gospel.²⁷⁰ Preaching best communicated the living spirit because it was ultimately the work of God himself. Bryden urged that preaching should consist of the simple, direct proclamation of the meaning of "Christ crucified" that arose out of one's own inner conviction, and brought others to encounter the transcendent reality of God and the conviction of faith.²⁷¹ For this, the most vital element in preaching was neither church educational techniques and programs nor critical scholarship, but the preacher's own Christian character, his recognition of his own inadequacy, and his own experience of God. Undertaken in such a manner, preaching served the work of faith that was "God's and not ours."²⁷² Thus, the preaching ministry of the church, he wrote in a pamphlet published by the Presbyterian General Assembly, "is not the creation of men nor even of the Church, but is the creation of Jesus Christ."²⁷³ And it was the preaching of the gospel, in turn, that served to "pave the way" for the Kingdom of God.²⁷⁴ Indeed, true preaching epitomized the Kingdom, insofar as it forsook the spirit of the world and human nature itself, and entrusted oneself to the new spirit of Jesus.²⁷⁵

While Bryden seemed to consider preaching of the gospel to be sufficient for unleashing the Kingdom of Grace in the world, Roberts and Dow portrayed preaching as one part of a more extensive

²⁶⁹Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 123-24.

²⁷⁰Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 66.

²⁷¹Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 70-72.

²⁷²Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 83.

²⁷³W. W. Bryden, "The Christian Ministry (1927)," in Separated Unto the Gospel, Donald V. Wade, ed., 120.

²⁷⁴Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 90.

²⁷⁵Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 72.

effort to implement the Kingdom. Like Bryden, they believed that preaching was the primary mission of the church. By preaching, more specifically, Roberts meant not preaching of doctrine, but the disclosure of a "word of God which is living and active ... and is able to release and enthrone the spirit in the lives of men."²⁷⁶ The significance of preaching lay not so much in what was spoken, but in the mediation of the spirit through the preaching, since the Word preached was a living power which arose out of the living experience of the preacher and went out to encounter the individual hearer.²⁷⁷ In its work of preaching, the Church was like an artist who mediated the mystical to humanity through appeals to the intuitions and instincts of the soul, encouraging the adventure of faith into "the unknown region beyond the land's-end of sense and reason."²⁷⁸

In the belief that the divine spirit "irrupted" into human lives through the historical process, and thus through human action, Roberts and Dow put considerably more emphasis than Bryden on the call to live out the ethic of suffering love, and on a vision of historical moral progress. Ultimately, their call to suffering self-sacrifice was optimistic and perfectionist. Recalling the analogia entis, Dow argued the classic Kantian axiom that ought means can: the fact that man was made in the image of God meant that "the qualities of God can be reproduced by us in this earthly tabernacle. Love, Purity, Truth, Beauty are ours to win as they are God's possession."²⁷⁹ And according to Roberts, the new life kindled by Jesus restored humans to their full spiritual powers, liberating them from tradition to a new life of righteousness and a new community bound no longer by law and force, but by grace, freedom, and the energy of love.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁶Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 194.

²⁷⁷Roberts, The Renaissance of Faith, 225; The New Man and the Divine Society, 206.

²⁷⁸Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 187, 208; The Renaissance of Faith, 234-35.

²⁷⁹John Dow, "The Preacher's Page: Be Ye Perfect," CJRT, Vol. 3, No. 5 (September-October, 1926), 425.

²⁸⁰Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 89-95.

Admittedly, Dow noted, the spirit of Jesus presented an infinite ideal, and thus included a dimension that could be realized only in the future.²⁸¹ Nevertheless, the fact of Jesus' spiritual presence in the now meant that the call to spiritual progress was a power drawing humans into the future. The infinite ideal was thus an eschatological projection into the ambiguity of the present. Quoting A.E. Taylor's The Problem of Conduct, Dow declared that

[t]he distant ideal is the source of our direct mental tortures, and yet without it existence would be unendurable....As moral beings we can never exist without some unreached ideal to serve as a spur to our activity....An end that is to be permanently felt as worth striving for must be infinite, and therefore infinitely remote.²⁸²

Despite this eschatological tension, Dow believed that the example of Christ's actual death on the cross meant that Christianity was not merely an "idealistic ethic to be professed," but an actual life to be lived.²⁸³ Indeed, humanity's moral identity with God should prompt man to "the building within ourselves of a nobler humanity and without ourselves of the City of God."²⁸⁴ And since the spirit of Christ was a moral force upon the will, it should be translated from mere sentiment into real action and "the real life of societies and governments."²⁸⁵ If the Christianity of western civilization in particular was to be authentic, Dow urged, it must abandon its hypocrisy of "lip-homage" to high ideals while perpetuating its capitalist social order, and it must "practice ... voluntary crucifixion in the individual and in the society of men."

With this call to action, Dow and Roberts welcomed new movements, like the English "Christian Order of Politics, Economics, and Citizenship" (COPEC) movement, that worked for the

²⁸¹Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 126-128.

²⁸²Dow, "The Preacher's Page: Be Ye Perfect," 425.

²⁸³Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 207.

²⁸⁴Dow, "The Preacher's Page: Be Ye Perfect," 425.

²⁸⁵Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 223.

infusion of the spirit of suffering love into society. In a clarion call to radical action, Dow claimed that the Kingdom called for the "ardent, zealous spirit of the revolutionists."²⁸⁶ The Kingdom would come only as humans took up the way of the Cross, and took the world by the force, not of armed insurrection, but of a renewed moral passion that was "inflamed by the wrong that round them lies, by the vision of the good to be won, ... following in the footstep of Him who...endured the Cross, despising shame."²⁸⁷

In fact, Dow and Roberts concluded their major works with optimistic moral interpretations of history which claimed that the spirit was breaking forth in the midst of the world, though perhaps inconspicuously because outside the currents of institutions of power. In his description of the British General Strike in the early 1920's, for example, John Dow claimed that British society had been preserved when the multitude of "silent citizens with religious convictions," though sympathetic to the miners, refused to take sides and rejected the methods of violence and civil strife.²⁸⁸ More generally, Roberts' confidence in the moral spirit at the heart of things was a constant theme of his published sermons. Beneath the futility of "natural" life, he suggested in one sermon, one could

hear the sound of the titanic wrestlings and heavings of creation, striving to break its bonds and to regain its freedom....Underneath, it is moving, straining, struggling. There is hope at the heart of things. The universe is not dead but alive. The future is not foreclosed; even now the universe is breaking down the barricades of despair.²⁸⁹

Indeed, the whole course of evolution was the work of "the Eternal Spirit" that was brooding over the face of the primal deep and leading it "out of the wilderness of confusion and seeming frustration into

²⁸⁶John Dow, "The Preacher's Page; Men of Violence," CJRT, Vol. 4, No. 6 (November-December 1927), 524-25.

²⁸⁷Dow, "The Preacher's Page: Men of Violence," 524-25.

²⁸⁸John Dow, "The Preacher's Page: Inconspicuous Religion," CJRT, Vol. 3, No. 3 (May-June 1926), 237.

²⁸⁹Richard Roberts, "The Revealing of the Sons of God," NO (30 June 1926), 4, 25.

the harmony and the peace of God."

Assuming that society was essentially a moral organism, Roberts and Dow expected that spiritual morality would come to permeate social relations. Since the spirit of Christ was a moral ethic of love, it was inescapably social as well as personal. As Dow put it, the Kingdom of God is "Brotherhood with its Godward aspect emphasized."²⁹⁰ As a moral force, Christianity could not, finally, be disentangled from social relations, but rather must direct society toward the true end of life.

While urging this moral idealism, however, they tried carefully to distinguish between moral ends and particular social doctrines that might be reducible to laws. All economic and political doctrines, according to Roberts, were "relative and provisional; in a changing and moving world they must necessarily be so."²⁹¹ Even morals were merely historical discoveries made "upon a strictly empirical basis." The codification of moral laws, though necessary to social life and the inevitable historical expressions of spiritual life, tended to keep society static and at the same time reduce the gospel to law. Such "mechanics" of social life were properly left to politicians and social engineers, but could not be the work of the church, for the church could not commit itself to specific institutions or doctrines of social policy or morality. Rather, its task was to articulate the "regulative spirit and principle" of commerce, government, education, and arts by proclaiming Jesus and the Cross as the ultimate end of life.²⁹²

Indeed, Roberts was convinced that, despite its compromises, the Church already had done much as the standard-bearer of the advance of the spirit in western society through its moral influence in such matters as its opposition to ancient slavery, its provision for charity and hospitality to the sick

²⁹⁰Dow, Jesus and the Human Conflict, 133.

²⁹¹Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 170, 184.

²⁹²Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 169, 185.

and poor, its insistence on a just price, and its interest in education. While jurisdiction over such activities had rightly shifted to governments, the church had lead the way to a more spiritual and humane social evolution by infusing its spirit into society while passing responsibility for working out its implications in historical life.²⁹³ And the modern trend to social democracy and partnership likewise was identical to the church's spirit of fellowship, freedom, and brotherly love. The principle of partnership needed only further implementation by politicians, industrial workers, and other areas of life. Its foretaste, however, was already apparent in church union and the social interpretation of Christianity.

Roberts' hope of moral transformation culminated in a vision of the day when the whole life of the nation would function as the Body of Christ; when

the School, the University, the Workshop, the Market-place, the Studio and the Farm know that they belong to one another and work together in the unity of life in God. 'I saw no temple therein,' says the writer of the Apocalypse. The New Jerusalem will have no temple because it is all temple, a single house of God. We do not see as clearly as we should that it is the business of the Church to make itself superfluous, to disappear as a separate institution, by diffusing its own character and ministry through society as a whole.²⁹⁴

The Kingdom of God was a whole order of life and not an institution. The Church, conversely, was not the whole Kingdom, but rather the guide and inspiration of the Kingdom in history.

Despite such hopefulness, Roberts' and Dow's expectations of moral transformation of society also indicate the ambiguity in their interpretation of the antithesis between spirit and world. Having emphasized the exclusively spiritual and free quality of the Kingdom, the question of precisely how the spiritual "divine society" was to embody that Kingdom in the world remained uncertain. If the divine life of the spirit was located in internal transformation in contrast to legal and moral conventions, and if the divine life was a life of freedom from law and an undefined venture of

²⁹³Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 168-84.

²⁹⁴Roberts, The New Man and the Divine Society, 169.

"creative instincts," its implementation in social structures seemed contradictory. As we shall see further, Roberts was prepared to leave the formal implementation of that spirit in social relations to political scientists and economists without admitting that they or the structured reality with which they dealt had a place in the Kingdom. To be sure, he claimed, economics, as a science of social relations, was rooted in ethical principles. The Church must therefore stand for economic and political doctrines that supported its spiritual ends of personality and human development. For instance, it might favour old age pensions and social security, not merely for their material benefits, but for their effect in liberating people from distractions and physical limitations that hinder full spiritual development.²⁹⁵ Ultimately, however, all law was relative, for the divine spirit could scarcely be articulated in the "earthly terms" of social relations, political and economic laws, or institutional mechanisms. So long as their ethical postulates were consistent with the spiritual mission of the church, "then the Church has no more to say to the economic doctrines which may be formulated nor even to the differences of opinion which may arise concerning them."²⁹⁶

Thus, Roberts' moral idealism and expectation ended in a moral reductionism which suggested that social structures as well as the social sciences were secondary to the Kingdom of God. Ultimately, if the divine spirit was free and juxtaposed against law, then it had no more than a tangential relationship to law, policy, and social structures. In his vision of the new order of freedom, Roberts expected that the coming "superman" would be disciplined by the spirit and the inner essential self, and presumably would be free from law and the structured world.²⁹⁷ John Dow's hopeful analogy illustrated this abstraction of the spirit from social structures brilliantly: like the wireless radio replacing the telegraph, he suggested, the coming age was comparable to a "spiritual wireless"

²⁹⁵Roberts, The Renaissance of Faith, 263-64.

²⁹⁶Roberts, The Renaissance of Faith, 259.

²⁹⁷Roberts, The Renaissance of Faith, 282-94, 314.

which would rely more on the "invisible contact" of spirit and life than on external mechanisms.²⁹⁸

V. Conclusion

The modern Augustinianism developed by Roberts, Dow, Line, and Bryden was echoed in various ways by other mainline Protestant clergymen-scholars in the late 1920's. In his review of Roberts' The New Man and the Divine Society, Ernest Thomas welcomed Roberts' realistic treatment of religion within the processes of the world and his insistence that the task of the Church was not to teach morals in the form of laws and dogma, but to promote a spirit of goodness, beauty, and truth as values and ends.²⁹⁹ Even more importantly for Thomas, Roberts had called Christians back, not to law, but to grace, forgiveness, and worship. Roberts, according to Thomas, had reaffirmed the hopefulness of a world which was not exhausted, but in process,-- a world where God might be found, not in philosophical abstractions, but in the processes of life. Thomas's response suggested especially that Roberts' "idealism in the making" could reinforce a neo-Kantian vitalism which looked forward to the eschatological triumph of the spirit and freedom. By 1928, Thomas had begun to work the ideas of Roberts into his seminars for the United Church conferences, but particularly by recommending the "synoptic" thinking of Sir Arthur Eddington and Alfred North Whitehead, in which "the brooding presence of the whole is felt in all the various parts," and which interpreted social, economic, and political processes in terms of "values and ends" rather than promoting specific moral reforms.³⁰⁰

In a more theological rather than philosophical vein, D. L. Ritchie, of Montreal Theological College, displayed something of the radical mysticism of the new Augustinianism. Ritchie preached

²⁹⁸John Dow, "The Preacher's Page: Vox Clamantis," CJRT, Vol. 4, No. 4 (July-August 1927), 351.

²⁹⁹Ernest Thomas, "Richard Roberts as Theologian," NO (20 July 1927), 15.

³⁰⁰J. A. MacGlashen, "Special Correspondence From the Maritime Provinces," NO (11 April 1928), 15.

passionately about the "revolutionary idealism of Christ," and argued that the Kingdom ethic of service broke as a prophetic vision against a modern social order motivated by the spirit of profit and materialism.³⁰¹ In the light of God's "Word made flesh," it was clear that Christianity must offer both an individual, personal salvation as well as a social gospel that turned "God's grace in Christ" on material and complex social life.³⁰² But he also strictly limited the legitimate role of religion in public and social life to moral and spiritual matters, for the church's "distinctive sphere" was "as a teacher of religion and morals[.]"³⁰³ Warning that they too often had been used to buttress particular economic and political establishments, he urged that churches stand "only as pioneers of the Kingdom of God" and as "buttresses for nothing but righteousness!" The churches must "remain prophetic and refuse to become political. They can conquer the world only from above the world." Ritchie thus suggested that the church's identity must transcend the structures of experience, at the same time serving as "batteries of moral motive power" to infuse the nation with "spiritual energy."

Behind this radical, but strictly spiritual vision of the coming of the Kingdom, was Ritchie's interpretation of Christianity as a "mystical" knowledge of Christ, which he defined as a "direct, synoptic, and synthetic" knowledge of the eternal in the midst of life that was different from scientific knowledge of external phenomena, but nevertheless a knowledge based on the "facts" of Jesus that were demonstrated in the transformed lives of believers.³⁰⁴ According to Ritchie, Christianity offered a permanent gospel of grace beyond historical Biblical forms, and that came to man through "God speaking in Christ" in human conscience. Consequently, the only weapon for the preacher and

³⁰¹D. L. Ritchie, "Is the Church Afraid of Her Lord?" NO, (15 June 1927), 4; D. L. Ritchie, "The Prophet for Today," NO (24 February 1926), 6.

³⁰²D. L. Ritchie, "The Prophet for Today," NO (24 February 1926), 6.

³⁰³D. L. Ritchie, "The Church and Public Life," CJRT, Vol. 3, No. 3 (May-June 1926), 177.

³⁰⁴D. L. Ritchie, "Christian Experience and Theology," CJRT, Vol. 4, No. 5 (September-October, 1927), 430.

teacher was the appeal of the truth of God to other consciences, primarily through preaching.³⁰⁵ The uniquely spiritual role of the church was still the "cure of souls" through preaching that reached the conscience of individuals and fostered a "spiritual biology" rooted in the experience of God in Christ.³⁰⁶ The Kingdom would come only through a change of attitude in individuals, and therefore only through preaching that evoked a "compelling Christ-consciousness" and "a new order of ideals" centred on "Jesus the Christ as the living Lord."³⁰⁷

In their different ways, Thomas and Ritchie demonstrated the continuities and the discontinuities in the efforts of the new generation of Canadian theologians to translate the neo-Kantian distinction between spirit and nature into a modern Augustinianism. While Thomas displayed the eschatological vitalism suggested by Roberts' view of the presence of a distinct spiritual reality irrupting in the world, Ritchie exemplified the dynamic tension between spiritual and natural realities suggested in the new Augustinian mysticism.

Though with significant differences, Roberts, Dow, Line, and Bryden had developed their modern Augustinianism out of several common concerns. In part, their disillusionment with modern culture lead them to a greater emphasis on the reality of human sin and the need for a transcendent, theocentric answer to the tragedy of modern culture. Their search for that answer also was undertaken from the context of an increasingly secularized critical modern thought that put into question the reality of God, and a fundamentalist challenge that claimed to restore the supernatural authority of God and the Bible. In the midst of these pressures, the new generation of mainline Canadian theologians took up the Kantian idealism and the reverent criticism that were entrenched in the

³⁰⁵D. L. Ritchie, "'The Everlasting Gospel.' What is Substance and What is Form in Religion," NO (11 May 1927), 4.

³⁰⁶Ritchie, "The Church and Public Life," 182.

³⁰⁷D. L. Ritchie, "A Gospel for Today," NO (6 April 1927), 4.

Canadian and Scottish progressive evangelical tradition, but pushed them toward new claims concerning a spiritual reality that transcended the structured historical world, but that nevertheless entered eschatologically into experience to transform human life.

Their development of the neo-Kantian apologetic into a modern Augustinianism provided several vital corner-stones of mid-twentieth century mainline Canadian Protestantism. While reclaiming the transcendent reality of God, they did so in a way that preserved the critical experiential perspective and the ontological categories of spirit and external structures that were staples of the Kantian idealist tradition in Canada. As a result, while they could claim a transcendent spiritual reality, they did so without fundamentally challenging the modern scientific interpretation of the historical-structural world. Indeed, while conceding a "mechanical" natural world, they attempted to claim from the premise of modern critical thought a spiritual reality that transcended what they now saw as a secularized historical-structural world, but nevertheless entered apocalyptically into the world of experience. Their insistence on the ontic and unique reality of the divine spirit that was experienced in the life of faith offered the grounds for a rejuvenation of modern Biblical theology understood as the witness of the church to Christ, and also for an existential affirmation of the reality of God against the corrosive relativism of critical historicism. On these grounds, they also could reclaim classic Augustinian doctrines concerning human sin, God's sovereignty and grace, and the Kingdom of God, while casting them into modern terms of psychological, existential crisis and emergent spiritual evolution. Perhaps most importantly for this "crisis generation" anxious about what otherwise seemed a tragic, insensitive, and mechanical world and an increasingly secularized culture, their mystical apocalypticism held out the eschatological hope that both God's spirit, and human freedom, would triumph over what now appeared to be deterministic nature.

In developing their modern Augustinianism, the new generation also completed the post-war trend to disentangling Christianity from its merely "cultural" identity with western civilization, and

suggested the framework for a revised understanding of the relationship between God and the world, and between Christianity and modern western civilization. Like Augustine's depiction of two cities after the fall of Rome, their juxtaposition of God's Kingdom of transcendent grace and a secularized world suggested a new dynamic tension between Christianity and modern western civilization in which modern Christians might prophetically critique modern culture and society in the light of the revolutionary claims of God's Word. Cast as it was in terms of spirit and nature -- whether in the neo-Kantian ontology of Roberts, Dow, and Line, or the more radical existentialist dualism of Bryden -- this interpretation of the antithesis was deeply ambiguous. On the one hand, it assumed that God's transforming Kingdom entered into the world, and so provided a moral norm and eschatological hope from which to critique contemporary civilization. On the other hand, however, it also could abstract Christianity and the Kingdom of God from the structured world and produce, albeit in modern form, a new quietism.

As we shall see in Part II, the emerging recovery of Augustinian doctrines would blossom during the 1930's in more radical departures in at least two directions. First, from his use of Denney's radical evangelicalism in the mid-1920's, Bryden would take up Karl Barth's insistence on the radically exclusive judgment and grace of God. Secondly, their emphasis on the antithesis opened the possibility of a radical Christian criticism of Canadian society and the development of a new social gospel movement, in the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, that would seek to be both revolutionary and yet distinctly Christian.

More immediately in 1928, however, it would become apparent that their neo-Kantian revision of Augustine remained problematic in several ways. First, their claims to the immediate experience of the spirit of Christ remained vulnerable to questions about how that spirit was known, and particularly how it was distinguishable from merely western human values. Secondly, while their juxtaposition of spirit and law aided their struggle to disinvest Christianity from the structures of

western civilization, and thus enabled a more thorough critique of western civilization, it also left unresolved the problem of how a transforming gospel was related to social structures. In the tension between the "law-order" of established structures and the present, eschatological spirit of freedom, their definition of Christianity in terms of spiritual reality left open the question of how the new order of the Kingdom of God was to be implemented. In fact, it seemed to leave the social sciences outside the pale of the Kingdom, while surrendering the structures of society that they participated in to secularization.

Chapter 5:

Christianity and World in Crisis, 1928-34

1928 was a pivotal year for mainline Canadian Protestants who were struggling to sustain an "enlightened evangelicalism," for the year was criss-crossed with new crises that forced modern Protestants to clarify, and to take sides, about the meaning of Christianity for twentieth century Canadian culture. First, the famous 1928 Jerusalem Conference of the International Missionary Council redefined the relationship between Christianity and non-western religions in a way that seemed to some to abandon Christian claims to the uniqueness and universality of Christ. Second, by 1928 mainline Protestants came to admit that their long campaign to reform Canadian society through methods like Prohibition had failed to stem the tide of modern social problems. Indeed, from 1928 on the modern world seemed increasingly bent on social crises of unprecedented scale, particularly in the emerging economic depression and the renewal of international tensions. To add to this impression that modern civilization had become secularized, thirdly, new criticisms of the neo-Kantian apologetic in 1928 by such scholars as Ernst Troeltsch and George Brett sharpened the challenge that historicism presented to "enlightened evangelicalism."

As a result, by the late 1920's mainline Protestants generally conceded, as some had argued since World War I, that western civilization had become fundamentally secular and alien from God's Kingdom. The new crises thus brought home to domestic mainline Protestants the questions faced by soldiers and chaplains during World War I. Though few abandoned their faith as a result of those crises, most advocates of "enlightened evangelicalism" acknowledged the need for a more radical reorientation of their understanding of Christianity and its relation to the world. That reorientation would be stimulated, fourthly, by contact with a new crisis theology, especially in the 1928 publication of the first English translation of Karl Barth's The Word of God and the Word of Man.

In the context of these cross-currents, mainline Protestants completed their translation of the neo-Kantian apologetic to the modern Augustinianism suggested especially by the new generation of scholars that included Richard Roberts, John Dow, John Line, and Walter Bryden. All of these were inducted into their major positions in Toronto churches and church colleges between 1925 and 1927, while the untimely death of William Morgan at Queen's in 1928 brought the end of the Queen's tradition of neo-Kantian liberal Protestant apologetics. Hence the direction taken by mainline Canadian Protestants in response to the crises of the late 1920's would shift from the personal idealism of Morgan, Baillie, and Scott to the modern Augustinian apocalypticism of Roberts, Dow, and Line, and the eschatological evangelicalism of Bryden.

In some ways, this shift was similar to the "great reversal" in which fundamentalists earlier had withdrawn themselves from what they regarded as compromises with "modernist" culture.¹ Mainline Protestants likewise identified God as radically "other" than human culture or ideas, and his Kingdom as a revolutionary movement in conflict with the naturalism and materialism of modern secular culture. Their Augustinianism offered a perspective from which to criticize modern western culture, and to attempt to disentangle Christianity from its currents. But here the analogy ends. While distinguishing God from western culture, most mainline Protestants did not attempt to remove themselves from the structures and institutions of western society to identify with a "remnant" body in a corrupt world, but rather assumed that the gospel must transform the world. Also, though recognizing the incapacity of modern thought to grasp the reality of God, they remained committed to the validity of critical thought for understanding the world and even the Biblical text. Indeed, it was partly their historical self-consciousness and their awareness, informed especially by critical realism in the social sciences, of being entangled in the relativities and matrix of modern culture that

¹See George M. Marsden, Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 61.

necessitated the "inbreaking" of a God who was "other" than human. The dilemma for mainline Protestants during the 1930's, then, became that of differentiating a unique spiritual reality -- of speaking of an "other" God and of identifying the meaning of the gospel and the Kingdom of God - - from within the matrix of a secular world.

As modern Protestants took up claims for a revolutionary gospel and a new understanding of the relationship between God and the world, however, they did so in different directions that would leave them deeply divided by the mid-1930's. More traditional progressive evangelicals would follow Roberts and Dow by continuing to differentiate the divine spirit, and the moral impulse, from social structures, and pursuing a campaign of personal evangelism as the prerequisite to moral regeneration and social reform. In a sharply different variation on this reform impulse, others began to interpret the Kingdom of God as a revolutionary Christian social movement. Walter Bryden, meanwhile, adopted Karl Barth's radical dialectic of God's judging grace over against the natural world.

I. The Jerusalem Council and Foreign Missions

By 1928, the year of the famous Jerusalem Conference of the International Missionary Council, most progressive Canadian Protestant clergymen-scholars had accepted the principles of indigenization of foreign missions and the separation of Christ and culture. Especially in the wake of nationalist rebellions in eastern Asia, Western progressive Protestants hoped that by distancing Christ from a western culture which had discredited itself by its barbarity in world war and colonial oppression, a new ecumenical society might be built on the basis of the universal spirit of Christ. While presented with the "eternal truths" embodied in a universal Christ disentangled from the trappings of western culture, Asian Christians were to be, in Ernest Thomas's words, "free to work out their own synthesis,

according to their own traditions."² This project of presenting a "disentangled" Christ, however, had been challenged by more radical critics who saw any attempt at foreign missions, based on claims to an unadulterated, universal, but exclusive Christ, as a naive form of cultural imperialism and an infringement on indigenous peoples to their own self-discovery.

The tension between claims to the exclusivity of Christ and the universality of religion in human values, and the associated question of the relation between Christianity and western culture, came to a head in the 1928 Jerusalem Conference of the International Missionary Council, in which Canadians participated as members of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America. The Jerusalem Conference was unique, in part because for the first time it aimed to include strong representation by non-Western Christians.³ As a result, the Jerusalem Conference offered a dramatic change in the way that western mainline Protestants understood the church and the relation between Christ and culture.

In a more local sense, it also represented a transition in Canadian Protestantism in that Canada's main representative and reporter to the Conference was Edward Wilson Wallace, marking the shift in Protestant leadership to a new generation whose training and early careers coincided with the turbulence of World War I and the early 1920's. Wallace was the son of a former dean of theology at Victoria College, a veteran missionary of Szechuan province since 1906, and secretary of West China Christian Educational Union. During the 1930's he would begin teaching at Emmanuel College in Toronto, eventually becoming its Chancellor. But in the early 1920's, Wallace professed deep disillusionment with the state of Christianity in the west and the validity of missions. His doubts

²Ernest Thomas, "The Truth About Foreign Missions," New Outlook (NO), 9 December 1925), cited in Robert Wright, A World Mission: Canadian Protestantism and the Quest for a New International Order, 1918-1939 (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 155.

³Kenneth Scott Latourette, "Ecumenical Bearings of the Missionary Movement and the International Missionary Council," in Ruth Rouse, Stephen Charles Neill, eds., A History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1517-1948 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), 369.

arose, he explained, from

an increasing uncertainty of the truth and power of Christianity and a questioning of the validity of its message for man, whether in our land or abroad. This undermining of the faith and fervour of the church people, upon which the great missionary movement had been based, was met by increasing pressure for loyalty to keep going the old causes and the old machinery, a frantic fundamentalism in more than doctrine, an insistence on the authority of the fathers to meet the doubts of an age that had gone astray. But by more and more people the validity of the whole missionary movement came to be questioned. 'We are not sure of the value of the church - or of our religion - here at home: how can we honestly try to sell abroad what is being discarded at home?'⁴

For Wallace, the Jerusalem Conference would bring a new outlook on such questions.

The main theme of the Conference, according to Wallace, was the common world-wide battle of religion against the equally global rise of secularized materialism represented particularly by western capitalism and imperialism. In one paper presented to the Conference, the American mystic Quaker Rufus Jones declared that "[t]he greatest rival to Christianity in the world today is not Mohammedanism or Buddhism or Hinduism or Confucianism but a world-wide secular way of life and interpretation of the nature of things."⁵ While suggesting a new pluralism in the relations between Christianity and other religions, the implications of this assessment also suggested a new definition of the Christian mission to the world. This was the greatest triumph of the conference, according to Wallace:

[i]n former conferences much was said of 'the dark continents,' 'untouched areas,' meaning geographical areas. Of this no word was spoken at Jerusalem. There, the dark continents were those great areas of life in which the spirit of Christ is not yet dominant - modern industry, race relations, secularism, the vast rural populations of the world...So conceived, Canada and the United States and Europe are as much fields for mission activity as Africa, China or India. And the relation of West and East, the former sending and receiving lands, is altered. We are no longer benefactors and they beneficiaries, but all together are sharers in one great adventurous task to rid the

⁴Edward Wilson Wallace, "Protestant Missions Since the Great War," quoted in Wright, 166-168.

⁵Wright, 165. See also Edward Wilson Wallace, "'Who is Sufficient For These Things,' The First Week of the Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Conference," NQ, (16 May 1928), 5, 7.

world of darkness and evil and to flood it with the light of the gospel.⁶

For Wallace and similarly troubled modern Protestants, the Jerusalem Conference suggested a significant change in thought about the relationship of Christianity to the world and its mission in the world. At Jerusalem, it became orthodox to identify the "secular" culture of the modern western world as the main challenge to Christianity. As Wallace concluded, the Jerusalem Conference "may well prove to be the most significant event in the religious life of our time."⁷

Wallace also found at Jerusalem the solution to questions about the finality of Christ and the relativity of historical religions. On this point, he welcomed Robert E. Speer's appeal to the Incarnation to affirm the sufficiency of Christ, but also to reject any single formula for presenting Christ. To proclaim the Incarnate Christ, Wallace reported, meant "to extricate Him from all in modern life that confuses and perplexes; to implicate Him in areas of life where He is not yet implicated; above all to express the message in love and in life."⁸ The gospel was essentially a person and the revelation of eternal life which binds together the whole communion of the saints. Christ was thus sharply distanced from all historically relative and inadequate cultures, and Christians were called both to identify with a distinct Christian universal community and to infuse Christ into all aspects of their local cultures. And since the gospel was God's revelation of himself in Christ, and all truth was united in Christ, the world mission of the church need not fear the discovery of aspects of his truth in other religions, nor hesitate, as Bishop William Temple of Manchester, England argued, to encourage new churches to express the gospel through their own forms, and for their own heritage. Ultimately, Christianity stood for no particular culture but the exclusive Incarnation, and freedom and

⁶Edward Wilson Wallace, "The Pattern on the Mount," Canadian Journal of Religious Thought (CJRT), (July-August 19128), 315.

⁷Wallace, "The Pattern on the Mount," 313.

⁸Edward Wilson Wallace, "'In Him is Life,' Article V: The Jerusalem Conference Considers the Christian Message," NQ, (23 May 1928), 5, 27.

diversity of expression in an "ever-growing and expanding Lord."⁹

The Jerusalem Conference's redefinition of the church and its mission became, almost overnight, a touchstone for mainline Canadian Protestants who were wrestling with the relation between Christ and western culture. Wallace professed to feeling liberated from "antiquated" assumptions. Rejecting the concerns of Barthian critics like Karl Heim that the Jerusalem decisions implied syncretism, he was impressed with preparatory papers that described Asian religions as containing "noble elements," and now felt free to grant autonomy to younger churches.¹⁰ Though Wallace's commitments seemed to maintain the basic liberalism of progressive Protestantism, he now was able to reconcile that liberalism with a frank acceptance of the relativity of all cultures, the finality of Christ as the universal model of spirituality, and the task of infusing that spirit in the social structures of his own context.

As Robert Wright notes, some Canadians, especially among the younger generation of the Student Christian Movement, would interpret the results of the Jerusalem Conference in even more radically liberal terms. Murray G. Brooks, a student participant in the Conference, described the Jerusalem resolutions as an enlightened approach to missions and a "breath of fresh air" to those troubled by missions programmes since the war.¹¹ The resolutions had repudiated western imperialism in non-Christian lands, and they had urged non-Christian religions to hold fast to faith in the unseen and eternal against growing materialism and secularism. Brooks' hope of a united front of religions was based on an interpretation that had reduced Christianity to a vague spirit of freedom. That interpretation would move some members of the new student generation, such as the younger

⁹Edward Wilson Wallace, "'It Seemed Good to the Holy Spirit and to Us,' Article X. The Significance of the Jerusalem Conference," NQ (27 June 1928), 4, 19.

¹⁰Wright, 168.

¹¹Murray G. Brooks, "Students and Jerusalem," Canadian Student (December 1928), cited in Wright, 166.

James G. Endicott, to participate in the Communist revolution in China.¹²

In contrast to this liberal interpretation, the Conference also brought international voice to the Barthian "crisis theology" movement that had grown in continental Europe. Though Barthians like Karl Heim and a minority of student representatives shared the Conference's radical repudiation of western culture, they also feared that commitments to historical relativism and syncretism, as well as the focus on social regeneration and the common religious aspirations of humanity, would distract from God and his work for humanity in Christ.¹³ Similar concerns were expressed by the veteran Canadian missionary E. Stanley Jones in his Christ of the Indian Road (1927):

The more clear the distinction between Christianity and Western civilization is becoming to the mind of India, the more favourably are its people inclined to regard the Gospel which we bring them. And herein lies the hope of all our effort. Christ is winning His way to the hearts of India's millions...¹⁴

Like Endicott, Jones suggested a sharp distinction between Christianity and culture. But like William Manson's view of the humanities, Jones' view of the relative insignificance of all cultures was rooted in his emphasis on the dynamic and sovereign work of Christ. Similarly, in 1931 G. Stanley Russell, who was minister of Deer Park United Church, Toronto, and had been influenced by Reinhold Niebuhr, would write in his The Church and the Modern World (1931) that the west had no "worthwhile religious revelation." Christ was making the kingdoms of the world into the Kingdom of God.¹⁵ Thus some Canadian Protestants would come to share and deepen, under the influences of American and continental European neo-orthodoxy, William Manson's and Walter Bryden's radical juxtaposition of Christ over against all cultures.

¹²Stephen Endicott, James G. Endicott: Rebel Out of China (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).

¹³Edward Wilson Wallace, "'In Him is Life,' Article V: The Jerusalem Conference Considers the Christian Message," NO, (23 May 1928), 5, 27.

¹⁴Quoted in ed., "India's Attitude Towards Jesus," NO, (2 February 1927), 13.

¹⁵Wright, 170-171.

For more traditional post-war progressive Protestants, however, the Conference stimulated a more critical consciousness of their participation in western civilization, and a renewed concern to infuse social relations with the spirit of Christ. As W. B. Creighton argued, the vision of the Jerusalem Conference overcame the struggle between evangelism, social service, and religious education, for it proclaimed that the message of Christianity was to be spoken and done.¹⁶ In following articles in the New Outlook, contributors noted that the Jerusalem Conference left western Christianity itself unable to assume smugness or rest on its conventions, for Christ was now greater than Christianity itself, and called the whole world to renewed efforts to embody him.¹⁷ And in his Moderator's Sermon to the 1928 General Council of the United Church, James Endicott emphasized the revolutionary new definition of the field of missions. The church's mission was not merely a geographical extension of Christ's Kingdom, but more especially its permeation of all areas of life. This mission was to be directed especially to the supposedly Christian west, where politics and business remained "great areas of sin ... in the world." The battle, he declared, was between the Lordship of Christ and the invasion of "secularism" in all areas of life.¹⁸

The debate about foreign missions would continue to echo into the early 1930's, galvanized partly by the 1932 publication of Re-Thinking Missions, a study undertaken by an American laymen's committee chaired by W. E. Hocking to examine the status of foreign missions and especially the problem of declining interest and financial support. In her favourable review of the work, B. Chone Oliver, a missionary doctor working in India under the auspices of the United Church Board of Women's Missionary Society, explained that the study proposed a treatment of Christianity that would

¹⁶ed., "The World Mission of Christianity," NO (11 July 1928), 15.

¹⁷See the following articles in the NO: Ethel Chadwick King, "Echoes From the Dominion Board," (4 July 1928), 17, 27; ed., "Those Untouched Masses," (16 May 1928), 3; ed., "The Jerusalem Council Challenges the Ministry," (27 June 1928) 13.

¹⁸James Endicott, "The Lordship of Christ," NO (19 September 1928), 4, 5, 15.

be inclusive rather than exclusive of other faiths by emphasizing a simple summary of the law, the Golden Rule, the Lord's Prayer, the Fatherhood of God, and the Kingdom of God.¹⁹ Such a proposal, she explained, assumed that God worked through other religions also, so that Christianity should build on these and show Christ as their fulfillment. It also assumed that Christianity should minister to whole persons, so that Christ's healing was not simply a matter of a sermon, but was itself a demonstration of the compassion and righteousness that were at the heart of Christianity. Missionaries therefore should cooperate with any other "forces working for righteousness."

Another reviewer, however, feared the reduction of Christianity to the "religion of the common man," so that it became no more than a common ethical interest or Matthew Arnold's "best that has been thought and said."²⁰ As many scholars were demonstrating, among them Adolf von Harnack and Shirley Jackson Case, the fourth century church also had claimed its affinity with classical, pagan culture, and had compromised Christianity in surrender to the Roman empire. Likewise, modern Christianity risked losing its "moral autonomy;" rather than turning to the pantheistic notion of God as a vague universal spirit, Christianity was called to proclaim all culture to be under the eternal standards of Jesus, and must seek the will of a Personal, transcendent God.

These different views were also evident in a discussion of the report held at Emmanuel College.²¹ Walter T. Brown, principal of Victoria College, essentially agreed with the report, arguing that Christianity should not be brought to other lands as a rival religion. Rather, missionaries should focus on the common view of God held by Christians and others, and elaborate on the uniqueness of Christianity sympathetically when asked. In a slight variation, E. W. Wallace emphasized that mission work should focus on efforts of friendship and sharing of a common task of social service,

¹⁹B. Chone Oliver, "On 'Rethinking Missions,'" NO (18 January 1933), 58.

²⁰C. H. Dickinson, "The Religion of the Modern Man," NO (18 October 1933), 742.

²¹ed., "Rethinking Christian Missions," NO (18 January 1933), 52.

in a way that showed open-ness to the personality of others and witnessed to the fundamental nature of Christianity as righteousness. John Line, however, pleaded for a stronger emphasis on Christ, rather than some universal quality of Christianity or Christ's thought about God. For Line, the central reality of Christianity was Christ himself.

These debates demonstrated two significant developments. On one level, virtually all participants shared the view that God and Christianity must be differentiated from western secular culture and capitalist social structures, and even from any cultural expression of God. At another level, however, they brought to light sharply different views of the meaning of Christianity and the meaning of Christ for the world.

II. The Social Meaning of Christianity

The Jerusalem Council's realignment of the church's mission toward the Christianization of western social structures confirmed the view that many Canadian progressive Protestants had been working toward throughout the 1920's. By the early 1930's, the urgency of transforming social relations was increased by the deepening crises of both domestic and international social relations, as William Creighton indicated in an October 1930 editorial in the New Outlook.²² At home, depression and unemployment had sparked growing nationalist protectionism, as well as labour unrest and communist movements. In international affairs, though the Kellog Pact had been negotiated, League of Nations disarmament talks proceeded only very slowly, while tensions grew between France, Germany, and Italy, and Fascism rose in strength. In the far east, nationalist rebellions had swept across India, China, and Japan. Though Creighton offered no answers to these problems; rather, he presented them as new and profound challenges that pressed mainline Protestants to reconsider their "new evangelism" and the significance of "spiritual experience" for the historical-structural world. In the late 1920's,

²²ed., "Is It Nothing to You?" NQ (29 October 1930), 1048.

as the depression emerged and as international tensions increased, mainline Protestants again began to emphasize the need to transform social relations as central to the mission of the church. But the belief that western culture and social structures had become secularized, and that humanity was indeed sinful, meant that advocates of renewed social reform were less optimistic than earlier progressives and social gossellers of human ability and progress, and more wary of identifying with either the traditions or current secular movements in western society. Their efforts, therefore, would seek a distinctively, and in some cases revolutionary, Christian answer to the social and economic crisis that was emerging by the late 1920's.

Already in 1927, some critics had begun to argue that the focus of the "new evangelism" on personal religion left Christianity an abstraction that was naive about the church's continued complicity in the structures of Canada's capitalist society. In 1927, Norton F. Brand pleaded for an organization of lay men that was not simply a prayer club, nor a "secular social service" club with banquets and finance schemes but no mention of religion. What was needed was an organization that would mediate secular and religious activities.²³ On a similar note, John Line, in his devotional address to the United Church's Maritime Conference, called for a clearer relation of devotional faith to practical life. Christians, he warned, were losing the art of using the moral and regenerative forces of Christianity in meeting practical needs, at a critical time of declining commitment to prohibition and nationalist rebellions in foreign mission fields. "We need a type of prayer life," he pleaded, "that involves a more definite and dynamical content of ethical and religious experience."²⁴ Christian devotion, according to Line, should be expressed in seeking to transform the world.

These pleas accorded well with the ongoing efforts of long-serving social gossellers to revive social activism in the church. In 1927 J. S. Woodsworth urged the United Church to recognize that

²³Norton F. Brand, "The Age of Organizations," NO (30 March 1927), 12, 22.

²⁴"The United Church in the Maritime Conference, Devotional Addresses," NO (6 July 1927), 18.

its campaign for spiritual and moral renewal must have implications for broader social issues. He made his case in response to the 1926 report of the United Church's Committee on Industrial and International Relations, headed by J. W. MacMillan, professor of sociology at Victoria and after 1927 chairman of the Minimum Wage Board of Ontario. That report had supported a minimum wage based on the principle of the "supreme sacredness of human life." Woodsworth pressed the issue further: if minimum wage provided barely enough to live on, leaving workers in poverty and poor health, both individuals and society suffers. In such cases, social matters were both moral and economic.²⁵ Similarly, John Coburn had argued in 1926 that the moral spirit of Christianity should move people to social action, especially to revolt against the autocratic "monarchical" control of business by owners. Coburn called for a new democracy based on Christian principles -- principles which he identified neither with "radical and materialistic socialism" nor with the status quo of capitalism and "commercial warfare," but with the "faithful application of Jesus' principles of brotherhood, fair play and love to all."²⁶

By 1928, however, some mainline Protestants were conscious that such calls for the application of Jesus' principles must take account of the newly-discovered secularization of the society that Christianity now encountered.

This was especially apparent in the new strategy for prohibition that Ernest Thomas and the United Church's Board of Evangelism and Social Service believed was necessary in 1928. The 1926 defeat of prohibition in Ontario signified, Thomas believed, that the old Ontario had died.²⁷ Protestants could no longer rely on a structural manifestation of Christianity through the state. In fact, to impose

²⁵J. S. Woodsworth, "Are Economic Questions 'Moral'?" NO, (19 January 1928), 5, 27.

²⁶John Coburn, "How Can We Make Our Business Safe?" NO (4 August 1926), 21.

²⁷Ernest Thomas, in NO (22 December 1926), 5, cited in Richard Allen, The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada, 1914-1928 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 347.

structural change by legislation on an unwilling public, Thomas had by this time concluded, would itself contradict the spirit of freedom which was central to Christianity. Beginning in 1928, therefore, Thomas worked to develop a strategy for prohibition that was based on "scientifically" respectable educational program to convince the public to freely abstain from alcohol. This strategy complemented Thomas' studies of the person of Jesus; both sought to change people and society by a "spiritual" method that focused on changing people's minds and hearts.

This concern for a uniquely Christian, understood as "spiritual," approach to social problems was also the theme of the 1929 sessions of the Alberta School of Religion. Founded in 1925, the summer sessions of the school were held at St. Stephen's College north of Edmonton. The 1929 sessions, attended by approximately one hundred ministers, were lead by Principal A. S. Tuttle, Richard Roberts, and Lynn Harold Hough, who was Roberts' successor at the American Presbyterian Church in Montreal.²⁸ Throughout the sessions, according to reports, the campaign for prohibition legislation was criticized with the argument that if the time spent on that campaign were devoted to effective teaching of the Golden Rule, the results might be more fruitful for developing a moral spirit that would practice prohibition. In contrast to reform by legislation, the main speakers emphasized the importance of affirming a transcendent God for moral vitality. Religion, Tuttle warned, must preserve its hold on a transcendent deity, lest it "lose a grip on its moral sanction." At the same time, however, Hough and Hugh Dobson argued that the moral vitality of religion must be experienced in practical life, rather than merely in the ritualism that seemed to be the focus of the new evangelism. "[N]o material cross," Dobson declared, could be "substituted for the cross in human experience."²⁹

The twin themes of these criticisms, namely the insistence that Christianity engage practical social problems, but do so from a unique emphasis on transcendent spiritual reality, became especially

²⁸W. H. I., "The Alberta School of Religion," NO (18 September 1929), 964.

²⁹W. H. I., "The Alberta School of Religion," 964.

important given the emergence of a secularized profession of social science and social work by the late 1920's. R. M. MacIvor, who in the late 1920's had moved to Columbia University, demonstrated this trend in a 1931 lecture to the Social Services Department at the University of Toronto.³⁰ According to MacIvor, new social conditions required new methods of social service. The social world no longer consisted of neighbourhoods based on personal relations, but large urban mass society. This new society presented conditions that were beyond local and personal control, but rather required adjustment of the whole system. Though the social worker still needed personal contacts and individual effort, they also needed training for a scientific understanding of whole social systems, including economics. "Undisciplined good will," he claimed, "no longer suffice either for doing or discussing social work -- science and philosophy are essential equipments."³¹

MacIvor's juxtaposition of science with "undisciplined good will" implicitly challenged the reliance of mainline Protestants on a model of personal evangelism and moralism to solve complex social problems, and from the side of professional expertise proposed instead to disentangle science and religion. This advice partially, and ironically, agreed with the growing emphasis of Protestant leaders on distinguishing a transcendent spiritual reality from secular culture, though they did so in the belief that transcendent moral sanctions, as Tuttle had urged, would indeed prove essential for social reform. One example of this Protestant moral concern was E. J. Urwick, who had succeeded MacIvor in Social Work and the Political Economy Department at the University of Toronto in 1927. As Sara Burke has shown, Urwick, like Thomas, had become disillusioned with attempts to institutionalize Christian moral ideals through the "mechanisms" of reform legislation and interest groups already during his work in the Toynbee settlements in England before coming to Canada in 1924. Yet he also resisted MacIvor's subordination of moral ideals and philosophy to social science,

³⁰ed., "Is the Social Worker Obsolete?" NO (1 April 1931), 296.

³¹ed., "Is the Social Worker Obsolete?" 296.

as well as the trend among professionals to a strictly "materialist" rather than an idealist approach to social work. Urwick therefore attempted to preserve a place for distinct moral ideals, and their practical but voluntary application in society.³²

The seemingly countervailing trends in mainline Protestantism and contemporary social science were brought together especially in the work of D. N. McLachlan, General Secretary of the United Church's Board of Evangelism and Social Service (BESS). In 1928, McLachlan began to voice concern about the coincidental abstraction of religion and the secularization of social thought. To the 1928 Social Work Conference in Toronto, he warned that social work was losing its sense of God, and called for a renewal of the role of religion and morality in the social sciences.³³ He also called on Christians to recognize their participation in the corporate life of society, and to take up the holy task of remedying social wrongs, identifying with the poor, and working for brotherhood, and so serving as vehicles of the healing grace of God in the world. Likewise, in the annual report for the BESS, McLachlan noted growing demands to relate evangelism and conversion more effectively to social life. On the one hand, he affirmed that religion had first to do with the relation of the individual soul to God, and that no improved living conditions could satisfy that demand. Nevertheless, Christianity had social as well as individual applications, for the individual lived only in the context of social relations. Christianity, he argued,

speaks not only of something visible in the heavens, but also of something visible on the earth. Therefore, it must be declared anew that the Gospel of Christ offers not only a mystical rapture of soul, but a genuine fellowship among all men, creating a brotherhood where each serves the other, establishing a human family where God is

³²Sara Burke, Seeking the Highest Good: Social Service and Gender at the University of Toronto, 1888-1937 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 120-6.

³³McLachlan's speech to the 1928 conference of the Canadian Association of Social Workers was entitled "The Spiritual Basis of Social Work." See Edith M. Luke, "Our Montreal Letter; Canadian Conference on Social Work," NO, (16 May 1928), 16. See also Allen, 291-291.

Father.³⁴

McLachlan's comments, like the conclusions of the Jerusalem Conference, suggest that something of a turning point had been reached in mainline Protestants' views of the relationship between Christianity and Canadian civilization. While concluding that modern western civilization had become secularized and that the spiritual sources of Christianity must be distinguished from that civilization, they also began to urge a new social mission for Christianity in transforming the structures of "secular" society. That turn began with criticizing the limits of the new evangelism. But precisely what action Christians should take would be a matter of deep controversy as growing international tensions and the depression emerged in the late 1920's and early 1930's.

The revival of a Christian pacifist movement among mainline Protestants at the turn of the decade reflected another example of renewed moral absolutism in response to growing international tensions and frustrations with disarmament and peace talks during the late 1920's and early 1930's. The revival of that pacifism was centered in the establishment of a chapter of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) in Toronto in 1930 under the leadership of Richard Roberts, the Quaker W. R. Firth, the Jewish rabbi Maurice N. Eisendrath, and a membership that included Rev. R. Edis Fairbairn, J. S. Woodsworth, and William Creighton. Roberts had long been active in the FOR, in England and the United States, as well as in Montreal and Toronto. In 1926 he helped to produce The Christian and War, a plea written largely by Montreal church historian William Alva Gifford, and what Thomas Socknat describes as the definitive statement of Canadian pacifism during the interwar years.³⁵

The FOR's "Statement of Purpose" reflected the moral absolutism that Roberts and Tuttle had urged at the 1929 Alberta School of Religion. Its declared intent was to use the self-sacrificing love

³⁴United Church of Canada, Board of Evangelism and Social Service, Annual Report, 1928, "He Shall Reign," Yearbook, 1928, and Record of Proceedings of the Third General Council, 19.

³⁵Thomas P. Socknat, Witness Against War: Pacifism in Canada 1900-1945 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 100-105, 124-7.

of Jesus as the principle for reconciling the "world-wide family."³⁶ While recognizing the reality of evil in the world, the statement declared that the love disclosed in Jesus was "the true basis of society and the effective power for overcoming evil and transforming human life." That love must be worked out in the practical reconciliation of human conflicts, thereby to dedicate human life to the universal Kingdom of God. The reality was, however, that the principle of love was violated by war and by the existing organization of society on the basis of self-interested nation-states competing for material power and profit. In such a world, the members of the FOR were called to be willing to take risks for a way not yet accepted by the world, and seek "through peaceful means such fundamental changes in the spirit of men and the structure of the social order as shall make possible the full expression of love in all human relations."³⁷

During the first years of the 1930's, pacifists like the members of the FOR remained cautiously optimistic. The difficulties of the peace negotiations and disarmament talks at Geneva through 1931 and 1932, according to Creighton, were a test of Christianity in modern western world.³⁸ The example of Ramsay MacDonald's Labour government efforts at peace, suggested Rev. H. D. Ranns of Saskatchewan, displayed the work and hopefulness of "Christian statesmanship."³⁹ MacDonald, according to Ranns, was no "fanatic socialist," but rather a moderate and idealist socialist informed by the Webbs and Fabianism, and also a member of the "kirk." And his acceptance of allied withdrawal from the Rhineland and disarmament negotiations demonstrated his faith in the way of peace. Here was an idealist who was putting Christianity into practice, with "his feet ...on solid earth." And even in late 1931, following the Manchuria crisis and the refusal of Japan to accept the

³⁶NO (18 February 191), 148.

³⁷NO (18 February 191), 148.

³⁸See editorials by William Creighton in NO (4 March 1931), 201.

³⁹H. D. Ranns, "J. Ramsay MacDonald: Man of Peace," NO (29 January 1930), 103.

ruling of the League of Nations, Newton Rowell remained cautiously hopeful that the League, having prevented all out war, might yet serve as a world peacemaker.⁴⁰

By 1933, however, the looming crisis in international relations that followed the deadlock of the 1932 Disarmament Conference and the election of Hitler to a minority government in early 1933 left advocates of pacifism and international security moving in different directions. At a conference of the Canadian Institute of International Relations, held at Hart House in Toronto during September 1933, Newton Rowell presented a choice between totalitarianism and British constitutional democracy. As the world turned to fascist and communist dictators, he argued, the British Commonwealth remained a bulwark of democratic and parliamentary government, rule of law, freedom of speech as well as conscience and religion, equality, and world brotherhood.⁴¹ For others like William Creighton the appearance of Hitler and his radicalization of nationalism left pacifism at a turning point. Hitler's efforts to appoint a loyal bishop and transform the Lutheran Church into a national German church, Creighton warned, raised the question "whether Christianity is stronger than narrow nationalism. Now is the time, if ever, for the Church to show that its loyalty to Christ transcends the emotions aroused by demagogues and militarists."⁴² Creighton, and fellow advocates of a revolutionary Christian socialism, now suggested that the transcendent absolutes of the Christian ethic were radically opposed to the whole nation-state and capitalist system. Pacifism, Creighton declared, must either give up, or become much more aggressive in challenging the structures of modern western society..⁴³

⁴⁰William Creighton cited Rowell's views from a paper given to the Canadian Club, in ed., "The League and Manchuria," NO (9 December 1931), 1164.

⁴¹"The World for a Week: In a World of Dictators," NO (20 September 1933), 675.

⁴²"The World for a Week: Hitler's Goose-Step Religion," NO (19 April 1933), 315.

⁴³ed., "We Must Fight for Peace," NO (23 August 1933), 612.

Creighton's linkage of pacifism with opposition to capitalism pointed to the intersection of pacifist concerns with the profound domestic social crisis brought by the emergence of the depression after 1929. It was especially in their search for an adequate response to this crisis that mainline Protestants realized the alienation of modern society from God's Kingdom, and also developed conflicting interpretations of the meaning and relation of the gospel to modern society.

The debate about a Christian response to the rising economic crisis emerged in the United Church during an AFL-CIO meeting in Toronto in October 7-13, 1929, already before the famous Black Tuesday of October 24, but in a time of growing labour and socialist agitation that had Torontonians speculating about a Bolshevik "Red Scare." While in Toronto, labour representatives were invited to some forty-eight United Church pulpits in Toronto and Hamilton, for the purpose, according to D. N. McLachlan, of building better understanding between the church and labour, and to promote better relations between capital and labour.⁴⁴ Seeking the conciliation of these groups, McLachlan explained that the church's concern with labour was reflected in its 1928 appointment of a Committee on Industry to study economic and working conditions. There was a growing opinion, he claimed, that both labour and capital should exist for service, and must respect above all the sacredness and welfare of personality. The source of problems in industry, he argued, lay with technological development and the mechanization which had crowded out workers, and also "personal and spiritual values." He added that proposals submitted by the Manitoba Conference and sent down to the presbyteries for discussion included a call for cooperation and partnership rather than a "master and servant" in industry, and also urged that profits should be based on service and distributed equitably to avoid unrest and social conditions injurious to public welfare. Those proposals also declared, however, that recourse to class war in order to right economic wrongs was "inconsistent with

⁴⁴D. N. McLachlan, "The American Federation of Labour," NQ (2 October 1929), 1003, 1006.

human brotherhood."⁴⁵

McLachlan's interpretation of the emerging economic crisis as a conflict between spiritual personality and natural mechanism, and his insistence on the primacy of a universal moral brotherhood, demonstrated his combination of personal idealism with the modern Augustinian tension posed by Richard Roberts and John Dow, and also his appeal, like Roberts and Tuttle, to a transcendent God as the grounds of absolute moral principles. To others, however, though they shared the goal of a cooperative economic order, this personal idealism naively ignored the structural relations in society that contributed to problems like unemployment, and that stood in the way of cooperation. The seasoned social gospeller J. S. Woodsworth, for example, argued that the causes of unemployment were systemic to capitalism. It was not merely mechanization, but the capitalists who controlled production, and who in their search for greater profits invested in greater mechanization, that displaced workers. The paradoxical result of capitalism was greater production, but less purchasing power for the masses. Unemployment thus proved the failure of capitalism, for it rendered both wages and profits impossible. Citing a 1930 resolution of the Alberta Conference of the United Church, Woodsworth urged the church to regard enforced unemployment intolerable and called for a fundamental change of the capitalist system through social control of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, and for an order based on cooperation and service rather than competitive acquisition.⁴⁶

Others who supported Woodsworth's arguments linked the problem of unemployment to broader social concerns. In a letter supporting Woodsworth's views and the Alberta Conference's resolutions, Charles Huestis also appealed to the Bolshevik example as both a model and a fearful prospect. Despite its methods, Russia at least accepted the principle of equality: "from everyone

⁴⁵McLachlan, "The American Federation of Labour," 1003, 1006.

⁴⁶J. S. Woodsworth, "Unemployment: A World Problem, Article II," *NQ* (29 October 1930), 1052.

according to his ability; to everyone according to his need."⁴⁷ Liberal-evangelical Christianity, he added, bore a special responsibility for the crisis of capitalism and the prospect of revolution: it must, he declared, "stop dogmatizing about Christianity and stop practicing it as a vehicle of personal salvation only. It must begin the immediate application of it to the anarchy produced in its own moral sanctuary by the existing distribution of industrial and political power." The failure of liberal Protestantism to present, and apply, a truly prophetic gospel that was relevant to the economic crisis, Huestis warned, might end in a period of struggle, bloodshed, and the Russian plan.

In another attack on what seemed the hypocrisy of liberal Protestantism, Rev. Charles Bishop of Provost, Alberta, argued that questions of peace and unemployment were connected in the structures of western society. Unemployment was due to overproduction caused by commercial competition between individuals and nations, and war served as an instrument of commercial competition. Moralistic denunciations of war, therefore, were "banal" so long as an "unrestrained war" for markets and wealth was permitted, and indeed promoted as the sign of patriotism and piety.⁴⁸

To this argument, William Creighton added that the Church should take an interest in the problem of unemployment, despite claims that such economic issues were not the business of the church.⁴⁹ Arguing that the issue involved members of the church who were either employers or employees, Creighton suggested that the church could not be abstracted from the larger social context that its members were part of. Furthermore, he argued, unemployment was an issue of social justice that could not be separated from Christianity. Paul determined to preach "Jesus Christ and him crucified," but was nevertheless led thereby to comment on social issues. Christ was the foundation

⁴⁷Chas. Huestis, "Our Readers' Forum; 'Unemployment and Its Problems,'" NO (26 November 1930), 1153.

⁴⁸Rev. Charles Bishop, "Our Readers' Forum: 'The Great Issue of Unemployment,'" NO (26 March 1930), 306-7.

⁴⁹ed., "The Church and Unemployment," NO (10 September 1930), 874-75.

for human life, including politics and economics, and as he had warned, the church would be judged on its response to the poor and sick.

Though they will require closer examination at a later point, these arguments indicate that the crises brought on by international tensions and the emerging depression opened anew difficult questions about the relationship of Christianity and the gospel to contemporary society. At one level, they confirmed mainline Protestants' belief that western society had become alien from God's Kingdom, while a new emphasis on the transcendent spiritual sources of Christianity provided a standpoint for renewed criticism of that society. Within this trend, however, the different responses of mainline Protestants to those crises represented an emerging conflict that cut especially through the United Church. On the one hand, a nascent Christian socialist movement would urge that the coming of God's Kingdom involved a revolutionary reconstruction of the structures of western society. On the other hand, a revived personal idealist version of liberal-evangelicalism would insist that reconstruction could come only by a divine spiritual transformation of individual human wills. At the center of their differences were questions about the nature of the gospel and the relationship between God's grace in the spirit of Christ and the structured world. Though both would echo aspects of an earlier progressivism, they were decidedly post-war movements that were born out of the perception that modern western society was secularized, and therefore in need of a radical Christianization. This situation, however, presented a predicament for mainline Protestants themselves, for by 1928 it was unclear how one could speak of God at all in the context of modern secular culture.

III. Historicism and the Challenge of Secular Thought

While they stimulated renewed concern with the social mission of the church, both the Jerusalem Conference and the social crises of the late 1920's also indicated that Christian claims to the unique and universal significance of Christ were now widely in question in the broader secularized culture

of western civilization and even among the most thoroughly modernist members within mainline Protestantism. Despite efforts to develop new apologetics, neither the older Queen's neo-Kantianism nor Roberts' vitalist "idealism in the making" had sufficiently challenged or supplanted the anthropocentric, historicist, and naturalist assumptions of critical thought. To the contrary, by 1928 the central claims of the analogia entis and vitalist ontology were themselves eroding under the scrutiny of what was now explicitly secular science and humanism.

Concerns about the secularization of modern thought appeared on several fronts among Canadian Protestants. D. N. McLachlan's response to the secularization of social science has been noted already. For John Dow, meanwhile, the crisis of modern thought came in an article published by Ernst Troeltsch in The Modern Churchman for October 1928 -- an article which seemed to Dow to strike at the crux of Incarnational Christology.⁵⁰ Troeltsch had questioned the validity of claiming a central and unique role for a figure such as Jesus in the vast and uniform causal processes of history. Once more, Troeltsch had pointed to the paradox of human attempts to claim knowledge, defined in terms of critical thought, of God and a unique Christ from within what he assumed to be the causal nexus of experience in the natural world. As Dow concluded in response to Troeltsch, "[o]ur modern age has grown accustomed to thinking in terms of evolution and continuity and it finds it hard to insist on a unique and isolated emergence of the divine occurring in the midst of the historic order."⁵¹

In raising his alert, Dow also linked the challenge of Troeltsch's historicist criticism to currents in contemporary literature that were equally pessimistic about the intervention of God in history and the meaning of human life. J. S. Mill, for example, much earlier had referred to the frustration of man's "loftier aspirations" by the sense that human life was insignificant. And more recently, H. G. Wells had portrayed a God whose power to correct evil in the world was limited --

⁵⁰John Dow, "The Historic Jesus," CJRT, Vol. 6, No. 5 (September-October 1929), 308.

⁵¹Dow, "The Historic Jesus," 308.

a God who was bound to the necessity of the evolutionary process and to human freedom to do evil, and was no more than a Comrade who suffered with humanity in his tragedy.⁵²

By 1930, one could add to Dow's list of skeptical humanists Bertrand Russell's Why I Am Not a Christian (1927), Walter Lippmann's Humanism (1930), and Julian Huxley's Religion Without God (1930). According to one Canadian critic, the attempt of these new humanists to preserve humanism and a variation of traditional moral ideals, but without reference to God and spiritual reality, was self-defeating and could only end in the loss of moral responsibility. Modern humanism, Egerton R. M. Brecken argued, suggested that ideas of God and human sin were the irrelevant and irrational concerns of the undeveloped intellects.⁵³ But if the human soul was a biological accident of a blind cosmos, Brecken countered, then freedom was an illusion and moral distinctions meaningless. If God was merely the "progressive self-realization of cosmic energy, whose only known manifestation is in the intelligence of man," then man is part of God and any moral demands were merely human wishes. In fact, Brecken argued, all people, including humanists like Russell, sensed the tragedy and despair of civilization and were aware of having missed the mark of the high potential of humanity suggested in humanist ideals.

Though still very much in the vein of liberal Protestantism, Brecken's response to the new secularized humanism demonstrated the concern of many mainline Protestants to retain a hold on a unique and transcendent God, as well as a spiritual dimension to human nature, as a necessity for sanctioning a moral order and meaningful human freedom. Similar concerns were expressed by Canadian Protestants in response to naturalist ideas in the social and natural sciences. Frank Leach, United Church minister and occasional professor of Psychology at Manitoba College, came to the

⁵²John Dow, "The Preacher's Page: 'Fellow-workers with God,' and 'Christian Consolation,'" CJRT, Vol. 5, No. 1 (January-February, 1928), 59-60.

⁵³Egerton R. M. Brecken, "Getting Rid of Sin: A Lenten Meditation," NQ (27 February 1929), 233.

same concerns held by Dow, McLachlan, and Brecken. In 1925, Leach had argued that psychology could serve religion by disclosing the mental processes involved in religion and the "therapeutic" value of religion.⁵⁴ By 1928, however, Leach was more wary of the limits of psychology, considering especially William Starbuck's interpretation of religion as the product of adolescent sexual complexes and James Leuba's dismissal of the claims to religious experience as no different than hysteria or drug-induced hallucination.⁵⁵ Likewise, by 1929, Richard Roberts considered the apologetic value of the new physics and natural sciences to have eroded severely. Roberts was especially concerned that recent works by heretofore vitalist philosophers like C. Lloyd Morgan, who earlier had identified God within the evolutionary process, now concluded that such vitalist apologetics left God subservient to the process of emergent evolution and less than the whole of natural reality.⁵⁶ Immanentism, Roberts conceded, was not enough to describe God, for God must also be "other than the process." In fact, he warned, mere immanentism led only to ego-centrism and anarchy.

All of these challenges shared Troeltsch's fundamental claim that human rational inquiry into the historical-structural world could disclose no unique transcendent or supernatural divine reality in the world. As Dow had noted, they thus challenged the heart of Incarnational Christology. Indeed, it was especially on the question of whether historical criticism could affirm the divine in the historical Jesus that the crisis of historicist and naturalist thought hit most closely to home for mainline Protestants.

For those who wrote in the Canadian Forum, the challenge of historicism was resolved rather easily by resolving the story of Jesus into mythology. In his 1927 review of Georg Brandes's Jesus: A Myth (1926) and J. Middleton Murray's The Life of Jesus (1926), both recent works by literary

⁵⁴Frank Leach, "The Preacher and the Psychology of Religion," NQ (4 November 1925), 6.

⁵⁵Frank Leach, "Psychology and Religious Experience," CJRT, 5, no. 1 (January-February 1928), 5.

⁵⁶Richard Roberts, The Christian God (New York: MacMillan, 1929), 82.

critics which treated the Bible as mythological story, H. J. Davis, professor of English at the University of Toronto, exemplified the acceptance of a mythological interpretation of the Christ-story.⁵⁷ While Brandes had concluded that the Bible stories were largely the products of later constructions, and that Jesus never had existed, Davis sympathized more with Murray's argument that the noble stories of the Bible could only be based on the experience of a real person. But these works also reflected the ultimate legacy of Schweitzer's work, Davis argued, in showing that the "merely antiquarian" concern of nineteenth-century liberals for the historical Jesus was unnecessary. Paul and John had no need of the "merely historical" Jesus, for they were content with their own "mystical experience of the living Christ." Davis sympathized with Murray's belief in Jesus based on his own soul's adventurous discovery of "the world's greatest man of genius." Like Rudolf Bultmann in Germany, Davis accepted Schweitzer's "eschatological" interpretation of Jesus's death. Though deluded in his expectation that his martyrdom on the cross would usher in the new age, Jesus' Messianic hope was fulfilled in an unexpected way by "living" in the early church's memory and its belief that he was resurrected. He continued to live, then, in the "legend or myth" of the church, and it was in this living myth of an "immeasurably great Man" that Jesus became real to contemporary believers.

In part, Davis' interpretation of Jesus reflected the emerging crisis of hermeneutics and historical interpretation and the shift in historicism to a self-consciously present and future-oriented positivism. His use of modern critical method to rationalize the historic witness of the church to a unique Christ by stripping it of "impossible" elements that were contrary to uniform natural processes represented the imposition of universal reason over the historically particular and unique and suggested the irretrievability, and perhaps irrelevance, of objective historical events. While Davis conceded that the Christ-story might have originated with the real experience of the "objective presence" of the risen

⁵⁷H. J. Davis, "History or Myth?" The Canadian Forum (CF), 7, no. 81 (March 1927), 273-276.

Christ, he nevertheless was prepared to dispense with the objective historicity of Christ; all that was available to the modern mind was the idea of Jesus in myth. For Davis, the past was vital not as a past reality, but only when it becomes "a present, living symbol as legend or myth."⁵⁸ Here the historicity and impact of Christ's death and resurrection were subordinated to the ongoing function of the living myth of Christ in the present.

S. H. Hooke followed Davis' review in 1928 with one more promotion of Julian Huxley's Religion Without Revelation (1926), and of Alfred North Whitehead's Science and the Modern World (1925). After dismissing the "muddle" of moderate modernists who rejected supernatural miracles yet affirmed the uniqueness of an historical Christ, Hooke declared that in Huxley lay "the only hope, not for colonizing heaven, ... but of a sane and fearless attitude towards the facts of life and of reasonable religion based on a true humility in the face of those bewildering facts."⁵⁹ Hooke concluded with a quote from Huxley confessing an essentially secular religion:

I believe that the whole duty of man can be summed up in the words: more life, for your neighbour as for yourself. And I believe that man, though not without perplexity, effort, and pain, can fulfill this duty and gradually achieve his destiny....I believe in the religion of life.⁶⁰

While advocates of naturalism like Davis and Hooke largely accepted the premises and conclusions of historicism and naturalism, most mainline Protestants followed a course that had been emerging during the 1920's. First, they asserted the limits of critical science itself, and as part of that limit some would point out that all knowledge was historically relative, so as to claim the validity of faith as the prerequisite of theological claims. Second, they sharpened the separation of science and religion that had been emerging especially since World War I. And thirdly, they took up the emphasis

⁵⁸Davis, "History or Myth?" 273-276.

⁵⁹S. H. Hooke, "The Three Taps," CF, 8, no. 88 (January 1928), 602, 604.

⁶⁰Hooke, "The Three Taps," 602, 604.

of Dow, Roberts, Line, and Bryden on a transcendent God who thereby was free from the nexus of natural causes, and who entered the world in the Incarnate Christ.

Perhaps in response to the mythological interpretations of Jesus by writers like Brandes and Murray, more moderate mainline Protestants like Ernest Scott and the editors of the CJRT concluded by 1928 that an impasse had been reached in historical study of the Bible.⁶¹ Critical studies of Jesus once again seemed to reduce him to merely a product of his social and historical context, and historical study now seemed inadequate to disclose the full reality of Jesus. Somehow, the CJRT editor urged, Jesus must be seen as something more, that the study of historical context could not exhaust. In his Studies in Early Christianity (1928), Scott argued that the historical method was limited: while historical study was necessary insofar as "everything in the present is linked up with the past," he warned that historical study of contexts could not finally exhaust the mind, faith, and experience of Biblical persons such as Jesus or Paul. These, the CJRT editor noted, could only be studied "from within."⁶² The editor added that though Christianity believed the divine life was manifested in time, it embodied a "universe of religious and moral values" which lay beyond the field of literary and historical science.

In making this argument, the CJRT editor appealed to the neo-Kantian distinction between spiritual and natural realities as well as between the different kinds of knowing in religion and science. These distinctions had been central in the apologetics of William Morgan, E. F. Scott, and John Baillie. In their defense of a unique spiritual reality, they had claimed a "factual" knowledge of spirit equal to science's factual knowledge of the world, but they did so by insisting on an ontological duality between spirit and nature. As Morgan had argued, science and religion, while subscribing to

⁶¹ed., "Has Historical Study Failed?" CJRT, 5, no. 3 (May-June 1928), 175.

⁶²ed., "The Limits of Historical Study," CJRT, 5, no. 3 (May-June 1928), 175.

the same experiential methods, dealt with different realities and had nothing to say to one another.⁶³ There was no way to relate science and religion together: "[o]f a Christian philosophy we have hardly more than fragments."⁶⁴ But in Morgan's case, the absence of such a philosophy meant that the ultimate nature of the universe remained unanswered.

John Baillie's version of the neo-Kantian apologetic, especially in his The Interpretation of Religion (1928), had appealed to the Italian idealist Benedetto Croce to affirm the inescapable relativity of all judgements of consciousness, and on that ground to the equal legitimacy of claims to religious knowledge:

[b]ut religious judgements being what they are, and making claim to objective truth as they undoubtedly do, it is psychologically an impossible feat, as well as logically a self-contradictory desire, not to make one's own fundamental religious conviction the criterion of religious truth. If we believe them to be true (as we must do, if they are really convictions), then we are, ipso facto, making them the criterion. And, once again, what other criterion is at all conceivable? Moreover, if one does not set aside one's conscience in seeking to surprise the secret of beauty, why then should one have to lay aside one's faith in seeking for 'religious truth'?'⁶⁵

In part, Baillie's argument was a restatement of Augustine's credo ut intelligam, which claimed that faith preceded the judgements of knowledge. But Baillie's efforts to reclaim the validity of faith, the transcendent reality of God, and the presence of spiritual reality from within what Croce had called the "onrushing process" of life was predicated on the distinctly modern awareness of being located within the nexus of historical-structural relations, and on a definition of faith in terms that began, in keeping with Kant's epistemological turn, with the experience of God in human consciousness.⁶⁶ Baillie's hope was that claims to theological knowledge of God, though having its own unique object,

⁶³William Morgan, The Nature and Right of Religion (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clarke, 1926), 116-120.

⁶⁴William Morgan, "Religion and Philosophy," The Expositor, 8th Series, 7 (1914), 452.

⁶⁵John Baillie, The Interpretation of Religion (New York: Scribners, 1928), 122-123.

⁶⁶Ernst Breisach, Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 280-281, 327-28.

would remain consistent with the procedures of critical science.

Through the late 1920's, insistence on both the separation of science from religion and the relativity of all knowledge were woven together in attempts to resolve the problem of knowing the nature of the world and the relation between God and the world. With his new wariness of secular and naturalist interpretations of religion in psychology, Frank Leach, like E. F. Scott in 1924 but also like Baillie, concluded that psychology could only describe the phenomena of religious experiences and their connection to the human psyche, but it could not speak to the claim of a divine object of those experiences.⁶⁷

Ironically, such attempts to limit science and separate religion from it found support among those who, like George Hunter of the Canadian Forum, also sought to liberate science from religion while conceding a moral usefulness to religion. In his "science" column in the Canadian Forum, Hunter noted in 1926 a new humility concerning the limits of science.⁶⁸ Western man, he claimed, had become too self-satisfied with his conquests of nature through science, "congratulating himself as the creator of the drama, whereas he is only the scene-shifter." Despite their long advocacy of modern science, writers in the Canadian Forum, as A. B. McKillop shows, at this time began to warn of the threat of science, technology, and materialism, and identified that threat with American influence in the modern structures of communication and industrial capitalism.⁶⁹ Hunter's concern to preserve a moral order of freedom also led him to propose limits to the claims of science, thus strangely agreeing with Leach, Scott, and the CJRT editors. Science, Hunter argued, could only give information about the data and externals of nature, but not about the value of nature or how we should respond to it. Though it provided much knowledge, science ultimately revealed the measure of human

⁶⁷Leach, "Psychology and Religious Experience," 5.

⁶⁸George Hunter, "Science and Religion," CF, 7, no. 74 (November 1926), 142-143.

⁶⁹A. B. McKillop, Contours of Canadian Thought (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 122-123.

ignorance and insignificance in the Universe. It was appropriate, therefore, that humanity should respond to nature with worship. Religion was still, Hunter argued borrowing from Huxley, a "biological necessity" for the community, especially as it embodied "the so-called moral laws according to which society has regulated its behaviour."⁷⁰ About religion, science had nothing to say, except to verify empirically the extent to which those moral laws helped to preserve society.

Hunter's admission of the limits of science and the independence of religion, albeit understood in terms of a naturalist moralism, still failed to resolve ontological questions about the nature of the universe or the objective reality and presence of God. In a 1929 review of A. S. Eddington's popular The Nature of the Physical World, Hunter summarized the revolutions brought by modern science, especially in electro-magnetic theory, quantum theory, Einstein's differentiation of space and time and his relativity theory, and especially in molecular theory. These developments, Hunter noted, overthrew the Newtonian view of static laws and matter, postulating instead a world in process. But they also left a crisis, since the heart of material reality in atomic structure now eluded science: "the veil is drawn aside from the inner shrine, we find only an elegant differential equation, and a Principle of Indeterminacy. The Snark was a Boojum after all."⁷¹ Physics now worked in a metaphysical vacuum, unable to move beyond its own relative and inferential theories and microscopic measurements to the substance of reality.

Thus, despite agreeing with the independence of "religion," Hunter's argument ended in a secular moralism and an ontological impasse that was far from Baillie's intentions. In doing so, it indicated the dead end of Baillie's apologetic. Baillie's attempt to justify faith and theological knowledge by appealing to the independence of religious knowledge and the inescapable limit and relativity of all human claims to knowledge was self-defeating, for it did not automatically confirm

⁷⁰George Hunter, "Science and Religion," CF, 7, no. 74 (November 1926), 142-143.

⁷¹G. H. "Physics and Metaphysics," CF, 9, no. 108 (September 1929), 418-420.

Christian claims to the reality of God, and in fact lay his claim to the validity of "religious" knowledge open to the charge that it was equally limited and relative.

In his reviews and lectures during the 1920's George Brett pushed the impasse of metaphysics and ontology to its logical conclusion in a full embrace of historicism. In his early 1920's works in reply to E. F. Scott, Brett had argued that science was indeed limited by its historical relativity, and by its ability only to describe phenomena rather than provide total explanations of reality.⁷² As a descriptive exercise, however, science could be applied to all aspects of life, and its method indeed provided a standard of truth for claims about experienced reality. He applied this standard to the attempts of the "new idealism" to claim a metaphysical or spiritual substance in the universe that was known by moral intuition independently of scientific knowledge.⁷³ While conceding the limits of science and its inability to arrive at metaphysical reality, Brett nevertheless argued that the "new idealism" was untenable, for its argument from something which could not be "known" could not validate a positive claim to metaphysical or ontological reality.⁷⁴

In a fuller article in 1926 on the relation of science and modern philosophy in the Canadian Forum's new section on "Science", Brett provided an historical overview of philosophy, as well as a vision of what he took to be the task of philosophy. Kant, he argued, had laid the foundations of modern critical and historical thought in turning philosophy from abstract speculation about the metaphysical essence of reality to problems of the nature of knowledge and the ends and function of the mind.⁷⁵ The implications of Kant's ideas, expressed popularly in Pragmatism, both limited and extended the scope of philosophy. The task of philosophy now was reduced to the analysis and

⁷²G. S. Brett, "Some Beliefs About Psychology," CJRT, 1, no. 6 (November-December 1924), 476.

⁷³G. S. Brett, "A Woman in Philosophy," CF, 3, no. 31 (April 1923), 212-213.

⁷⁴G. S. Brett, "The Evolution of Orthodoxy," CJRT 3, no. 2 (March-April, 1926), 97.

⁷⁵G. S. Brett, "The Philosopher's Stone," CF, 6, no. 72 (September 1926), 370-372.

synthesis of all knowledge from the more limited sciences into a "total interpretation of experience." Though limited, Brett claimed that this approach had the benefit of taking the history and role of the mind seriously as an actual historical reality rather than an abstraction. Here Brett embraced the implications of historicism, arguing that an historical approach to philosophy finally liberated thought from ontological speculation, while it still provided the resources for developing man's understanding, and freedom, within the limits of the historical-structural experience.⁷⁶

It was from this historicist perspective that Brett developed, in a lecture on "Modernism" given to the Clerical Alumni Conference of Trinity College in 1927, a new pragmatic interpretation of religion.⁷⁷ According to Brett, the problem of modern thought was to reconcile the tension between memory of the past and the process of change, particularly in religion. Brett claimed that religion still held a central place in life: like Augustine's credo ut intelligim, Brett affirmed the necessity of belief in order to know reality. But modern thought also had come to see religion as "in the making." It had moved beyond the Protestant struggle to reconcile individualism and law in religion, to the position that though belief was a necessity, no particular statement of belief could be taken as final. In place of external law and authority, the modern model was the experiential "spirituality" of Augustine's Confessions.⁷⁸ In the freedom of the spirit, however, modern religion must admit diversity and new interpretations of truth, in the hope that free expression in time would achieve unity. But no human statement of truth could permanently capture the life of the spirit. "The quest for the philosopher's

⁷⁶For a further discussion of Brett's historical method, see Leslie Armour and Elizabeth Trott, The Faces of Reason: An Essay on Philosophy and Culture in English Canada 1850-1950 (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1981), 430-448.

⁷⁷G. S. Brett, "The Modern Mind and Modernism," CJRT, 5, no. 2 (March-April, 1928), 91-92.

⁷⁸G. S. Brett, History of Psychology, Vol., I, 347-348, cited in John A. Irving, "The Achievement of George Sydney Brett," University of Toronto Quarterly, 14, no. 4 (July 1945), 349.

stone or the elixir of life," he had declared 1926, "has now been cast into oblivion."⁷⁹ Reality could only be known by its consequences. Hence, whatever claims Christianity could make were dependent on its ability to transform lives in the world.⁸⁰ Here was a pragmatic historicism that would press young scholars like Line back to the search for a Christian social revolution.

From his consistently historicized spiritualism, and his repudiation of claims to knowledge of ontological absolutes beyond the merely descriptive function of science,⁸¹ Brett sharply criticized Baillie's The Interpretation of Religion.⁸² According to Brett, Baillie's attempt to prove that religion must have a trans-subjective object had not achieved a "definite result." Baillie's claim that religious values reflected a unique internal experience of a spiritual reality that was nonetheless closed to direct scientific analysis, according to Brett, implied either that what it claimed was merely an hypothesis or dogma which could not be submitted to analysis, or it was subjective experience and so remained unable to "escape from the grip of the psychologist." Furthermore, Baillie's apologetic failed to discuss the problem of evil. Consideration of the reality of evil in social systems and even social norms, Brett suggested, might have forced Baillie to recognize the distinction between the objective reality of God and human morality more clearly. To do so, however, would have destroyed the new apologetic by questioning the assumed validity of moral values and relativizing them. Indeed, Brett argued that Baillie had failed to show that morality was connected to an ontological reality identified vaguely as "goodness at the heart of things." The argument for God on the basis of human values seemed to Brett no more than a naive intuition -- one that could still be interpreted in merely natural terms as the socially sanctioned moral beliefs constructed by the community.

⁷⁹Brett, "The Evolution of Orthodoxy," 99.

⁸⁰Brett, "The Evolution of Orthodoxy," 97.

⁸¹Brett, "A Woman in Philosophy," 212-213.

⁸²G. S. Brett, "'The Interpretation of Religion'," CJRT, 6, no. 2 (March-April 1929), 94.

Brett's critique was significant in several ways. First, he had affirmed the historical relativity of all claims to scientific knowledge, yet he insisted that claims to experience reality must nevertheless be accessible to science. Science, however, was now understood not as the pronouncement of metaphysical or logical absolutes, but as the descriptive analysis of the process of experience. Thus, secondly, Brett also challenged any claims to knowledge of God in any absolute or transcendent identity. In this way, Brett challenged all neo-Kantian apologetics that attempted to move from human consciousness of values to a personal and transcendent God. Such was also the conclusion of Charles Herbert Huestis, Secretary of the Lord's Day Alliance. The new "realist" idealism, Huestis concluded in an article on "What Einstein did to my Mind," failed to offer a new apologetic for the reality of God: "[h]owever much you may attenuate matter, you do not in that way reach spirit."⁸³

Apparently, John Baillie did not entirely disagree with Brett. Already by the time that his The Interpretation of Religion was published in 1928, John Baillie suggested vaguely that his thought was moving in different directions.⁸⁴ And in another article in 1928 Baillie criticized the modern secular humanism, such as that of Walter Lippmann, as bankrupt, for it lacked reference to a transcendent superhuman reality. For Baillie, the Christian belief in a transcendent God had become the pivotal basis of a realistic assessment of the world and the call to moral obedience.⁸⁵ But by now, it seemed, that belief could not claim the support either of science or moral intuition.

In the historicism of the late 1920's, the neo-Kantian apologetic had lost not only its complementary alliance with science, but also its claims to meet the demands of modern critical thought by proving the reality of God from the experience of the spirit in consciousness. It is no wonder, then, that the editor of the CJRT who noted the challenge of historicism also pleaded that,

⁸³Charles Herbert Huestis, "What Einstein Did to My Mind," NQ (10 April 1929), 382.

⁸⁴Baillie, Interpretation of Religion, viii.

⁸⁵John Baillie, "The Predicament of Humanism," CJRT, 8, no. 2 (March-April 1931), 109-118.

though the divine life was manifested in time, it embodied a "universe of religious and moral values" which lie beyond the field of literary and historical science. Thus transcendent divine reality and the historical-structural world were drawn apart, and Morgan's declaration that there was as yet no reconciliation with which to construct a Christian philosophy was confirmed. It also is no wonder that the editor might suggest the Barthian movement as a possible way to face the limits of historical study and yet recover a transcendent God.⁸⁶

IV. The Arrival of Barth and Crisis Theology

The ideas of Karl Barth came to Canadian attention in 1928 in two main ways. First, they appeared as the minority objection at the Jerusalem Conference, and thus appeared as an alternative to the religious pluralism that seemed to be the ultimate outcome of neo-Kantian liberalism. Secondly, it was in 1928 that an English translation of Barth's The Word of God and the Word of Man was published and made widely accessible to Canadian scholars.

In 1928, however, Barth's ideas did not create near the stir that they first did among German liberal theologians in 1917. Throughout the 1920's a new generation of Canadian Protestants, including Richard Roberts, John Dow, John Line, and Walter Bryden, influenced by post-Ritschlian British theology and philosophy in the work of James Denney and H. R. Macintosh, were themselves engaged in the struggle to reclaim a transcendent divine reality that was distinct from the historical and natural world. In a striking coincidence, the ideas of Karl Barth entered Canadian debate precisely at the height of the crisis of historicism and secular thought. As a result, Barth's ideas received, initially, a favourable reception insofar as they offered an answer to the dilemma of claiming knowledge of God from within the limits of modern historical self-consciousness. From their own well-established concerns, however, Canadian Protestants used Barth's ideas selectively and

⁸⁶ed., "Has Historical Study Failed?" CJRT, 5, no. 3 (May-June 1928), 175.

eclectically, mixing them with other "neo-orthodox" ideas from Emil Brunner, Reinhold Niebuhr, and the continuing influence of British scholars. Nevertheless, though they would respond to Barth's ideas in different ways, Canadian Protestants found in Barth a renewed and confident declaration, seemingly liberated from the limits of science and historicism, for a distinctly transcendent God and his radical judgement and grace in the world.

Aside from an allusion to Barth in the CJRT editorial noted above, the first formal reference in Canada to Barth's work appeared with the announcement of the publication of Barth's The Word of God and the Word of Man (1928), translated by the American "realist" theologian Douglas Horton, that appeared in July 1929.⁸⁷ This work was followed in short order with the announcement of Reinhold Niebuhr's Leaves From the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic (1929) in October 1929,⁸⁸ and Emil Brunner's The Theology of Crisis (1929) in December 1929.⁸⁹ Despite a deepening disagreement between Barth and Brunner during the early 1930's, Brunner's work claimed to introduce "Barthianism" to the English-speaking world. In a general way these works offered what seemed, as the Upper Canada Tract Society described Brunner's work, an "orthodox theology adjusted to the facts of modern science without accepting the relativism of modern liberalism."⁹⁰ Arriving together in this manner, these works could readily be lumped together in an amorphous impression of "crisis theology," while actually providing a variety of quite different views.

In 1929, D. L. Ritchie, dean of what was by then Montreal Theological College, offered one of the most comprehensive and receptive introductions of the Barthian movement to Canadian Protestants. Writing from Geneva, Ritchie provided a careful summary of Barth's ideas based on

⁸⁷NO (24 July 1929), 772.

⁸⁸"Among the New Books," NO (16 October 1929), 1050.

⁸⁹"Book Gift Suggestions," NO (11 December 1929), 1292.

⁹⁰"Upper Canada Tract Society," NO (16 April 1930), 384.

Barth's Romerbrief (1917) and his The Word of God and the Word of Man (1928).⁹¹ According to Ritchie, Barth emphasized the total otherness of a holy God, so radically as to suggest an infinite qualitative difference between God and humanity. This difference led to Barth's difficult dialectical style of argument, for no creaturely expression could do justice to God; to the contrary, all flesh lay under God's judging-saving grace. Like Scottish theologians such as James Denney and P. T. Forsyth, Barth declared the need to recognize the full reality of sin as the prerequisite for reclaiming the grace of God. In turn, he emphasized that the church's faith lay, not in merely the person of Jesus or a "crucified and baffled Jesus," but in a risen and triumphantly ruling Lord. He also insisted that the Word of God was not to be found in Biblical literalism, but in the living Spirit which speaks in the souls of believers, making Christian faith a radically new creation and the work of God over against fallen nature.

It was Barth's emphasis on the distinct reality of God that most appealed to Ritchie, who had been a strong advocate of the neo-Kantian personal evangelism and new evangelism of the mid-1920's. Like Luther, he claimed, Barth had answered the disillusionment and unbelief of twentieth century Germany with a new and hopeful word from God. Barth, according to Ritchie, "got back and up to the reality of the holy God, to the reality of sin and to the reality of God's judgment of the world in Christ Jesus."⁹² In an interpretation that fit his own neo-Kantian predilection, Ritchie claimed that Barth had rediscovered, amid the illusions of his time, the two "abiding realities" of "God and a man's own soul." In so doing, he also refused to "lose the Christian religion" in "kultur," "thin humanisms," "facile psychologisms," and the tendency to "make God the product of His creation rather than the Author and Saviour of it." In place of modern subjectivism, historicism, and "theories of social amelioration," Barth had returned Christianity to an objective holy God and his justification

⁹¹D. L. Ritchie, "Barth and Barthianism," CJRT, Vol. 6, No. 5 (September-October 1929), 318.

⁹²Ritchie, "Barth and Barthianism," 318.

of sinful men.⁹³

While acknowledging criticisms of Barth from many sides, Ritchie's own reservations were limited to doubts about Barth's dialectic method and the assumptions that it was based on. He preferred Emil Brunner's further development of the Barthian theology in a way that eased Barth's dialectic. While still a "devastating critic" of all immanence theology, Brunner, according to Ritchie, saw "that an overemphasis on the transcendence of God leaves little room for the grace of God in the Incarnation. Religion, too, while not to be confused with culture, cannot be finally excluded from it. And surely the grace of God must be the foster-mother of a true human culture."⁹⁴

Through Brunner's revisions, then, Ritchie wedded Barth's emphasis on the transcendence and grace of God with his own insistence on the presence of God in the world, epitomized in the Incarnation, and in relation to social morality. "Barthianism," he declared, "at least confronts men with a living God, a holy God, a God who has spoken and speaks, who, as the Christ and His Cross witness, has cared and cares; and it certainly challenges them to think."⁹⁵ With this reading, Barth was seen as reaffirming the neo-Kantian claims for the reality of God, while at the same time recovering classic doctrines of sin and redemption. For Ritchie, Barth relieved a new generation of preachers of the limits of anthropocentrism and mere moralism, offering in place of the "husks of Historical Criticism" a positive gospel message which was the "kernal" of the Word. Barth's theology finally had achieved what the neo-Kantian apologetic had sought all along through human values, namely the reality of God.

Ritchie's sympathetic, though selective, interpretation illustrates how some leading Protestant scholars incorporated Barth's ideas to revive a liberal-evangelicalism that emphasized the Augustinian

⁹³Ritchie, "Barth and Barthianism," 320.

⁹⁴Ritchie, "Barth and Barthianism," 318.

⁹⁵Ritchie, "Barth and Barthianism," 325.

themes of God's transcendent sovereignty and grace and the reality of God's Kingdom entering apocalyptically into the world. Yet this use of Barthianism was particularly Brunner's version of crisis theology. With Brunner's adaptations that defended a "point of contact" between the transcendent God and the world in the human soul and in the Incarnation, Barth could be read as affirming a unique spiritual relationship between God and humanity that now was sharply distinguished from the structured world of institutions and social relations. Through the 1930's, Ritchie, Roberts, Dow, and George Pidgeon would lead the call to renewed personal evangelism that emphasized reliance exclusively on this "spiritual" avenue of divine grace that transcended nature.

John Line's interpretation of Barth moved in a very different direction from Ritchie's. As late as early 1929, Line still claimed in a review of twentieth-century developments in the sciences that the theistic physics suggested by scholars like astronomer Sir Arthur Eddington demonstrated that beneath the mechanical laws and external phenomena of nature lay a realm of free spiritual energy which eluded science.⁹⁶ For Line, vitalism transformed Newtonian, mechanistic views of the world into an organic view of a world in process lead by the impulse of an undefined, free spiritual reality. This vitalism, according to Line, meant that modern humanity no longer lived in a closed universe; to the contrary, it was reasonable to postulate "creative spirit as the foundation of the world," and to interpret evolution as a continuous divine creation or a series of emergents.⁹⁷ It also meant, he claimed, that the real world was "unseen and inscrutable," and could only be disclosed in terms of ultimate moral convictions and analogously to human personality. Here Line suggested that the divine reality lay in a moral order that transcended nature, but that humans, as moral beings, nevertheless encountered within experience.

⁹⁶John Line, "The New Physics and the Religious View of the World," CJRT, Vol. 7, No. 1 (January-February 1929), 6-17.

⁹⁷John Line, "The New Physics and the Religious View of the World," 16.

Line's encounter with Barth came in the midst of his search for the reality of a transcendent God. Shortly after his review of Eddington's interpretation of the new physics, Line reviewed the English translation of Barth's The Word of God and the Word of Man (1928).⁹⁸ Considering his commitment to critical science and vitalism, the radical separation of God and world that he found in Barth's ideas must have been startling. Urging preachers to read the work, Line described Barth as "a fascinating and disturbing writer; his paradoxes fall like sledge-hammers on our conventional and complacent habits of thought."⁹⁹

It was, however, Barth's trenchant criticisms of western society and liberal Protestant religion that Line quoted most extensively. Among the themes that impressed him were Barth's denunciation of the mundane yet radical depravity of the human will and the utter failure of human morality to transform life; his declaration of the judgement of God upon modern capitalism and his call for radical Christian righteousness; and his critique of the liberal, idealist attempt, as in the psychological and experimental approaches of Schleiermacher and Ritschl, to project God from the human mind. Line also noted Barth's renewed Calvinism in his insistence on the chasm between a transcendent God and humanity, and in his portrayal of the crisis which ensued in the confrontation between humanity and God's sovereign will.

Most of all, Line was struck by Barth's proclamation of the eschatological in-breaking of God into human life in order to judge and transform it. As he later explained, from among his ideas Line found Barth's doctrine of eschatological crisis a valuable principle, namely that "God does take sides, things happen in the world of which He is the decisive cause, if the better day is ever to dawn for which good men long, it will be not through human invention and efficiency only, but because God

⁹⁸John Line, "Barth and Barthianism," CJRT, Vol. 6, No. 2 (March-April 1929).

⁹⁹Line, "Barth and Barthianism," 102.

lives and speaks and acts."¹⁰⁰ In fact, Barth's early participation in the "strange prophetic" movement of the Blumhardts who had emphasized the power of God to break into human life and transform it, and in the "religious-social" enthusiasm in Switzerland that had brought Barth to participate in "Religious Socialism," provided a model of revolutionary Christianity for Line.¹⁰¹

As in the case of Ritchie, however, Line's appreciation of Barth was selective. Line acknowledged that Barth's emphasis on the distinction between God and the world, and his view of the eschatological crisis between sinful modern civilization and the judgement and revolutionary transformation of God, provided a much-needed complement to the immanent theology of the day, including Line's own work.¹⁰² But Line rejected Barth's treatment of Christ's work on the cross and in resurrection as "meta-historical;" though it might satisfy those seeking an "aneo-Christology," or a transcendent, other-worldly Christ, Line clearly had little enthusiasm for Barth's super-historical or hidden (Hielsgeschichte) view of Christ and redemption.¹⁰³

While emphatically rejecting Barth's turn to "dogmatics," Line, along with others like Gregory Vlastos, would appropriate Barth's emphasis on the transcendent reality of God, and especially his declaration of radical eschatological judgement on the structured "natural" order of modern society. More specifically, Barth's insistence that God "took sides" in the conflict in the world, and that he was working within the world to judge and transform it, provided renewed urgency for a social gospel movement that was shorn of the optimism and evolutionism of the earlier progressive social gospel. This eschatological judgement upon the social order of modern western society would be the central theme of the Christian socialist movement that Line and Vlastos would help to found, and that would

¹⁰⁰Line, "Barth and Barthianism," 102.

¹⁰¹Line, "Barth and Barthianism," 98.

¹⁰²Line, "Barth and Barthianism," 98.

¹⁰³Line, "Barth and Barthianism," 101.

culminate in the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order and its call for Christian revolution.

Walter Bryden, the rising Presbyterian scholar, found yet a third interpretation of Barth's ideas as a solution to the crisis of historicism and secular culture. Though he shared Ritchie's concern for the renewal of an authentic evangelical Christianity, as well as Line's focus on God's eschatological judgment in history, Bryden also followed Barth's own example of emphasizing the dogmatic confession of God's exclusive initiative in redemptive grace. From his earlier use of James Denney's emphasis on the radical uniqueness of the living Christ, Bryden had rejected the notion of a universal moral "spiritual" reality within the world suggested by Ritchie, and instead had emphasized the sole initiative of divine grace in God's tangential spiritual intervention in human life and experience through the living Christ. In 1929, therefore, Bryden answered the crisis of modern secular and historicist thought with his declaration of the supremacy of God's transcendent spiritual reality.

This declaration was made most clearly in his 1929 Convocation address entitled "The Triumph of Reality."¹⁰⁴ His solution, which included his first published reference to Barth, was essentially a recommendation of Barth's ideas, particularly his description of the wholly otherness and sovereign will of God, which according to Bryden was "the heart and soul of Calvinism."¹⁰⁵ In his recommendation, Bryden presented Barth as answering the modern search for authentic reality. The time was coming, he warned, that people will "listen only to reality and truth," and demand only "the authentic note of that something 'Other' in the soul of the man" which is the product of God's own revelation of himself.¹⁰⁶ Such a revelation, however, involved a revolutionary struggle of self-abandonment to God. As Barth put it, "one must give himself up in order to give himself over to

¹⁰⁴W. W. Bryden, "The Triumph of Reality; An address delivered at the Spring Convocation of Montreal College, 1929," in Separated Unto the Gospel, Donald V. Wade, ed. (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1956).

¹⁰⁵Bryden, "The Triumph of Reality," 135.

¹⁰⁶Bryden, "The Triumph of Reality," 145.

God, that God's will may be done. To do His will, however, means to begin with Him anew. His will is not a corrected continuation of our own. It approaches ours as a wholly other."¹⁰⁷ With Barth, Bryden called for a revolutionary turn of the tables on the anthropocentric perspective of modern thought, and an absolute ontological differentiation between the created order and a transcendent God, in order to admit the real and exclusive initiative of a sovereign God in human experience.

Bryden's interpretation was the most thoroughly consistent with Barth's own views, and Bryden would become the leading exponent of Barth in Canada during the 1930's. Like Barth, he would repudiate calls both to a revival of moral spiritualism, and to Christian revolution. Instead, he would urge an eschatological evangelism in which the church, under paradoxical terms, could only confess and "dogmatically" proclaim the living Word of God.

Despite their different interpretations, these samples of Canadian Protestant responses to Barth illustrate the pivotal, albeit not revolutionary, role of Barth's ideas among mainline Canadian Protestants in the late 1920's. In part, his views confirmed Canadian Protestant perceptions that western civilization had become secularized and alienated from God's Kingdom. Likewise, his confident proclamation of the reality and judgment of transcendent God on human sin seemed to set aside the limits of historicism and naturalism, and to portray faith as a gift of God that was self-evident and justified on its own terms, even if apparent only to the faithful. Indeed, though commitment to the idealist tradition was sufficiently strong to prevent most Canadians from accepting his view of the radical ontological chasm between God and humanity, his emphasis on the distinction between God and the natural sinful world found a receptive audience in Canada and helped Canadian Protestants also to emphasize the tension between God and the world even while they differed profoundly regarding the precise parameters of those terms. Barth's ideas confirmed trends already present in Canada, and encouraged Canadian Protestants in their departure from an older liberal

¹⁰⁷Bryden, "The Triumph of Reality," 135.

Protestantism to new forms of theocentrism that harkened back to Augustine. They did not, however, resolve nagging questions about how God was known, or how his Kingdom was related to the structural-historical world.

V. The Crisis of Preaching

The permeation of these developments into the life of the mainline Protestant communions can be seen in the increasingly urgent crisis of preaching in the United Church. This crisis began to emerge gradually after 1927, during the height of the United Church's "new evangelism" campaign. Beginning as a nagging suspicion of the inadequacy of the latest form of idealist liberal Protestantism, by 1934, confronted with profound crises in modern thought and society, preachers from across the country wondered what they could say about God that would restore faith or change society, or indeed whether it was possible to speak of God at all in a world in turmoil. Thus the crisis of preaching marked a turning point among mainline Protestants. At the same time that they became convinced of the corruption of western culture, they also became disillusioned with what now seemed the inadequate and negative results of its historical criticism, the naive optimism, and the self-indulgence of liberal Protestantism.

In 1928 and 1929, the mystical pietism of the new evangelism was still at its peak. The new aesthetic emphasis in worship, for example, was hailed by Rev. John Moore in 1929 as holding out a spiritual vision of a transcendent ideal that contrasted with the ugliness of industrial society and the "coarse realism" of the modern arts and social sciences.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, advocates of the new church architecture celebrated its ability "to lift men to God by means of architecture."¹⁰⁹ In early January

¹⁰⁸Rev. John Moore, "The Essentials of Life," NQ (3 July 1929), 683.

¹⁰⁹R. P. Stouffer, "The Romance of Church Building," NQ (25 February 1931), 177. In the same issue, Hugh Matheson, of Emmanuel College, offered "Some Considerations on the Divine Art of Church Building."

1929, D. N. McLachlan of the United Church's Board of Evangelism and Social Service reasserted that the Personal Evangelism campaign initiated by the BESS, and spearheaded by Ernest Thomas' encounters with the person of Jesus, was still the "supreme need" of the hour.¹¹⁰

In addition to the comments by Richard Roberts and Walter Bryden noted in Chapter 4, additional criticism of the "new evangelism"'s focus on the experience of spiritual reality came from many different corners, beginning already in 1927 and increasing in intensity with the emergence of such crises as the depression and the growing international tensions that followed failure of the 1932 Geneva arms talks and the rise to power of Hitler. As noted above, Norton Brand's plea for a religious organization that would more effectively mediate secular and religious activities, came already in 1927.¹¹¹ That year, Line also had pleaded in his devotional address to the United Church's Maritime Conference for a clearer relation of devotional faith to practical life that was urgently needed at the present critical time in the demise of commitment to prohibition and nationalist rebellions in foreign mission fields. "We need a type of prayer life," he pleaded, "that involves a more definite and dynamical content of ethical and religious experience."¹¹² Christian devotion, according to Line, should be expressed in seeking to transform the world. These pleas were comparable to the British movement for a Christian Order in Politics, Economics and Citizenship (COPEC) whose proposals, in Bishop Charles Gore's Christ and Society (1927) were noted by F. J. Moore in 1927.¹¹³

In 1928, J. H. Riddell, principal of Manitoba College, issued what was perhaps the most severe criticism of the social naivete of the United Church's "new evangelism." While endorsing the

¹¹⁰D. N. McLachlan, "Realizing God: The Supreme Need," NO (16 January 1929), 78.

¹¹¹Norton F. Brand, "The Age of Organizations," NO (30 March 1927), 12, 22.

¹¹²"The United Church in the Maritime Conference, Devotional Addresses," NO (6 July 1927), 18.

¹¹³F. J. M., Review of Christ and Society, by Charles Gore, CF, 9, no. 102 (March 1929), 216.

need for a "sane, vigorous evangelism," Riddell questioned the focus of that evangelism and the identity of the church. Christianity was supposed to be a gospel of grace for the lost, sick, and sinful, and the church alone could locate the root of social problems in sin and bring the only message of forgiveness and the hope of restoration in Christ. The United Church, however, seemed to lavish its elaborate evangelistic campaigns on, and so identify with, "those who are socially worthy and morally worth while." In so doing, it was "drawing away from sinning, sorrowing and sordid masses of people."¹¹⁴ By withdrawing its efforts to aid and evangelize the poor, the church was losing its ability to create new life in Canadian society, its provision of a caring and accessible social service in contrast to cold government bureaucracy, and the contact between church and poor that should enable the church to be a genuine instrument of grace that drew the poor into the church community. Christianity, he argued, had become "too abstract, too personal, too unsocial, too exclusively confined to the church, the sermon, the ritual, the choir, and the promising attractive people among us."¹¹⁵ It was, by contrast, in serving the poor that the church would create a genuine brotherhood of love and so make Christianity real.

Riddell's comments were a damning indictment of the new evangelism. They also demonstrated the revolutionary potential of a sharpened sense of the antithesis between sin and grace, and between secular society and the church. From an emphasis on divine grace, Riddell called for identification with those in need of transforming grace. And using a social analysis similar to that of Thomas' 1923 critique of the church in the modern world, Riddell declared that the church, for all its attempts to separate religion, could not escape its own participation in the social structures of its context. Religion did not live in the abstract, but in the real structures and processes of the world.

¹¹⁴J. H. Riddell, "The Inclusiveness of the United Church of Canada," NO, (28 March 1928), 8.

¹¹⁵J. H. Riddell, "The Inclusiveness of the United Church of Canada, III," NO, (2 May 1928), 14.

Though similar to the concerns of social gossellers like Coburn and Woodsworth, Riddell's understanding of the world and of the gospel were significantly different. His attack was directed against the optimistic gospel of personalism, and would apply no less to the optimistic progressivism of the earlier social gospel. Riddell's views indicated a new sense that Christianity now lived in a secular and sinful situation, and at the same time held out a vision of the church as a revolutionary counter-community that must have a distinctly Christian approach to social problems.

As both the effects of the depression and the ideas of Barth and Niebuhr began to appear in 1929 and 1930, others reiterated and deepened Riddell's indictment of the compromise of liberal Protestantism with the established order. In a September 1929 article entitled "Confessions of a Near Pessimist," which clearly alluded to Reinhold Niebuhr's Leaves From the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic (1927), E. M. Graham echoed Niebuhr's criticism of the liberal church.¹¹⁶ Despite all its preaching, the church had been unable to change the "politico-socio-economic debacle" that now hung over society. Not only was the church "hand in glove with capitalist oppression," but it was unable, even after the war, to change that entanglement, so that even progressivism was smothered by futility. The church and its membership, it seemed to Graham, lacked the genuine will to deprive themselves for the sake of change, and thus preferred the laissez-faire "God of things as they are."¹¹⁷

Harold Ranns, a United Church minister from Saskatchewan, attributed this ineffectiveness of the church to the lack of an authentic and authoritative gospel in liberal Protestantism itself. After reading Barth's The Word of God and the Word of Man (1928) and W. E. Orchard's The Present Crisis in Religion (1929), Ranns suggested that Canada also was experiencing a crisis of religion.¹¹⁸ Like the declining church participation and the dwindling influence of Christianity that Orchard

¹¹⁶E. M. Graham, "Confessions of a Near Pessimist," NO (11 September 1929), 922.

¹¹⁷Graham, "Confessions of a Near Pessimist," 922.

¹¹⁸H. D. Ranns, "Is There a Crisis in Religion?" NO (19 March 1930), 272.

described in England, Ranns suggested that the church in Canada, too, had become an "adjunct" of people's business or political careers. The reason for this low view of Christianity and the church was due to the lack of authority that was in such contrast with Barth's view of the authority of God's Word in Christ. The church, as Barth had urged, must be less concerned with its organization and activity, and with parroting the formula of "success," and must cultivate its "real" inward life and its "face to face" encounter with the reality of God. It must feel its own need, and it must ask God's question of man, before it could preach God's reply with conviction. Until it could say truly, "Thus saith the Lord," its preaching was an "impertinence."

William Creighton added to this plea for authenticity and authority by pointing out the lack of certainty and conviction in United Church preaching. With tentative sermons on popular themes and questions of the day, the pulpit seemed to have no message that fed those hungry for the gospel.¹¹⁹ The church as well as modern society seemed to be suffering from a bewildering uncertainty about truth, and at the same time seemed unwilling to commit itself to the truth of God.¹²⁰ In a twist on a Christian Century editorial questioning whether Christian missions could be saved, Creighton questioned whether the church at home, satisfied as it was with the status quo, could be saved.¹²¹

According to Rev. John Moore, the uncertainty in religion also resulted in declining certainty about ethics and the weakening of religious sanctions for morality.¹²² The "profound secularization" of modern society was due to a paradox in which modern society in practice assumed that Jesus was dead, and at the same time, trapped in a world of facts and practical achievements, it regarded

¹¹⁹ed., "The Note of Certainty," NO (27 August 1930), 824-25.

¹²⁰ed., "Truth in Religion," NO (4 March 1931), 200-201.

¹²¹ed., "Can the Church be Saved?" NO (19 March 1930), 269.

¹²²John Moore, "The Ability of Christ," NO (21 August 1929), 851.

Christianity as an "impossible idealism" that man must accomplish on his own. This humanist moralism was in striking contrast to the apostles and early church, who saw the reality of their need and sin "beyond their own putting right," and only then realized the power of the cross and resurrection. Only through faith in the risen Christ and their experience of forgiveness did Christ enable them to overcome their failures, transform their earthly existence into higher values, and conquer the ancient world. Likewise, modern Christianity needed, not new church organizations and programs of human effort, but a release of the divine energy of the living Christ. "Not our ability will bring the power! This is a humbling thought for ministers -- not our ability, but the ability of Christ! He is able! We must do our best -- or rather, we must let Him do His best through us."¹²³

This turn from the anthropocentrism of liberal Protestantism to theocentrism, and more specifically Christocentrism, was also the theme of D. L. Ritchie's diagnosis. In pointing out and responding to the search for authenticity and certainty, Ritchie challenged what he saw as the humanism in liberal Protestantism and its sentimental focus on the person of Jesus, and called, like Bryden and Barth, for a recovery of the reality of God and a gospel centered on the living Christ. The pulpit, he warned, could not be reduced to a "public lectureship" for humanistic philosophy, but rather was "a throne for the Word of God."¹²⁴ In Protestant worship, preaching meant God speaking to the people. If people were to be drawn back to the church and a deepened spiritual and wholesome life, the church must offer "ultimate realities," consisting of God's way to man and man's way to God, in its teaching.

No pale Nazarene teaching lovely maxims by the lakeside, whose hope went out and perished before the blast of despair, can lift the churches to the feet of God. There is no hope for us in any form of a variegated humanism. The citadel of Christianity is the gospel of the resurrection. It is that which makes it the power of God unto salvation. If Christ be not risen, our faith is in vain; we are yet in our sins; our

¹²³Moore, "The Ability of Christ," 851.

¹²⁴D. L. Ritchie, "Answering the Challenge," NQ (24 July 1929), 631.

churches are also vanity. No martyred Jesus, but only a victorious Lord, can draw all men to Himself.¹²⁵

The church, he concluded, must teach the truth of the risen Lord, and make that truth "catch the conscience" to make people good.

Ritchie later noted that the challenge and urgency of preaching God's word was magnified by the fact that the church lived in a pagan context.¹²⁶ The church must be alert to the "ceaseless conflict" that must exist between "a living Church and civilization," he warned, lest it lose the power to leaven and transform that civilization. But in the midst of that civilization, it now was difficult to identify a clear gospel to preach. "What are we to preach?" he quoted Henry Sloan Coffin. In a world begging for relief, the church seemed only to offer "a babel of contending voices" and "sectarian shibboleths," or refuge from the problem in "modern artifices and novel inventions." In his proposal for a solution to the problem, Ritchie recommended the Jerusalem Conference's affirmation of Jesus Christ as "the revelation of what God is and of what man ought to be." This Incarnational theology would be prominent in the 1930's. Even with this solution, however, Ritchie warned that the church must not only preach this faith, but it must know it in its own soul, and apply it to demonstrate that it worked to meet the needs of civilization. In short, it must testify to the living Christ by living a Christian ethic and thereby challenging modern pagan civilization. The only answer to religion, he concluded, was to live religion.

When the depression struck especially close to the United Church in 1930 with its failure for the third year in a row to meet its budget for the Missionary and Maintenance Fund,¹²⁷ critics pointed to what they regarded as the outright hypocrisy of a church that lavished its wealth on ornate

¹²⁵Ritchie, "Answering the Challenge," 631.

¹²⁶D. L. Ritchie, "Have We a Gospel?" NO (24 September 1930), 931.

¹²⁷ed., "A Situation of Real Seriousness," NO (14 May 1930), 464.

suburban buildings while neglecting the urban poor and mission needs.¹²⁸ In a "modern churchianity," wealthy congregations had built "mansions to the soul" that seemed to approach a new Gothic ritualism, but in reality such grand mansions were "ornaments" of a stale Christianity. Charles Bishop, writing from Provost Alberta, made similar criticisms, noting a striking lack of proportion in the fact that the United Church had spent forty million dollars on church property since union, but could not raise the fifteen million dollars required for mission work. But furthermore, he wondered whether one could worship in simplicity and genuine Christ-like care for the poor and unemployed in the lavish suburban cathedrals of the soul.¹²⁹

It was this deepening disillusionment with both liberal Protestant religion and its entanglement in a civilization that now seemed utterly pagan that the anonymous rural minister referred to when, in 1933, he questioned whether any religion was adequate.¹³⁰ Confronted by desperate parishioners trapped in hunger and poverty to the point of losing hope, it was not sufficient to piously counsel tranquil trust in God and his Providence. It seemed impossible, in the first place, to transmit "tranquility" to someone in such desperate straits. "What can you say to a man," he wondered, "who is really every day face to face with seemingly insuperable difficulties?" But it also seemed blasphemous and unjust to suggest that such man had not trusted in God sufficiently. "He has trusted in God..." the preacher emphasized; his revolt was not against God, but against the human system which crushed life and confidence in the ultimate victory of good. The problem was not the need for restful trust in God, but the lack of unrest and the failure of religion to move people to do something to transform society. No religion was adequate, the preacher urged, unless it could change despair

¹²⁸L. M. England, "'Our Readers' Forum: 'Glorified Magnificence,'" NO (19 March 1930), 284.

¹²⁹Charles Bishop, "Our Readers' Forum: 'Are We Spending Too Much on Ourselves?'" NO (5 November 1930), 1086.

¹³⁰Anonymous, "Is Any Religion Adequate? Musings of a Rural Minister," NO (15 February 1933), 153.

into hope, bring order out of chaos, appease hunger, and thereby remake human life into divine life.

Together, these comments reflect a deepening search for the reality of God and the "real" meaning of gospel and the reality of God, and in that search mainline Protestants took a pivotal turn during the late 1920's and early 1930's. That turn consisted of neither a lack of social concern, nor, in most cases, a loss of faith in the reality of God, but rather a more intricate and dialectic process. The culmination of critical science in a secularized and naturalist interpretation of human life and the world, and the darkening social context of the depression and international unrest, had undercut the last vestiges of liberal-evangelical appeals to science, the historical Jesus, human conscience, and progress as apologetic supports. The disillusionment of mainline Protestants was first of all with western civilization and its manifest contradiction of God's Kingdom, and in turn that disillusionment extended to the poverty and the entanglement of their liberal Protestant tradition with the social structures and culture of modern western civilization.

It was from this disillusionment that mainline Protestants attempted the difficult task of reclaiming classic doctrines concerning God, sin and grace. Indeed, the recovery of these classic emphases appeared now to be a viable alternative to liberal Protestantism, and offered a transcendent perspective -- a prophetic word from beyond the nexus of western civilization -- as a standard by which to critique the social injustice and the intellectual and moral uncertainty of western civilization. It also suggested an alternative identity for Christianity that envisioned the church as an eschatological community which stood in prophetic tension with the world, and which was called to relate a "real" transforming gospel of God to that world. In short, mainline Protestants attempted to recover the reality of a transcendent God and the church's prophetic witness to the gospel as the only answer to the crises of modern society.

The fact that this attempted recovery of classic Christian themes arose out of self-conscious disillusionment with the modern world, however, meant that it was defined in terms of the modern

dilemma. Hence the relevance of God "for man," the problem of revelation and human knowledge of God, and the manner in which God's grace transformed human life, continued to be the central concerns of mainline Protestants. And these concerns would remain problematic especially as mainline Protestants, even while attempting to recover transcendent grace, continued to assume the validity of modern critical science for understanding the natural world, and remained self-consciously and seemingly inescapably participants in the structures of western society. Hence, a fundamental tension between divine grace and the structures of nature would be a common undercurrent in all variations of the new theology. The rediscovery of transcendent grace provided a new touchstone and starting point for mainline Protestants, but they would develop radically different interpretations of the meaning of that grace, and of how one could speak of it all, in a secular world.

VI. Conclusion: Which Way Christianity?

In his 1930 book Which Way Christianity, the American Christian socialist Harry Ward argued that the modern world was in crisis and inevitably on the road to revolution. Christianity was in the crucible, he urgently pleaded, and must decide how it would identify itself and the Kingdom of God in relation to the crying need of transformation in the world. After 1928, Canadian mainline Protestants increasingly came to a similar conclusion.

As we shall see in greater detail in the following chapters, mainline Protestants in Canada would develop three different, though often intersecting, interpretations of the revolutionary relationship between God's Kingdom and the world. At one level, all three movements shared in the turn after 1928 that identified Christianity with the transcendent reality of God, and interpreted God's Kingdom as an eschatological reality that was in sharp tension with the existing order of western civilization. This juxtaposition of the Kingdom and the world was exemplified in Richard Roberts' continued development of a revised Augustinianism. In his The New Man and the Divine Society

(1926), he described the "Kingdom of Grace" as a revolutionary presence of the transcendent divine spirit which entered the world and was embodied in life of community. By 1929, he would add that Jesus had come "preaching a revolution," a revolution that would come by bringing into the world "a new principle of life, a new scale of values, a new standard of judgement."¹³¹ In another reflection on Augustine in 1930, Roberts claimed that Augustine envisioned the Church as a "world-redeeming city,...a colony established in the world to bring down heaven to earth."¹³² Here he described the church in terms of a two-dimensional axis, or "two lives." On its "horizontal" axis was its life in time and space as an historical institution. But it also participated in a "vertical" relationship, with its eyes turned heavenward in aspiration and prayer, through which it was more than "a mere historical institution," and through which it brought heaven's light into the world. Thus the church mediated between two worlds to bring the revolutionary Kingdom to world.

Roberts' picture of the church at the intersection of transcendent spiritual grace and structured life suggested several themes regarding the relation of the Kingdom of God to secular world that by now were standard among mainline Protestants. First, the Kingdom, and the Christian church, was set in clear tension with the prevailing society and culture of the world. Secondly, that tension meant that the very foundations of modern western culture were in need of radical transformation. At the same time, thirdly, that tension called for a distinctively Christian solution to the world's crisis, -- a solution which could come only through reliance on God's own transcendent initiative and grace. While the different strands of modern Protestantism that emerged through 1930's all shared this view of the Kingdom as a revolutionary reality, they would disagree profoundly, at a second level, about where the lines of revolutionary conflict which divided the Kingdom and the world were to be located.

¹³¹Richard Roberts, "Thy Kingdom Come," NO (25 October 1929), 1069.

¹³²Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour: A Little Commemoration of St. Augustine, II," NO (19 November 1930), 1123, 1138.

The first strand, which dominated the United Church, consisted of the reconstruction of a neo-liberal evangelicalism. Led by Richard Roberts and John Dow, as well as D. N. McLachlan, Ernest Thomas and George Pidgeon, this strand held most closely to the older neo-Kantian idealism while synthesizing it with a modern Augustinianism. According to Roberts, the life of the church at the intersection of two axis meant that one needed personal grace, but that personal salvation could only be experienced and lived in the society of the church.¹³³ For Roberts, the Kingdom of God was a "crisis" to the world insofar as presented the invasion of a new moral principle -- the Christ-like "spirit" of divine love -- which entered into the world through the Incarnation and the life of the church, and transformed the world into a moral community.¹³⁴ At the same time, however, this spiritual community was distinct from the broader structures of natural and social life, and served as the agent for the Kingdom of God in the world solely through moral influence and spiritual transformation. The Kingdom of God, therefore, was a new social order which sprang from the present inward rule of God. Reminiscent of Medieval scholasticism, the neo-liberal evangelical interpretation envisioned a dualist hierarchy in which the grace of spirituality and personality transcended, and ultimately triumphed over, the natural, structured world.¹³⁵

A second strand was the more activist, revolutionary Christian socialism led by a younger generation of clergy and scholars like John Line, John King Gordon, and Gregory Vlastos, who would form the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order after 1931, and also would participate in the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation. It should be noted that this movement was not entirely contrary to Roberts' vision of a revolutionary "spiritual" community. Roberts, in fact was in limited ways a sympathetic, though peripheral participant in the Christian socialist movement, while Christian

¹³³Richard Roberts, "A Little Commemoration of St. Augustine, II," NO (19 November 1930), 1133.

¹³⁴Roberts, The Christian God, 64-65.

¹³⁵Richard Roberts, "The Son of Man in Men," NO (31 December 1930), 1271.

socialists like Line would insist on a spiritualized socialism that contrasted with Marxist materialism. But moreso than Roberts, members of the Christian socialist movement insisted, as did Line in his paper commissioned for the founding of the Movement for a Christian Social Order, that the revolutionary Kingdom of God must be related to policies and the "realities" of a structured world, and must embody God's spirit of love in the structures of a revolutionary social order.¹³⁶ Line and his colleagues combined Barth's idea of the radical disjunction between God and human nature with a critical anthropology that located humanity firmly within the historical and structured world. In doing so, they also moved away from the neo-Kantian ontological identity between God and human personality, and interpreted the spiritual relationship between God and humanity strictly in terms of a moral quality that informed man's whole social life. Thus the revolutionary antithesis could not be understood simply in terms of a conflict between spirit and nature, but rather was a conflict between a social system based on greed in the current system of capitalism and imperialism, and a social order based on the Christian ethic of love. Through the 1930's, advocates of Christian socialism would press the courts of the United Church to declare its condemnation of the capitalist order and its support of the coming Kingdom of God in a democratic-socialist political and economic order, and they also would participate in the League for Social Reconstruction and the establishment of Canadian Commonwealth Federation. As they did so, their differences with Roberts' vision of an exclusively "spiritual" communism became more evident.

The differences between these two positions paralleled the split which emerged between Reinhold Niebuhr and other American Christian socialists like Harry Ward, and it also cut through the United Church as it sought a response to the crises of the early 1930's. Through the Joint Campaign for the Evangelization of Canadian Life, launched in 1933, Roberts, Dow, McLachlan, and

¹³⁶John Line, "Fundamental Unity of Spiritual and Social Religious Values: The Substance of an address Given Before the Toronto Ministerial Association," NO (18 March 1931), 253, 264; and (25 March 1931), 274, 285.

Pidgeon proposed to Christianize society and industry through evangelism and personal moral revival. They also would sympathize with the Oxford Group movement that swept through Canada in 1933. Christian socialists, in contrast, would press the United Church, especially its Commission on Christianizing the Social Order, to condemn capitalism and work toward socialist programs to work out the Kingdom of God in a new social order.

While these debates cut through the United Church, a third, more thoroughly Barthian alternative was developed especially among Presbyterians under the leadership of Walter Bryden. To be sure, other views were present in the Presbyterian Church: the continuing Presbyterian Church after 1925 initially was dominated by conservatives concerned with preserving traditional Presbyterian doctrine and church polity, and in 1933 the Presbyterian Church joined the Joint Committee on the Evangelization of Canadian Life launched in 1933 to promote a revival of spiritual life.¹³⁷ Meanwhile, a small minority of progressives who had remained with the Presbyterian church, including Walter George Brown of Saskatoon, advocated cooperative reforms similar to those demanded by Christian socialists.¹³⁸

Though sharply critical of the middle class identity of modern Protestantism, Walter Bryden repudiated both liberal-evangelicalism and Christian socialism as attempts to build the Kingdom of God by human "techniques" that glossed over human sin and usurped the sovereign grace of God.¹³⁹ Like Roberts and his colleagues, Bryden would emphasize the exclusive reality of divine spirituality. But like Barth, he would emphasize the radical discontinuity between God and natural humanity. For Bryden, the fundamental lines of the battle for God's Kingdom lay between grace and nature, where

¹³⁷Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly, 1933, "Report of the Committee on Evangelism," 105-6.

¹³⁸J. M. Pitsula, "W. G. Brown, 'Righteousness Exalteth a Nation,'" Saskatchewan History, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Winter 1980), 56-70.

¹³⁹Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 248-50; Bryden, Why I Remained a Presbyterian, 164.

grace was the sole work of a transcendent, sovereign, and holy God over against the corruption of natural man and the world. The Kingdom of God would be established despite humanity by the eschatological evangel -- the invasion of the spirit of Christ living in the faithful community of the church set over against, but nevertheless in the world. The church, therefore, could not be permanently linked to capitalism, and the fact of its current entanglement in that social structure indicated that it was not sufficiently spiritual. This situation was an unreal and temporary reality, for the hidden spiritual reality of the church was that of "a great host of humble people who are endeavoring.....to trust and serve God."¹⁴⁰ And true spirituality, according to Bryden, must produce a social ethic that was at once more genuinely personal, but also more radical and challenging than any based on conventional, naturalistic, or idealistic theories, because it was anchored in the reality of God's own love.

Throughout their debates, mainline Protestants appealed to a transcendent divine ground, and to classic Christian doctrines of God's sovereignty and human sin, in order to restore a dynamic tension between Christianity and contemporary western civilization. In the conclusion to his study of the social gospel in Canada from 1914-1928, Richard Allen notes that the decline of the progressive social gospel came with the erosion of a hope that was based on an immanent principle of meaning.¹⁴¹ Indeed, the disillusionment of mainline and modernist Canadian Protestants with that progressive, immanent hope peaked during the period 1928 to 1934 with the culmination of critical thought in a secular and naturalist interpretation of the world, and with the crisis of the capitalist economic and social order. Part of the dynamic of that disillusionment, however, was the gradual recovery during the mid-1920's, and more extensively during the 1930's, of the themes of a modern

¹⁴⁰Bryden, Why I Remained a Presbyterian, 114.

¹⁴¹Richard Allen, The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada, 1914-28 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 355-56.

Augustinianism to assure their faith in God, to make sense of their world which was collapsing around them, and in fact to seek a sharper prophetic criticism of a world which now seemed alien to God's Kingdom.

This reclamation of a transcendent, theocentric orientation was not necessarily an attempt to escape the dilemmas and relativities of human life. To the contrary, while seeking a transcendent Word of God, mainline Protestants remained self-conscious of their involvement within what they understood to be the nexus of the historical-structural order, and likewise they continued to assume the validity of critical science for understanding the "natural" world. As their search for the transcendent reality of God arose from their modern dilemma, so it was shaped by the struggle to grasp how God and his Kingdom were related to and identified in a secular world which seemed to be trapped in a self-sufficient system of natural causes. Hence, the problems of knowledge and revelation, and of how the gospel might transform the tragedy of modern life, remained central concerns to mainline Protestants. Meanwhile, the recovery of a transcendent God raised new hope for the prospect of an eschatological entry of God's revolutionary Kingdom into the world -- a Kingdom, notably, which would redeem society while preserving human freedom in the world. Whether the historical-structural world was to be surrendered to secularization, transformed by human action through the moral impulse of the divine spirit, or subjected to the divine initiative of judgement, remained the central dividing point among Protestants during the Depression-era collapse of western social structures.

FREEDOM AND GRACE:
MAINLINE PROTESTANT THOUGHT IN CANADA, 1900-1960

Volume II

by

Hubert Richard Krygsman, B.A., M.A.

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of History
Carleton University
Ottawa, Canada
June 23, 1997

Copyright, 1997
H. R. Krygsman

Volume II: Table of Contents

PART II: THEOLOGIES OF GRACE AND FREEDOM

Chapter 6: Between Two Worlds: the new Liberal-Evangelicalism	400
I. Spirit and Nature: a New Theology of Grace	402
II. Evangelism versus Revolution	418
III. Church and World	451
IV. Conclusion: the Revival of Liberal-Evangelicalism	479
Chapter 7: Revolutionary Christianity	483
I. Towards the Socialist Fellowship	485
II. The roots of "Radical Religion"	489
III. The Coming Revolution; the Revival of Prophecy	514
IV. The Hope of Revolution	531
V. The Dilemmas of Radical Religion	564
VI. Conclusion	573
Chapter 8: The Reality of Grace	575
I. From Mystical Realism to Barth's Dialectic	578
II. The Word and the World	587
III. The Judging-Saving Word	622
IV. Conclusion	653

PART III: TOWARDS A CULTURE OF FREEDOM AND GRACE

Chapter 9: Nature and Grace: Prospects for a Christian Culture	657
I. The Return to Theology	658
II. The Problem of Christianity and Culture	677
III. Conclusion	708
Chapter 10: The Culture of Grace and the Gospel of Grace	710
I. Instruments of Grace: the Augustinian-Idealist Revival	711
II. The Soul of Culture	725
III. Grace Against Nature: the Neo-orthodox Critique of Culture	743
IV. Conclusion	777
Postscript: "Freedom and Grace" in Post-World War II Canada	780
<i>Bibliography</i>	797

PART II:

THEOLOGIES OF GRACE AND FREEDOM

Chapter 6:

Between Two Worlds: the new Liberal-Evangelicalism

The reconstruction of a liberal evangelical response to crises of the 1930's was rooted in a pivotal change in mainline Protestant thought from the remnants of nineteenth century progressive Protestantism to an emphasis on transcendent grace and the differentiation of God's Kingdom from a secular world. After 1928, the manifest alienation of western civilization from God's Kingdom belied any apologetic based on human moral progress, while the historicist limits of critical thought, as George Brett had demonstrated, challenged any claim to move from human moral conscience to claims about the reality of God. Even Richard Roberts admitted, in 1929, that his vitalist apologetic could no longer confirm the reality of God. Not only did these new realities challenge liberal Protestant conceptions of God, but they also threatened to submerge human freedom and moral responsibility under the fatalism of a mechanistic world.

The answer to these challenges that would come to dominate especially the United Church during the 1930's was the translation of neo-Kantian apologetics into a modern Augustinianism that Richard Roberts and John Dow had begun to articulate already during the mid-1920's. Now, their work turned more fully toward what they claimed was an Augustinian "theology of grace" that included such themes as the transcendent sovereignty of God, the dependence of humans on God's grace for redemption, and the apocalyptic relationship between God's Kingdom and the world. Their interpretation of Augustinian themes, however, was a distinctly modern interpretation that cast Augustine into neo-Kantian terms of personalist philosophy and Incarnational theology, and that defined the tension between God's Kingdom of grace and the world as a distinction between a "transcendent" spiritual reality present in the world, especially in human personality, and natural phenomena.

This neo-Kantian revision of Augustine provided the intellectual framework from which the mainline Protestant establishment, especially in the United Church, defined its response to the crises of the early 1930's. At a foundational level, it enabled liberal Protestants to reconcile a transcendent God with the traditional liberal-evangelical claim that God was experienced within the world, and likewise to reconcile an optimistic view of human nature with a claim to reliance on divine grace. Consequently, though they shared the turn of Karl Barth and Reinhold Niebuhr to a theocentric interpretation of Christianity, their idealist interpretation of Augustinian themes would distinguish the main currents of modernist Canadian Protestantism from both "crisis theology," and less so from Niebuhr's "Christian realism."

Their neo-Kantian revision of Augustine also had profound implications for how mainline Protestants envisioned the nature of a transformed society. Their claim to the transcendent reality and grace of God, and the superior reality of moral spirit, seemed to offer a Christianity that was disentangled from western culture, and that could provide a prophetic moral critique of western civilization. Likewise, the apocalyptic infusion of God's spiritual Kingdom offered the hope that the world might yet be transformed. Nevertheless, their modern version of Augustine would also preserve the ambiguities involved in Augustine's Christian-Platonist cosmology. On the assumption of a distinction between spirit and nature, and a revived analogia entis that identified essential personality with the divine spirit, the revival of liberal-evangelicalism and its incorporation into the agenda of the mainline churches identified religion with the realization of moral spirit, and held out a personalist vision of society that called for the individual freedom, and the economic security, that would enable all persons to realize their true personality. For advocates of the new liberal-evangelicalism, that transformation could only be achieved by relying on God's grace and spiritual methods, while social structures, and the technical sciences and expertise involved in social sciences, were "relative" and subordinate to moral priorities. Evangelism, therefore, rather than social revolution, was the sure and

enduring way to social change.

At its core, the revived liberal-evangelicalism identified the antithesis between Kingdom of God and the world with an ambiguous tension between spiritual and historical-structural realities, and the center of that tension was to be found within the human psyche. The great ambiguity for a revived liberal-evangelicalism, therefore, was the difficulty of living the spiritual Kingdom of God in the temporal world. In the end, despite their hope that moral spirit would penetrate social life, their understanding limited the engagement of God's Kingdom with historical-structural life in the world, and turned, like Augustine, to the hope of the triumph and transcendence of the spirit, and free human personality, over the mechanical world of nature.

I. Spirit and Nature; a New Theology of Grace

In 1929 Richard Roberts described the early church community as a primitive Christian "communism" that embodied a revolutionary, though distinctly spiritual order in which the grace of God's spirit was spontaneously radiated in the lives of believers, including in a "spiritual" economy in which property was disposed of freely to meet the needs of all.¹ In his The Christian God (1929), Roberts claimed that his view of God's Kingdom, which he now began to identify as a "Kingdom of Grace," was rooted in a "theology of grace."² Building on his earlier work in his The New Man and the Divine Society (1926), he portrayed the Kingdom of God as the revolutionary entry of God's transcendent spirit into the world and its embodiment in the life of the church community. In contrast to his earlier idea that the Kingdom would come by human efforts at amelioration, he had discovered that Jesus had come not to improve the world, but to revolutionize it: "He was preaching a revolution, -... and He proposed that this revolution should come by bringing into the world a new principle of life, a new

¹Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; the Spirit of Grace," New Outlook (NO) (22 May 1929), 539.

²Richard Roberts, The Christian God (New York: MacMillan, 1929), 144.

scale of values, a new standard of judgement."³

With this revolutionary but "spiritual" Kingdom of Grace in mind, Roberts urged in another of his ongoing reflections on Augustine that the church be more actively engaged in social reform. Though he still objected to Augustine's notion of the church as a "pilgrim city on its way to heaven," he now suggested that Augustine's ideas contained the idea of the Church as "world-redeeming city....a colony established in the world to bring down heaven to earth."⁴ The Church had "two lives," which he defined in terms of two intersecting axes. On its "horizontal" axis was its life in time and space as an historical institution. But it also participated in a "vertical" relationship, with its eyes turned heavenward in aspiration and prayer, through which it was more than "a mere historical institution," and through which it brought heaven's light into the world. Thus the church mediated between two worlds as the instrument of the revolutionary Kingdom of Grace in the world.

Roberts' description of the church participating in two worlds offered to mainline Canadian Protestants an important new Augustinian vision of the relation between God's Kingdom and the world for a post-Christendom age. The crises of 1928 had left advocates of an "enlightened evangelicalism" with no doubt that they lived in the midst of a secular culture, but also in a quandary about how they might speak of God and his Kingdom in relation to a secularized world. In this context, the ideas of Roberts and John Dow offered a "theology of grace" that, like Barth, appealed to the apocalyptic initiative of a transcendent God, but in keeping with the Kantian tradition insisted that such a God was related to historical life. In order to reconcile God's transcendence and his active presence in the world, they combined the familiar neo-Kantian ontology, now drawing on the "realist" idealism of Alfred North Whitehead, with an Incarnational theology. In doing so, they interpreted the

³Richard Roberts, "Thy Kingdom Come," NO (25 October 1929), 1069.

⁴Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; A Little Commemoration of St. Augustine, II," NO (19 November 1930), 1123, 1138.

tension between God's Kingdom and the world as an apocalyptic conflict between a divine "moral" spirit and the structured "secular" world of nature. This revised Augustinianism mitigated against the absolute chasm between God and humanity posed by Barth, and held out the hope that by spiritual and moral revival through evangelism, society might be transformed, and spirit might triumph over what they assumed was the mechanical world of nature.

The theme of God's transcendent sovereignty was especially evident in Dow's work after 1928. Following his publication of Jesus and the Human Conflict (1928), and in response to the challenge of Ernst Troeltsch's historicism, Dow used his "Preacher's Page" column in the Canadian Journal of Religious Thought (CJRT) to advocate a classic Christian interpretation God's transcendent sovereignty. Citing the work of John Baillie's brother Donald, Dow argued that God only could be God for man when he was seen as transcendent and sovereign, and his Kingdom "far above the changing fortunes of the great campaign."⁵ The Christian hope, he added, lay in a Pauline and Augustinian vision of God's sovereignty over history.

But while asserting God's transcendence, Dow also emphasized, like Roberts, God's activity in history: "[f]rom the beginning," he claimed, "God has been working out a great purpose in the created universe, whose ultimate goal is man, or, more specifically, the brotherhood of man in Christ: this is the meaning of the universe, of its long history and its sore travail."⁶ Dow thus held out what Alistar McGrath identifies as Augustine's "sacred" view of history, both in starting from the premise of faith in the reality of God, and in interpreting history in terms of God's redemptive purpose.⁷ Though Dow did not refer to Barth, his interpretation of God's sovereignty in history was in sharp

⁵John Dow, "The Preacher's Page: 'Fellow-workers with God,' and 'Christian Consolation,'" Canadian Journal of Religious Thought (CJRT), Vol. 5, No. 1 (January-February, 1928), 59-60.

⁶Dow, "The Preacher's Page: 'Fellow-workers with God,' and 'Christian Consolation,'" 59-60.

⁷Alistar E. McGrath, "Augustine of Hippo," Historians of the Christian Tradition, Michael Bauman and Martin I. Klauber, eds. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 83-85.

contrast to Barth's emphasis on the radical chasm between God and the world. Notably, his interpretation of the telos of history reflected a modern revision of Augustine that ultimately, as we also shall see in the case of Roberts, interpreted Christianity as a sanctified humanism.

Despite their increasing emphasis on God's transcendence, both Dow and Roberts described the relationship between that transcendent God and his action in the world in terms of a neo-Kantian ontology. In a 1932 pamphlet entitled "God's Eternal Plan; The Kingdom," prepared for the Kingdom of God movement, Dow described God as the creative will behind the veil of "the apparent meaninglessness of things."⁸ Dow drew particularly on the ideas of British personal idealists like John Oman, and the reverent Biblical criticism of A. B. Davidson and George Adam Smith. The "logos" of John 1, he claimed, was a "pre-Christian" reference to God as the "Divine Reason" or "Will to Love" that was "pushing out into the natural order to give it meaning, coming to "its own" in seeking fellowship with fellow "reasonable beings" until it was fully realized in the flesh in Jesus and the human souls that were penetrated by his appeal. Hence the real significance of the external cosmos was as the "arena for Jesus and the moral Kingdom."⁹

Roberts, meanwhile, adopted the new neo-Kantian "realist idealism" of Alfred North Whitehead in order to give greater emphasis to God's transcendent sovereignty, but yet affirm his active presence in history. In the "theology of grace" that he claimed in The Christian God, Roberts attempted to move beyond the "biological religion" and apocalyptic vitalism of his earlier book, The New Man and the Divine Society, and to sharpen the distinction between the transcendent, eternal God and natural process more effectively. The vitalist apologetic, he now conceded, was no longer tenable, for the efforts of vitalist philosophers to locate God within the evolutionary process seemed to leave

⁸John Dow, God's Eternal Plan; The Kingdom (Toronto: Board of Evangelism and Social Service of the United Church of Canada, 1932).

⁹Dow, God's Eternal Plan; The Kingdom, 2.

God subservient to the process of emergent evolution and less than the whole of natural reality.¹⁰ Immanentism was not enough to describe God, for God must also be "other than the process."

To answer this problem, Roberts employed Whitehead's definition of God as the "principle of concretion." According to Roberts, Whitehead's definition offered a way to understand God as acting upon the process from without, yet as infusing his whole purpose in each event through the "'ingression of eternal objects into particular occasions.'"¹¹ By this principle, each event was the convergence of God working within the process, and on the process from without. Whitehead's conception of God thus admitted the immanent presence of God in directing the "events" of natural processes, yet affirmed a God who stood beyond those processes to give it direction. Or to use Whitehead's language, each event was the "'particular actual occasion' into which the unknown-eternal has in some unique way 'ingressed'."¹²

Though Roberts' use of Whitehead's ontology was intended to assert the transcendent sovereignty and freedom of God to exercise his love in forgiveness, his method also assumed several other points. First, while he made no mention of Barth in this publication, he claimed that his emphasis on a sovereign God could be synthesized with Whitehead's theory of concretion to form a "theology of grace."¹³ Of course, Roberts' use of Whitehead's idealism was nevertheless in sharp contrast to Barth's declaration of a radical chasm between God and humanity. Like Dow, Roberts would insist on discovering the "unknown-eternal" from his self-manifestation in history.

Secondly, while Whitehead's principle of concretion described God's ontic, universal presence in the ordering of creation similar to the concept of a logos-principle, Roberts' use of that principle

¹⁰Roberts, The Christian God, 82.

¹¹Roberts, The Christian God, 83.

¹²Roberts, The Christian God, 84.

¹³Roberts, The Christian God, 144.

was focused on describing God's eschatological entry into the world in redemptive grace. As a result, the status of the natural order remained especially ambivalent for Roberts. More so than Whitehead, Roberts identified grace with a spiritual reality that was distinct from nature, though nevertheless somehow constitutionally part of the world. In particular, he would identify this spiritual reality with the primacy of moral freedom and responsibility, and thus with personality, in contrast to the mechanical world of nature.

As a complement to this version of neo-Kantian idealism, Roberts located a "bridge" between God and humanity in the Incarnation and in human moral personality to constitute the "vertical axis" between God and humanity. Like Dow, Roberts continued to hold to an Incarnational Christology like that which Scottish theologians John Baillie and his brother Donald Baillie would make famous during the 1940's.¹⁴ The Incarnation and its culmination in the cross, Roberts wrote in 1929, was the "'crisis' of this world," for it demonstrated the antithesis between the way of worldly power and the way of God's love for humanity.¹⁵ The cross especially was a revelatory moment of the transcendent and universal reality of God's will to love, and hence the reality of moral spirit. More specifically, it signified God's unique "justice of reconciliation" that surpassed retributory justice by working internally, and therefore cooperatively, to reconcile humans to God through the more divine power of gracious love and unconditional forgiveness.¹⁶ And in doing so, the event of the cross beckoned humanity "to rise above the world of events in time and space into a world of 'values' which recognize no time or space."¹⁷

¹⁴See, for example, Rev. James Brown, "Theologians of our Time; XI. John Baillie," The Expository Times, Vol. 75 (1963-64), 4-9.

¹⁵Roberts, The Christian God, 64-65.

¹⁶Roberts, The Christian God, 136.

¹⁷Roberts, The Christian God, 64.

Roberts' treatment of the Incarnation and cross as a "perennial symbol" of God's eternal will to love suggested the "flattening out" of the uniqueness of the historical event into a universal principal.¹⁸ In contrast to Barth's view of the radical otherness of God and the mysterious hiddenness of his grace, Roberts' appeal to the Incarnation and cross emphasized the disclosure of God's spirit in the world. On the other hand, while certainly not denying the event of the Incarnation and the cross, its historical eventfulness was merely the epitome of a universal moral reality that was continuously present in the world, as in the "principle of concretion." In fact, Roberts' treatment minimized the historical event of Christ and the cross. In 1931 Roberts conceded that little could be known or confirmed about the objective events of Jesus birth and life. In language reminiscent of Albert Schweitzer, Roberts declared that Jesus "came out of the mystery that enfolds us and then passed out of our sight."¹⁹ Humans, Roberts claimed, could not know the larger mysterious reality that was in the universe, and that surpassed measurement and analysis. If the events of Christ's Incarnation could not be known, it was sufficient to conclude that "they ought to have happened," for they confirmed and fulfilled the glimpses of the transcendent Mind that could be had from the order in the world and the hope in human souls.

Roberts thus appears to have abandoned claims regarding the objective historical reality of Jesus. "History," Roberts declared echoing Benedetto Croce's historicism, "is only history when you have lived it over again in your own mind." Until it was relived by historical imagination, history was merely "dead facts."²⁰ Instead of its historic once and for all role, Roberts focused on the existential meaning of the cross. Christianity was "a religion of crisis," not only in Barth's meaning that the world was always under the judgement of God's invading Word, but rather in the sense that

¹⁸Roberts, The Christian God, 64.

¹⁹Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; His Star," NO (16 December 1931), 1195.

²⁰Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; The Gospel at Philippi," NO (23 September 1931), 899, 912.

the claims of God's will in Christ forced a decision on every person regarding how they would respond to God's Kingdom in their life in the world.²¹ This existential focus suggested that the meaning of the Incarnation was a matter of moral intuition rather than "scientific facts" about the historical Jesus.

Although John Dow was far more reluctant to disengage the meaning of Christ from historical reality, his interpretation of the Incarnation also emphasized its function as a symbol of eternal reality. In reply to the threat of historicism, Dow argued that Christianity was more than beliefs centered on the ideal of love, for it claimed a relationship with a real God. The central feature of Christianity was that in Christ God entered into human history. To lose this center was "to miss God just where He comes most near."²² Here Dow reasserted the main argument of his Jesus and the Human Conflict. The significance of Christ was not his teaching, but his Incarnation of the divine spirit through which God spoke at creation and continues "all through history breaking dramatically in" with acts of grace.²³ And contrary to skeptical criticism, the gospel record and the witness of the early church offered a coherent and dramatic history of events which testified to, and could only have been produced by, the unique personality and moral power of Jesus. In turn, the impact of that person on the early church, especially in its commitment to the ethic of redemptive love, demonstrated their experience and conviction of Jesus as a "new fact of history" that presented a unique expression of God's love.²⁴

Though his argument at this point reiterated his earlier work, Dow continued to develop his Incarnational theology in a series of sermons for the CJRT through 1929 and 1930. Centered on a

²¹Richard Roberts, "Christianity at the Crossroads," NO (29 April 1931), 395.

²²John Dow, "The Historic Jesus," CJRT, Vol. 6, No. 5 (September-October 1929), 307.

²³Dow, "The Historic Jesus," 307.

²⁴Dow, "The Historic Jesus," 305.

review of the gospel records, he began to emphasize the risen Christ of John's gospel above the Christ of the Cross or the historical Jesus and his teaching ministry. Whereas the interpretation of the Incarnation in his Jesus and the Human Conflict had been Adoptionist in the sense that Jesus' Messiahship emerged as Jesus and his disciples became conscious of his supreme work, Dow now emphasized John's portrayal of Jesus as the universal risen Christ.²⁵ As he put it in his 1932 pamphlet, man's hope lay in the resurrected Christ: "[s]o long as Jesus was but a Jew confined to earth, hemmed in by time and space and race, he could not be a universal Saviour."²⁶ Like Roberts, Dow suggested that it was not in his particular historical acts, but only as the resurrected, universal spirit that Christ could be "universally available," for only in "breaking the shackles of earth and time" was Christ free to bring God's eternal spirit of love to all mankind. Hence the cross, Dow now argued, was not the end of Christ's work, but rather opened up on the life of the Spirit. Like the early church, which Dow claimed was taught to stop relying on the local Jesus of history so as to set its faith on Christ the Spirit, the gospel called the modern age to move beyond the literal and moral teachings of Jesus and the life of law to a life of freedom in the Spirit of Jesus.²⁷

Dow's Christology here was enigmatic: Christ was a unique Incarnation of spirit that "broke the bonds of earth," but he was also the expression of the "hidden counsel" of God's mind and God's Word that was actively present in constitution of the world. Though similar to Barth's notion of the hidden-ness of Christ, Dow's argument asserted a "hidden" but universally present spiritual reality in the world that bridged the gulf between earth and heaven in a way that did not merely provide a single instance of contact, but that broke the heavens wide open to contact between God and humanity so that God's face might shine from all men's faces. In its revelation of the link between the Incarnation

²⁵John Dow, "The Preacher's Page; Cease Clinging," CJRT, Vol. 6, No. 5 (September-October 1929), 345-46.

²⁶Dow, God's Eternal Plan: The Kingdom, 10.

²⁷Dow, "The Preacher's Page; Cease Clinging," 345-46.

and that universal spirit, he argued, the Gospel of John presented "an outline history of the world from the divine viewpoint."²⁸

Dow's reference to a divine view of history suggested that the "theology of grace" developed by him and Roberts, based as it was on a neo-Kantian ontology and an Incarnational Christology, provided the framework for a revival of moral idealism and a spiritualized, moral interpretation of history. In particular, they located the divine spirit especially in human moral personality, and would juxtapose that inner moral spirit with external law structures. This constitutional identity of humans with the divine spirit was evident in Roberts' response to the Jerusalem Conference. In contrast to the objections of Barthians, Roberts welcomed the Conference's common front of theistic religion against secular culture.²⁹ Referring to Jacob's vision at Bethel, Roberts described the world as having "lost the ladder" to eternity, but he was confident that the "latent power in religion" could turn the tide of secularization. God did not leave himself without a witness in the world, for every person could hear the voice of God calling to return to him. The nature and "inmost secret" of religion, Roberts claimed, included "two coefficient movements, the human aspiration to God, the divine revelation to man," which were never separated."³⁰

Roberts argued the point further in his part of a series of articles on humanism in the Canadian Journal of Religious Thought for 1931. In contrast to articles by John Line and John Baillie which saw the worst in modern secular humanism, Roberts' article, entitled "In Praise of Humanism," defended contemporary humanists like Irving Babbitt and T. S. Eliot. Unlike naturalistic humanists such as Walter Lippmann, he claimed, Babbitt and Eliot affirmed the sacredness of human personality

²⁸John Dow, "The Preacher's Page, By Words," CJRT, Vol. 7, No. 4 (July-August 1929), 339.

²⁹Richard Roberts, "'Jacob and the Ladder,' Sermon Preached at the Reopening after Reconstruction of Sherbourne Church, Toronto, Sunday, November 24, 1929," NQ (11 December, 1929), 1277, 1289.

³⁰Roberts, "'Jacob and the Ladder,'" 1277, 1289.

in a way that seemed open to the superhuman nature of reality and the potential of humans.³¹ In particular, Roberts claimed that their humanism confirmed both the supreme value of humans, and that the structures of society, industry, and politics were made for humanity. On another occasion, Roberts reiterated this view by claiming that the main principle of Christian behaviour was "reverence for personality."³² With its insistence on the primacy of humans over systems and institutions, humanism was not far from Christianity. Indeed, Christ's Incarnation as Son of Man demonstrated that God himself was a humanist.

In part, Roberts' high estimate of humanity derived from his positive emphasis that God's grace was for humanity. In his The Spirit of God and the Faith of Today (1930), Roberts challenged Barth's declaration of God's judging "No" against humanity. The "eternal revelation" of Christ's Incarnation and the fact that the gospel was entrusted to the church, he argued, showed "the everlasting Yes of God" toward man and the world.³³ For Roberts, however, God's "yes" was the affirmation of man's constitution which, though marred, was itself divine. Like Emil Brunner and Rudolf Bultmann, Roberts' high view of humanity suggested that there remained in human nature a constitutional "bridge" toward God.

This assumption of the ontological identity of the divine spirit and human personality was especially evident in both Roberts' and Dow's assertion that the meaning of the Incarnation and the Cross really had two sides: as Dow put it, they were both theocentric and anthropocentric. While the Incarnation was "the story of a divine seeking" after humanity by incarnating in the flesh the Graciousness and Truth of God, it was also the story of the human quest for renewal and a messiah

³¹Richard Roberts, "In Praise of Humanism," CJRT, Vol. 8, No. 2 (March-April 1931), 124.

³²Richard Roberts, "The Son of Man in Men," NQ (31 December 1930), 1271.

³³Richard Roberts, The Spirit of God and the Faith of Today (Chicago: Willett, Clark & Corby, 1930), 174.

king.³⁴ In classic theological terms, this two-sided meaning was a semi-Pelagian interpretation whereby grace involved the cooperation between God and humans. And as Roberts claimed, the two sides of the Incarnation affirmed the essential identity of humanity and divinity, so that Christ was to be seen in one's fellow men, and the Kingdom of God was also the Kingdom of Man.³⁵ Ultimately, Christianity was therefore a spiritualized and sanctified humanism, and the practice of Christianity was epitomized in a morality centered on reverence for human personality.

It was in terms of this moral idealism, and particularly Whitehead's process of concretion, that Roberts envisioned the Kingdom of God as an apocalyptic invasion of the divine moral order into the world. In his The Christian God (1929), Roberts described the Kingdom of God as a "crisis" to the world insofar as it was the invasion of a new moral principle -- the eternal Christ-like "spirit" of divine love -- which entered into the world through the Incarnation and the life of the church, and transformed the world into a moral community.³⁶ Contrary to earlier ameliorative views that assumed that humans could progressively establish the Kingdom on earth, Roberts emphasized now that the Kingdom was a gift from God. As such, it was first of all a distinctly spiritual order, in contrast to what Roberts claimed was the materialist assumptions and power methods of Marxist communism.³⁷ The spiritual Kingdom of Grace, epitomized in the New Testament primitive church, was a Christian community in which the grace of God's spirit was spontaneously radiated in the lives of believers. New Testament communism was not first an economic policy, according to Roberts, for it was "grown from within," and grown "by grace," by the Holy Spirit. This inner transformation

³⁴John Dow, "The Preacher's Page; 'Fellow-workers with God,' and 'Christian Consolation,'" CJRT, Vol. 5, No. 1 (January-February, 1928), 59-60.

³⁵Roberts, "The Quiet Hour: The Spirit of Grace," 539.

³⁶Roberts, The Christian God, 64-65.

³⁷Roberts, "The Quiet Hour: the Spirit of Grace," 539.

produced a new attitude in which material property was subordinated to moral ends like the higher service of human personality.³⁸ Thus the spiritual Kingdom was also the triumph of God's grace and spirit over material nature.

Roberts' interpretation of the inbreaking eternal spirit also led him to an existentialist revision of Augustine's amillennialism which portrayed the Kingdom of God as an immediate, present reality. In his sermons of this period, Roberts declared that advent and judgement were always present. Jesus comes not just at the end of time, he declared, but is "always coming to his people" in "perpetual immanence of the Son of Man."³⁹ Jesus was "always coming in judgement....The court is, in fact, already in session. The day of judgement is now."⁴⁰ Since the Kingdom of God was a present eternal reality, the judgement and redemption of the Advent was to be experienced in the present, particularly in the quality of the relations between humans.⁴¹

Roberts and Dow also identified the coming of the Kingdom especially with the Church. As Roberts had described it with his two axes, the Church was at the intersection of transcendent grace and the world, and, similar to Medieval sacramentalism, served as a "colony of heaven" to bring the Kingdom of Grace into the world.⁴² Similarly, in 1932 Dow claimed that the "bridge" revealed in the Incarnation was extended into history through the church. According to Dow, the church was "God's work of art," the "poem" that gave the world its reason for being.⁴³ And conversely, the church was the power of God's eternal moral Kingdom in the world and the dynamic power of man's

³⁸Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour: Communism and Communism," NO (28 October 1931), 1023.

³⁹Richard Roberts, "How to Spend Advent, II," NO (17 December 1930), 1223.

⁴⁰Roberts, "The Son of Man in Men," 1271.

⁴¹Roberts, "The Son of Man in Men," 1271.

⁴²Roberts, "The Quiet Hour: A Little Commemoration of St. Augustine, II," 1123, 1138.

⁴³Dow, God's Eternal Plan: The Kingdom, 3.

political and social hopes. Only the spirit manifested in the church could ensure the world's hope for peace.

In contrast to what Roberts took as Augustine's view of the church as a "pilgrim" community, his and Dow's view of the church as the mediator of the Kingdom also meant that it was the instrument for transforming society. In his description of spiritual communism, Roberts argued that as the Church participated in the temporal, structured world as well as its spiritual relationship to God, the Kingdom came in and through a context of social relations. The life of the church at the intersection of two worlds meant that personal salvation could only be experienced and lived in the society of the church. Man was saved by grace, he declared, but only "in the crowd." The divine society of the Church could not be reduced to mere individual spirituality, for "[p]ersonality and society are as necessary to one another as sight and light: we can never be wholly ourselves except in and through one another. We were made for society and society for us."⁴⁴ Because of the social nature of true humanity, there was no salvation outside the Church; instead, the experience of grace must radiate freely through the life of the Church in its organization on the basis of a Christ-like spirit of brotherhood, and through the Church it must permeate and transform social relations.⁴⁵ As Dow put it in 1932, just as "communistic societies" embody the dynamic of revolutionary hope, so the fellowship of the Christian church must present to the world the incarnation of Christ's creative spirit.⁴⁶ Since it had the power of God's spirit behind it, the church could act confidently and prophetically in inspiring man to bear the burdens of mankind "on the altar of conscience" and to "transform pity into actual social energy" in support of good causes.

Above all, the Kingdom of God was to be brought by grace, or by the free, spiritual method

⁴⁴Roberts, "The Quiet Hour, A Little Commemoration of St. Augustine, II," 1133.

⁴⁵Roberts, "The Quiet Hour: The Spirit of Grace," 539.

⁴⁶Dow, God's Eternal Plan: The Kingdom, 9.

of inner personal transformation. Throughout their apocalyptic vision of the Kingdom of Grace, Roberts and Dow assumed that the fundamental distinction in life lay between divine spirit and the material, structured world, and they had identified the essence of personality with divine spirit. Likewise, they identified the coming of the Kingdom with the inner working of the spirit. God's justice, Roberts claimed, was a new "justice of reconciliation" that surpassed retribution by working internally and cooperatively to reconcile humans to God through the "more divine" power of gracious love and unconditional forgiveness.⁴⁷ Likewise, the brief entry of Christ into time left the triumph of spirit and grace that coincided with liberation from the limits of structural-historical life. As Dow had put it, the resurrected Christ was a spirit who broke the "shackles of earth and time" in order to be free to bring God's eternal spirit of love to all mankind.⁴⁸ Or according to Roberts: "He found us bound as creatures of time: He left us free heirs of eternity."⁴⁹ Hence the event of the cross beckoned humanity "to rise above the world of events in time and space into a world of 'values' which recognize no time or space."⁵⁰

Several years later, in 1934, Roberts described humans as living in two worlds. Like Augustine, he described those two worlds in the ontological categories of law, or the temporal "order of mortality" in which man must prove himself by obedience to law, and the eternal order of grace in which man was freed from being "hemmed in" by the temporal world.⁵¹ While distinguishing them, however, he maintained that law and grace were not antithetical; rather, the law was the

⁴⁷Roberts, The Christian God, 136.

⁴⁸Dow, God's Eternal Plan: The Kingdom, 10.

⁴⁹Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour: His Star," NO (16 December 1931), 1195.

⁵⁰Roberts, The Christian God, 64.

⁵¹Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour: The Recapture of the Christian Experience: IV. Son Once More," NO (11 April 1934), 256.

"school-master" that lead humanity to strive Godward. Though this human striving could never be complete, it met God coming downward in the spirit of Christ.⁵² Instead of a conflict between grace and law, Roberts suggested here a Platonic hierarchy in which law was subordinate to, and fulfilled in, grace. His assumption of this hierarchy was the premise of Roberts' view that man lived simultaneously in two worlds, and that the coming of the Kingdom was the infusion of temporal life with the inner freedom of the spirit to transmute the temporal "into the sacramental."⁵³

For Roberts and Dow, the promise of an apocalyptic Kingdom of Grace was also the guarantee of a moral order and human freedom over against the increasingly all-encompassing historical-structural mechanisms that, according to critical science, seemed to enclose life in the late 1920's. As Roberts stated in 1929, the fundamental tension in life was between the progress of moral spiritual freedom and the evil tendency of natural man to resist the movement of life to realize its inherent potential of faith and love.⁵⁴ Likewise, Dow claimed that the Incarnation demonstrated, in the face of a world in crisis, that the cosmos existed as the "arena for Jesus and the moral Kingdom."⁵⁵ The emergence of this eternal moral Kingdom was the meaning behind the apparent meaninglessness and the "toiling and moiling of creation and history and time." Roberts' and Dow's proclamation of a moral Kingdom of Grace meant also the reassurance that human personality was free and valuable, and that man could rise above the apparently meaningless mechanisms of life.

By the early 1930's, then, Roberts and Dow had developed a modern, specifically neo-Kantian restatement of Augustine's interpretation of the relationship between God's Kingdom and a secularized

⁵²Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; Our Inner Life, IX, The Fruit of the Spirit," NO (30 August 1933), 629.

⁵³Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; The Recapture of the Christian Experience: IV. Son Once More," NO (11 April 1934), 256.

⁵⁴Roberts, The Christian God, 121-23.

⁵⁵Dow, God's Eternal Plan: The Kingdom, 2.

world. Their modern Augustinianism appealed to a transcendent sovereign God and his intervention in grace into the world. In turn, their "theology of grace" envisioned a sharp tension between God's Kingdom and what they now saw as a "secular" civilization. While appealing to transcendent grace, however, they nevertheless insisted that God's Kingdom was to be worked out in history through the church; indeed, they retained their modern critical perspective and historical consciousness. Consequently, their appeal to transcendent grace became the basis, not for what Roberts took to be Augustine's world-flight, but rather a concern for radically transforming modern western civilization. Though concerned with history, however, their neo-Kantian idealist "realism" revised and revived Augustine's Platonic ontology that identified God's grace with spirit, and sin with the structured world. From this framework, and in keeping with their "experiential" critical method, they continued to claim that God's spirit was located in the world, and particularly in human personality. Consequently, their hope for the apocalyptic realization of the Kingdom of God in history was also the hope for the realization of human personality and freedom, and a moral communal order.

This conception of the relation between God's Kingdom and the world, however, left an ambiguous status for the structured world, and an ambiguous task for the church in the world. While the church was to be the instrument of God's Kingdom in the world, that Kingdom was by definition qualified by freedom and spirit, and therefor was to be achieved solely through and in "spiritual" methods. Consequently, they would limit their efforts at social reform to evangelism and moral reform, in the expectation that such efforts would liberate and transform social relations. While this emphasis on the life of the spirit seemed to bring release from the doubts and complexities of structured life, it also would reduce matters of policy and science to mere technique.

II. Evangelism versus Revolution

Though Roberts and Dow had envisioned an apocalyptic Kingdom of God that would revolutionize

social relations, their efforts to achieve that Kingdom led, by late 1931, to a more exclusive focus on "psychic" moral transformation through the experience of Christ's spirit in the soul. In part, this "psychic" focus was the logical conclusion of their interpretation of the roots of Kingdom of God in internal moral transformation. But it also was a response to the most intense period of the Depression and the deepening of world tensions, and to the rising call from both Communists and Christian socialists for social revolution. During this pivotal time, Roberts and Dow joined more traditional liberal-evangelicals like George Pidgeon in repudiating revolution. Instead, they insisted that the root of the world's crisis was moral rather than "environmental," and they hence insisted on relying exclusively on divine grace and spiritual transformation.

Such emphases revitalized the liberal-evangelical establishment of mainline Protestantism, and suggested an alternative to revolution in renewed pietist evangelism, most notably in the Kingdom of God movement and the Oxford Group movement. In the context of deepening pessimism about the depths of the world's crisis, leading mainline Protestants especially in the United Church identified Christianity with what Roberts called the "vertical" relationship between a transcendent divine spirit and the essence of human personality. As a result, their main response to the crisis was a campaign for evangelism, while they remained suspicious of "unspiritual" methods of social change and seemed to withdraw from attempts to relate the Kingdom of God to social structures. Indeed, critics would argue that the liberal-evangelical Protestant establishment not only ignored the structural problems of society, but by omission naively participated in preserving the status quo.

This reliance exclusively on spiritual methods was a major theme of the United Church's Board of Evangelism and Social Service, and the work of its secretary D. N. McLachlan and field secretary Ernest Thomas, already in the late 1920's. In the belief that Canadian society had become secularized, members of the United Church's Board of Evangelism and Social Service had begun to search for distinctly "Christian" responses to the emerging social crisis. After the 1926 defeat of

prohibition in Ontario, for example, Ernest Thomas argued that efforts to legislate prohibition through the state should be abandoned.⁵⁶ In the belief that efforts to impose structural change by legislate would itself contradict the spirit of freedom which was central to Christianity, he began in 1928 to develop a "scientific" educational program to convince the public to freely abstain from alcohol. This strategy complemented Thomas' studies of the person of Jesus; both sought to change people and society by a "spiritual" method that focused on changing people's minds and hearts.

Similar principles were evident in the reports of the BESS and the work of D. N. McLachlan. In its 1926 report on "The Christianizing of Industry," the BESS urged that industry must serve the good of personality and the human soul, but it also recommended that the church use educational efforts, and especially a renewed pulpit, rather than attempts at reform by direct political action, to urge changes in the organization of industry, for change would come, not first of all through reorganization of society, but only with putting on the new mind of Christ.⁵⁷ And as we have seen in earlier chapters, McLachlan, along with others like University of Toronto social scientist Edward John Urwick, began in 1928 to warn against the secularization of professional social work.⁵⁸ McLachlan called for a renewal of the role of religion and morality in the social sciences, and also urged Christians to take up the task of remedying social wrongs, so as to mediate the healing grace of God to the world.

As Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau have shown, progressive Protestants dominated those social welfare agencies, such as the Canadian Association of Social Workers and the Social Service

⁵⁶Ernest Thomas, in NO (22 December 1926), 5, cited in Richard Allen, The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada, 1914-1928 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 347.

⁵⁷United Church of Canada (UCC), Board of Evangelism and Social Service (BESS), Annual Report, "The Christianizing of Industry," Yearbook and Record of Proceedings of the General Council (RP), 1928, 265, 266.

⁵⁸McLachlan's speech to the 1928 conference of the Canadian Association of Social Workers was entitled "The Spiritual Basis of Social Work." See Edith M. Luke, "Our Montreal Letter: Canadian Conference on Social Work," NO, (16 May 1928), 16. See also Allen, 291-291.

Council of Canada, that existed in Canada at the time.⁵⁹ Into the 1930's, therefore, Canadian social workers tended to preserve a close relation between moral idealism and social improvement. The dynamics of the early 1930's, however, pressed toward the differentiation of those concerns. While professional social workers like Charlotte Whitton, director of the Canadian Council on Child and Family Welfare, began to emphasize the specialized, technical skills of social science, McLachlan conversely defined the contribution of Christianity to social action in terms of strictly spiritual methods and concerns.⁶⁰ While he called for a more spiritual approach to social work, and for more Christian activism in social reform, McLachlan insisted that a distinctly Christian approach would set persons above material concerns, that it had first to do with the relation of the individual soul to God, and that no improved living conditions could satisfy that demand.⁶¹

McLachlan's emphasis on a "spiritual" response to social problems was also evident in his assessment of the emerging economic crisis in 1929. In an article commending AFL-CIO leaders to the pulpits of the United Church in October 7-13, 1929, he claimed that there was a growing opinion that both labour and capital should exist for service, and must respect above all the sacredness and welfare of personality. The source of problems in industry, he argued, lay with technological development and the mechanization which had crowded out both workers and "personal and spiritual values." He also seemed to endorse proposals submitted by the Manitoba Conference that called for the replacement of "master and slave" relations in industry with cooperation and profit-sharing based on service and the interests of public welfare. McLachlan emphasized that the proposals rejected

⁵⁹Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Churches and Social Welfare in Canada, 1900-1945 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 156-9.

⁶⁰Sara Burke, Serving the Highest Good: Social Service and Gender at the University of Toronto, 1888-1939 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 127.

⁶¹UCC, BESS, Annual Report, 1928, "He Shall Reign," Yearbook, 1928, and RP, 19.

recourse to class war to right economic wrongs as "inconsistent with human brotherhood."⁶² McLachlan's interpretation of the emerging economic crisis as a conflict between spiritual personality and natural mechanism, and his insistence on the primacy of moral brotherhood, demonstrated the commitment of many church leaders to a revived personal idealism that would appeal to a transcendent God as the grounds of moral principles that should infuse and direct social structures.

McLachlan's call for a "spiritual" and moral response to social problems was echoed by Richard Roberts. In 1929 he participated, along with Principal A. S. Tuttle and Lynn Harold Hough, who was Roberts' successor at the American Presbyterian Church in Montreal, in sessions of the Alberta School of Religion that emphasized the need for a uniquely "spiritual" approach to social problems.⁶³ While Hough and BESS western field secretary Hugh Dobson argued that the moral vitality of religion must be experienced in practical life rather than merely in the ritualism of the 1920's new evangelism, main speakers like Roberts and Tuttle emphasized that, rather than reform by legislation, society needed a revival of belief in a transcendent God as the basis for moral vitality. Religion, Tuttle warned, must preserve its hold on a transcendent deity, lest it "lose a grip on its moral sanction."

Roberts' view of the connection between transcendent deity and absolute moral sanctions to resolve social problems was especially illustrated in his participation in the revival of a Christian pacifist movement in 1930. Roberts had long been active in the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) in England and the United States, as well as in Montreal. In 1926 he helped to produce The Christian and War, written largely by Montreal church historian William Alva Gifford, and as Thomas Socknat

⁶²D. N. McLachlan, "The American Federation of Labour," NO (2 October 1929), 1003, 1006.

⁶³W. H. I., "The Alberta School of Religion," NO (18 September 1929), 964.

describes it, the definitive statement of Canadian pacifism during the interwar years.⁶⁴ The revival of the FOR with a chapter in Toronto was led by Roberts, the Quaker W. R. Firth, the Jewish rabbi Maurice N. Eisendrath, and included among its membership Rev. R. Edis Fairbairn, J. S. Woodsworth, and William Creighton.

The FOR's "Statement of Purpose" offered a moral solution, rooted in transcendent absolutes, to growing international tensions and the frustration of disarmament and peace talks during the late 1920's and early 1930's. Its declared purpose was to use the self-sacrificing love of Jesus as the principle for reconciling the "world-wide family."⁶⁵ According to the statement, the love disclosed in Jesus was "the true basis of society and the effective power for overcoming evil and transforming human life." That love must be worked out in the practical reconciliation of human conflicts, so as to dedicate human life to the universal Kingdom of God. The reality was, however, that the principle of love was violated by war and by the existing organization of society on the basis of self-interested nation-states competing for material power and profit. In such a world, the members of the FOR were called to be willing to take risks for a way not yet accepted by the world, and seek "through peaceful means such fundamental changes in the spirit of men and the structure of the social order as shall make possible the full expression of love in all human relations."

Into the early 1930's, then, Roberts and his colleagues seemed convinced that spiritual and moral transformation would readily issue in a transformed social order. Indeed, in 1930 Roberts was appointed by the United Church General Council to an Evangelism Commission that was chaired by George Pidgeon and also included McLachlan, James Endicott, and Newton Rowell.⁶⁶ Its

⁶⁴Thomas P. Socknat, Witness Against War: Pacifism in Canada 1900-1945 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 100-105, 124-7.

⁶⁵NO (18 February 191), 148.

⁶⁶ed., "In Aggressive Service." NO (22 April 1931), 368.

instructions were to invite all Canadian denominations to a joint effort of "vital evangelism" that would include enrichment of spiritual life; application of Christian principles to industry; and the promotion of brotherhood among all classes, races, and creeds. The assumption of the commission seemed to be that "vital evangelism" was organically connected to the formation of a new social order through the infusion of divine grace and a moral spirit into the world.

By 1933, the Evangelism Committee would launch, along with the Anglican, Presbyterian, and Baptist churches, a Joint Campaign for the Evangelization of Canadian Life. The intervening years between 1931 and 1933, however, saw a subtle shift in the outlook of Roberts and fellow-advocates of reform through "spiritual evangelism." In part, this change was due to the deepening crisis in western society. Through those years, the Depression seemed to worsen in its effects and in its intransigence. At the same time, the failure of the 1932 Geneva peace talks, and the rise of fascism especially in the 1933 minority government of Hitler, seemed to put confidence in the sufficiency and ultimate triumph of moral revival to the test. These growing tensions, in turn, contributed to the polarization of alternative strategies for "Christianizing" a western society. As William Creighton declared in 1933, pacifism must either give up, or become much more aggressive in challenging the structures of modern western society.⁶⁷ In particular, as we shall see in the following chapter, the formation of Christian socialist movements that advocated social revolution, and seemed sympathetic to communism, in turn pressed Roberts and his colleagues to clarify and justify their emphasis on evangelism and moral reform in contrast to social revolution.

Though in embryo already in the late 1920's, the polarization between advocates of "spiritual" transformation and structural change became explicit in 1931 following two indications of the growing radicalism of Christian socialists. In January 1931, after police intervened in a 1930 meeting of the Fellowship of Reconciliation which was to include Communist speakers on its platform, sixty-eight

⁶⁷ed., "We Must Fight for Peace," NO (23 August 1933), 612.

Toronto professors published a letter in support of the right to free speech even for Communists. As Michiel Horn notes, the common sympathies of many of those signatories contributed to the formation of the League for Social Reconstruction.⁶⁸ Coming as it did after nearly a decade of suspicion about the socialist sympathies of some University of Toronto professors, and in the midst of the "Red Scare" that swept across Canada, and most intensively in Toronto, during 1929 and 1930, the letter evoked an outpouring of reaction against both Communism and their professorial sympathizers.⁶⁹

A second significant development was the founding of an active Christian socialist movement in several Canadian cities, including the formation of the Movement for a Christian Social Order in Toronto on April 26, 1931. This movement will receive fuller treatment in the following chapter. For the moment, it is sufficient to note that in his paper commissioned for the founding of the movement, John Line called the church to greater attention to social structures, and declared the intent of the movement "to be an aggressive militant Christian social movement."⁷⁰ Although he would insist on a "spiritual" rather than a materialist communism, Line and other members of the movement, like John King Gordon, would be sympathetic to some ideas in the Russian communist "experiment."⁷¹

Advocates of a renewed Christian socialism also pressed the United Church conferences to adopt statements critical of the capitalist system. Beginning with a submission from the Manitoba in 1928, many of the conferences, especially in western Canada urged new efforts to Christianize

⁶⁸Michiel Horn, The League for Social Reconstruction: Intellectual Origins of the Democratic Left in Canada, 1930-1942 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 17-18. See also A. B. McKillop, Matters of the Mind: The University in Ontario, 1791-1951 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 380-5.

⁶⁹For a catalogue of reactions to the letter, see "'The Intellectual Capital of Canada'," Canadian Forum, Vol. XI, No. 126 (March 1931), 210-12.

⁷⁰"Mostly About People and Churches," NO (6 May 1931), 414.

⁷¹ed., "Professor Line on the Soap Box," NO (23 September 1931), 910.

industry and the economic order.⁷² In 1931, for example, the British Columbia conference urged a "revolution of Jesus Christ" that would transform the competitive capitalist system into a cooperative system in which human personality, love, and service were the supreme motive of business.⁷³ The Alberta Conference made similar calls for radical change, declaring that unemployment, overproduction, uncertainty, and the "unchristian anomaly" of abundant grain in elevators while citizens lacked bread, demonstrated the failure and condemnation of the present competitive system.⁷⁴ The present competitive, acquisitive system, the conference urged, must be replaced with a democratic cooperative order that gave priority to human needs rather than profit, and government should concentrate on cooperative efforts to ensure opportunity for steady employment and wholesome living conditions for all. The crisis was an opportunity for renewed devotion to working out the Kingdom of God in a Christian social order. But it also declared that such a kingdom would come to individuals and society by the "flaming evangel of God's grace." Only through the Spirit of God would the church be able to "motivate people to love and brotherhood which will impel toward 'Christian democracy in industry' rather than 'tyranny and anarchy' of violent revolution." Other conferences issued resolutions calling for further study of the social system, including, in the case of Hamilton Conference, study of the "Russian experiment," urging that "what looks like a thoroughly materialistic communism must be met heroically with a distinctly Christian social order." Such a social order must advance religious, political, and economic freedom, and promote a social conscience alert to the just needs of all.⁷⁵

⁷²UCC, Yearbook and RP, 1928, 98.

⁷³J. K. U[nsworth], "The Annual Sessions of British Columbia Conference," NO (10 June 1931), 546; and (15 July 1931), 665, 673.

⁷⁴"The Alberta Conference of the United Church: Findings on the Church and Industrial Relations and World Peace," NO (24 June 1931), 601.

⁷⁵W. S. D., "The Annual Session of the Hamilton Conference," NO (15 July 1931), 670, 672.

Ontario conferences presented the sharpest divisions. On the one hand, the Hamilton Conference called for study and government legislation to enact a system of unemployment insurance to cover all unemployment caused by conditions beyond the control of workers, including sickness, old age, disability, and technological changes.⁷⁶ By contrast, the London Conference, with some ministers claiming that there were good aspects to capitalism, amended the report of its Evangelism and Social Service Committee so that it called for elimination only of the "non-Christian elements" in capitalism, suggesting also that a wholesale change of the social system was not required.⁷⁷ The Toronto Conference displayed the sharpest division. Speaking for the Laymen's Association, John A. Tory and Newton Rowell urged the "greater consecration of all our resources to the Kingdom of God," specifically to a program for a "great spiritual awakening" consisting of a speaking campaign, prayer groups, promoting church attendance, and encouraging work for the underprivileged.⁷⁸ In contrast, however, the conference also adopted a statement proposed by Salem Bland, supported by John Line, that called for government action as vigorous as during the war for a comprehensive organization of the human and economic resources of the dominion "to bring immediate relief to the workless, hope to the despondent and embittered, and guide our country into a closer union than we have ever known."

From 1930 to 1934, this conflict cut through the activities of the United Church and its evangelism campaign. While recognizing that the collapse of the industrial world called for clarification of the church's role, D. N. McLachlan, secretary of the Board of Evangelism and Social Service, warned against direct action by the church.⁷⁹ Just as Christianity had permeated the Roman

⁷⁶"The Church on the Job," NO (1 April 1931), 294.

⁷⁷H. B. P. "The United Church in London Conference," NO (24 June 1931), 596.

⁷⁸E. Ryerson Young, "The United Church in Toronto Conference," NO (8 July 1931), 640.

⁷⁹D. N. McLachlan, "The Church and the Industrial Crisis," NO (2 September 1931), 826.

Empire at a time of concern for brotherhood, but without destroying that Empire, so, he argued, Christianity offered a moral spirit that might correct the current order, without destroying it. It was doubtful, he added, whether the church had the competence to deal with the technical problems of what was a complicated, world-wide industrial system. Finally, he suggested that the church's role was patient mediation of a necessarily slow and evolutionary process. Impatience raised the dangerous possibility of revolutionary methods that would set back "movements for orderly progress towards better things." Instead, the church's task was to mediate the reconciliation of employers and employees by promoting a "spirit of good will and mutual fellowship" between the main parties of industry. Hence, the BESS continued to focus on its plan for a joint evangelism campaign, while also helping to organize a joint National Emergency Relief Committee in 1931 to provide food and goods for the destitute, especially in the West.⁸⁰

The discussion was kept alive, however, at the 1932 General Council where the Board's report on "The Church and Industry" was first referred back to the sessional committee. While the Toronto members of that committee included Roberts and Pidgeon, its Chairman William Alva Gifford, Professor of Church History at United Theological Seminary in Montreal, succeeded in having John Line and Ernest Thomas added as corresponding members.⁸¹ The revised report of the committee clearly bore the stamp of their influence, for it argued that personal religion and spiritual experience, while certainly a valuable merit of the evangelical tradition, was not sufficient for the present crisis.⁸² In the face of what had become "a mass or collective problem," the traditional advice about personal responsibility and thriftiness failed to do justice to the complex of forces that were affecting human welfare. Indeed, it threatened to leave those forces to be "led by sheer secularist aims." A new age

⁸⁰"National Emergency Relief Committee," NO (26 August, 1931), 813.

⁸¹UCC, Yearbook and RP, 1932, 53, 78, 98-99.

⁸²UCC, Yearbook and RP, 1932, 286-90.

of social relations was upon western society, especially in the realm of economic relations. What was needed was a fresh interpretation of Christianity that would be expressed not only in terms of individual ideals, but also in a way that contributed to a just economic order and "a holy community achieved in this world according to God's righteous purpose." Accordingly, the report called for an interpretation of the Kingdom of God "into social terms" that included unemployment insurance as "a direct requirement, under the existing condition of things, of the teaching and ideals of Jesus" concerning the need of opportunity and welfare for all.

The committee's recommendation for a more thorough study in a Commission on the Social Order was approved, but it coincided with the Board's recommendation of a Commission on Evangelism that also was approved, and ultimately would take precedence in the mainline churches. With Sir Robert Falconer as its chairman and Walter T. Brown, then principal of Victoria University, as its secretary, the Commission on Christianizing the Social Order was instructed to study Christian principles that should govern the social order, and to define particular "first steps" to implement such a Christian order.⁸³ The common commitment of all sides to the need for radical spiritual renewal that must come from God's grace was evident in the committee membership. While advocates of Christian socialism like John Line, John King Gordon, and R. B. Y. Scott, participated in the Evangelism Commission, along with George Pidgeon, Sir Robert Falconer, J. M. Shaw, and J. R. P. Selater,⁸⁴ Falconer solicited advice for the Commission from social democrats like Irene Biss and Harold Cassidy, but especially from University of Toronto's more conservative liberal idealist E. J. Urwick.⁸⁵

As the controversy raged through 1933, Roberts and others who opposed social revolution in

⁸³D. N. McLachlan, "Commission On Social Order," NQ (20 December 1933), 910.

⁸⁴UCC, Yearbook, 1933, 103.

⁸⁵UCC, RP, 1934, "Report of the Commission on Christianizing the Social Order," 235.

favour of "spiritual" solutions found themselves on the side of business leaders who strenuously opposed any appearance of sympathy for communism or socialism, and who also were, like Newton Rowell, prominent members of the United Church courts, college boards, and Pidgeon's own Bloor Street United Church. When the Toronto Conference in 1933 again called for the socialization of banks and other sectors of the economy as part of what it would take to "Christianize" Canadian society, Roberts and Pidgeon were among those who published their dissent.⁸⁶ This encounter came on the heels of a decision by United Theological College's board, staffed with prominent Montreal businessmen, to release the vocal Christian socialist John King Gordon, though this decision was temporarily rescinded by the 1933 Montreal Conference.

Although their opposition ultimately had the result of supporting the liberal social order, the intent especially of Roberts and Dow cannot easily be linked with mere support for the middle class status quo. Their criticism of capitalism was well established in the 1920's. And Roberts, in particular, had been instrumental in the FOR which attempted to give platform time to Communists. As well, he would be sympathetic to, though not active in, the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order. While concerned no less than Christian socialists to transform society, Roberts and his colleagues differed from them particularly in their view of how the social order was to be Christianized, and thus in their understanding of where the battle lines for the Kingdom of God lay. As the crisis deepened, Roberts, Dow, McLachlan, and others insisted that nothing short of divine grace, which they identified exclusively with a spiritual reality, would suffice to transform society. And in their insistence on spiritual transformation, they located the battle for God's Kingdom especially in the human psyche.

They did so by framing their rejection of revolution in terms of an assumed tension between grace and nature. In an article entitled "Resurrection or Revolution," published in 1931 only one week

⁸⁶For discussion of Pidgeon's and Roberts' rejection of socialist proposals in the Toronto Conference, especially in 1933, see "The Toronto Annual Conference," NO (12 July 1933), 523-25; and John Webster Grant, George Pidgeon: A Biography (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1962), 122-26.

after the founding of the Movement for a Christian Social Order, Roberts claimed to agree with the goals of Christian socialists, but contrasted the methods of Christian reliance on spiritual grace with Communist materialism and militarism. The world, according to Roberts, hung precariously in the balance between Communism and the Christian gospel.⁸⁷ While both Communism and Christianity claimed to assert the supreme value of personality, their methods, according to Roberts, presented a fundamental antithesis between spiritual and worldly material forces. Communism pursued a secular agenda of world domination on the basis of materialism and force, and thereby threatened to "cut the cable" which tied the values of the soul to the eternal.⁸⁸ With rising global instability, the crisis of western capitalism, and the growing appeal of Communism in both the Far East and North America, Communism presented the greatest challenge to Christianity in many centuries, and it would have to be opposed with a distinctly Christian Revolution.⁸⁹

Indeed, when true to its principles, Roberts argued elsewhere, Christianity was revolutionary no less than Communism, for in contrast to "the normal order of the world," Christianity claimed to organize society on the basis of new allegiances to Christ the King and the inward rule of God.⁹⁰ And in contrast to the "material" methods of Communism, the method of Christian revolution was inherently contrary to "worldly" revolution, for it worked by peaceful penetration, persuasion, and free spiritual transformation from within.⁹¹ Ultimately, the revolutionary nature of Christianity rested on the resurrection, which Roberts described as an "embarrassment" to reason because it defied

⁸⁷Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; Resurrection or Revolution," NO (22 April 1931), 371.

⁸⁸Richard Roberts, "Christianity at the Crossroads," NO (29 April 1931), 395; and Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; The Red Cap on the Cross," NO (15 April 1931), 347.

⁸⁹Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; Resurrection or Revolution," 371.

⁹⁰Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; The Red Cap on the Cross," 347.

⁹¹Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; Resurrection or Revolution," 371; "The Quiet Hour; The Red Cap on the Cross," 347.

experience and history.⁹² Nevertheless, the resurrection signified the revolutionary presence of God in restoring all things, including societies, to life. The Christian revolution was itself a revolutionizing of "secular" revolution, for it began with the active word and grace of God and the creation of a new life of the Kingdom in the soul and mind of individuals. Thus Roberts saw Christianity as a "spiritual" alternative to modern Communism and its agenda of world domination.⁹³ In contrast to Communist materialism, a Christian social order was one characterized by the primacy of spirit and a spirit of friendship and self-sacrificing service.⁹⁴ Above all, a Christian social order was one that regarded "man as man is of supreme value," and that claimed for each person "a fair chance to grow into the full human thing it is in him to be."⁹⁵ The priority of personality meant that all were entitled to share in determining the objects and conditions of life, and an order based on the principles of friendship and fellowship rather than master and slave.

The essential premise of a social order devoted to personality was freedom in which persons could exercise moral responsibility. Accordingly, Roberts identified his version of the Christian Revolution with three great revolutions in modern European history that had defined the essentials of human relationships.⁹⁶ The Reformation had asserted the doctrine of free grace in the unmediated relationship of the believer to God. The French Revolution, despite its brutality, had won freedom for the individual citizen in the state, thereby complementing the spiritual freedom of the Reformation with political freedom. Finally, the Russian Revolution, despite its violence, had claimed freedom for

⁹²Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; Resurrection or Revolution," 371.

⁹³Richard Roberts, "Communism and the Kingdom of God; A Sermon Preached at Sherbourne Church, Toronto, on Sunday Evening, March 22nd," NO (8 April 1931), 323.

⁹⁴Richard Roberts, "Christianity at the Crossroads," NO (29 April 1931), 395.

⁹⁵Roberts, "Communism and the Kingdom of God," 323.

⁹⁶Roberts, "Communism and the Kingdom of God," 323.

workers in the realm of industry and economics, thereby adding industrial democracy to political democracy and free grace. Though these revolutions were necessarily violent, and had "overshot their mark" by turning to dictatorship, they had established the principle of freedom for humanity. Roberts' declaration that the world was now confronted with two revolutionary choices in Christianity and Communism implied that the spiritual order offered by Christianity, in contrast to Communist materialism and use of force, was the choice to be identified with freedom. Indeed, Christianity offered the only alternative to Communism, he claimed, for it held the only power "by which the society of mankind can be transformed into a beloved community and a city of God."⁹⁷

Like Roberts, Dow emphasized the contrast between spiritual freedom and material forces in a late 1931 sermon comparing Genesis 1 and John 1 entitled "Nature and Redemption."⁹⁸ Here Dow supported an argument that Jesus made no parables that drew on analogies from nature, because nature had nothing to say about the gospel. Nature, Dow went on, spoke only of God's faithfulness and the logic of cause and consequence, but it had no parallel to freedom of the will in man. Consequently, nature had nothing to say about human responsibility to God or the spiritual realities of sin or forgiveness at the heart of the gospel. Amid what he described as a civilization prostrated by the Depression, and with growing fears about international tension brought on by the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, Dow warned against finding security in earthly temples like armies and navies, or in what he regarded as destructive revolutionary action.⁹⁹ Contrary to calls for Christian revolution, Dow argued that Jesus' way was not revolution, for civilization would collapse on its own. Instead, Jesus aimed to liberate religion from forms and false supports to build a spiritual temple. "Such is our

⁹⁷Roberts, "Communism and the Kingdom of God," 323.

⁹⁸John Dow, "The Preacher's Page: Nature and Redemption," CJRT, Vol. 8, No. 5 (November-December 1931), 407.

⁹⁹Dow, "The Preacher's Page: Before the Deluge," 47.

task," Dow proclaimed, "to build up a spiritual order that will outlast the inevitable crash of our present social and political structures."¹⁰⁰

The conclusion of these arguments against revolution by "natural" or "material" means was the sharp juxtaposition of spiritual and structural change. In his description of Jesus' method of transforming the world, Dow argued that Jesus' way was not that of spectacular miracles, nor of communist revolution and change by political force. Rather, his way was the "unobtrusive" sowing of a Word of God and an idea of the Kingdom, relying on the work of the spirit rather than the operation of law and external aids.¹⁰¹ Here he identified spiritual power with ideas, and claimed that it was by contact with revolutionary ideas,-- soul touching soul --, that hearts were changed to create a genuine revolution at the moral center of human life. Roberts further contrasted this "spiritual" method of revolution with structural change, claiming that

[w]hat we want just now is not so much new schemes of social reclamation, new doctrines and methods of social change: though these must have their place. What we want first is new life: the life of the ever-living Christ in men - beginning with you and me.¹⁰²

In the polarization then taking place, Dow and Roberts thus magnified the distinction between grace and nature and turned their focus almost exclusively on spiritual revival, though in the hope that such a revival would also infuse and Christianize society. In part, this distinction would mean a choice for liberal individualism rather than socialism. But this choice was rooted in two basic features. First, it was an attempt to emphasize the initiative of transcendent, divine grace in contrast to earthly "forms" and corrupted human attempts to build the Kingdom of God. As McLachlan made clear in his May 1930 comments on Pentecost, though the church might have sufficient wealth and

¹⁰⁰Dow, "The Preacher's Page: Before the Deluge," 47.

¹⁰¹Dow, God's Eternal Plan: The Kingdom, 5, 6.

¹⁰²Roberts, "The Quiet Hour: Resurrection or Revolution," 371.

knowledge to change the world into a Christian democracy, these were "impotent" apart from the power of Christ to release them to the service of the Kingdom. Man would seek in vain for an easy, self-made way to this spiritual power, and the church's doctrines, programs, and agencies would remain cold formalities "till they became Christocentric."¹⁰³ The real solution to the world's crisis therefore required the recovery of the Spirit of Christ in human hearts. And for that recovery, Christians could only ""practice the Presence" of God, "listen for the voice of God," and wait on God who was the one sure foundation of life. But while emphasizing divine grace, secondly, liberal-evangelicals continued to define the struggle for the Kingdom in neo-Kantian terms as the tension between spiritual and natural realities. It was in terms of these foundations that they launched their evangelism campaign and focused their attention on internal, and individual moral transformation. While they expected that moral transformation would penetrate social relations, which they assumed were subject to moral direction, they were nevertheless ambivalent, especially in the context of rising communism and fascism, about attempts to directly control and alter social structures.

According to Roberts, then, modern civilization needed not only a change in fiscal policy, but a transformation of soul by the transcendent spirit:

[i]t needs to learn that fundamental principle of the universe, written deep in the nature of man, laid down in ancient scripture and confirmed by the word of Jesus Christ, that man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that cometh forth from the mouth of the Lord. Our world can, today, be saved only by a general affirmation by us all of the supremacy of the Spirit - or to put it another way, a widespread revival of religion.¹⁰⁴

The City of God must first, he claimed, be built "in men's souls" by their acceptance of Christ and His Kingdom as the rule of life, and their readiness to love God and neighbour by generous sharing

¹⁰³McLachlan, "Pentecost: No Room for a Man-Made Programme," 517.

¹⁰⁴Richard Roberts, "Revival Without Tarrying for Any; Sermon preached in Sherbourne Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, Sept. 20th," NO (30 September 1931), 923. See also Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; When the Salt Has Lost its Savour," NO (29 August 1934), 725-26, 741-42.

of each other's burdens. And such a revival of soul could only begin with worship and evangelism.

Building God's Kingdom first in the soul might well have served as the unofficial motto of the response of liberal-evangelicals to the social crisis of the early 1930's. Their strategy for responding to the crisis consisted almost entirely of evangelistic preaching as the primary method of the Kingdom, and they located the struggle for God's Kingdom almost solely within the human psyche. In short, they focused on restoring what Roberts called the "vertical axis" of humanity's spiritual relation with a transcendent God.

The project of building God's Kingdom in the soul was developed during 1931 and 1932 especially by the United Church's Evangelism Commission, of which Pidgeon, Roberts, McLachlan, and Dow were all members. Through 1931 and 1932, its members identified their efforts with a "Kingdom of God" movement, suggesting hope for a Canadian version of the Kingdom of God Movement initiated in Japan by the Japanese missionary Toyohiko Kagawa.¹⁰⁵ Through 1931, Roberts and Pidgeon both advocated the movement as a model for "vital evangelism" and revolutionary spiritual renewal in Canada. According to Roberts, Kagawa's three-point program of evangelistic conversion of "a million souls to Christ," a cooperative society in every town, and a mutual aid society in every church, could be applied equally in Canada to make Christ King in Canada.¹⁰⁶

In his promotion of a Kingdom of God movement in Canada during 1931, George Pidgeon focused primarily on the first point of Kagawa's program and related it to old-time evangelism. The church's impotence in the midst of great necessity, he argued, indicated its failure to draw on the spiritual grace available in Christ. Christ brought man into contact with "a divine energy that made

¹⁰⁵ed., "In Aggressive Service," NO (22 April 1931), 368.

¹⁰⁶Roberts, "Communism and the Kingdom of God," 323.

all things new," and that resource was already present in man and the church, available "at the command of faith."¹⁰⁷ For this spiritual quickening, all that was needed was the old solution of repentance of sin to remove the barriers to divine grace and a new determination to do God's will.¹⁰⁸ Here Pidgeon identified the role of the church in the coming Kingdom of God at its narrowest point. Since the power of God was already present in the church, and latent in the souls of its members, the church need not "work up" interest in Christ's cause through machinery; rather it need only release the divine Kingdom.¹⁰⁹ As McLachlan had indicated in his call for Christocentrism, building the Kingdom in the soul was primarily a matter of the Spirit of God working in the hearts of each individual. While the solutions to social injustices could only be identified by experts, the church's task was to declare "the central truths of salvation," namely the love of God in salvation through Christ, and the love and obedience which they ought to inspire. These vital truths were best conveyed in personal testimony of one's own soul's relation to God; in turn, faith became vital only when it was proven in the souls of each member.¹¹⁰ Immensely confident not only in the effectiveness of God's spirit, but also in the presence and potency of God's spirit already in the human soul, Pidgeon located the crux of the Kingdom in the human psyche. The church's role in that struggle could only be personal evangelism through testimony from one soul to another that inspired others to realize the divine spirit within them.

Roberts and Dow held similar views of the task of evangelism. According to Roberts, the

¹⁰⁷George C. Pidgeon, "Canada's Kingdom of God Movement, II. The Church's Faith," NO (27 May 1931), 490, 504.

¹⁰⁸George C. Pidgeon, "Canada's Kingdom of God Movement, III. The Conditions of Spiritual Advancement," NO (3 June 1931), 514, 529.

¹⁰⁹Pidgeon, "Canada's Kingdom of God Movement, III. The Conditions of Spiritual Advancement," 514, 529.

¹¹⁰George C. Pidgeon, "Canada's Kingdom of God Movement, V. The Privilege of Youth," NO (17 June 1931), 562.

event of the cross need only be "placarded," and in turn simply acknowledged in an intimate personal encounter in which God addressed the "hidden foundations" of human personality, in order to share Christ's triumph over against the paradoxical world of good and evil.¹¹¹ Likewise, Dow had suggested already in 1929 that the church's role of extending the Incarnation into the world was epitomized in its preaching of the Word. For Dow preaching was essentially a spiritual communication uniquely appropriate to the divine "spiritual" economy, for the gospel came not by force, but by spirit calling to spirit. In God's redemptive purpose of making heaven and earth one, he argued, the one acceptable method was "personal evangelism." "The preacher," he claimed, "is the pivot of divine history," since it was only in preaching that the unique spirit of Christ was conveyed.¹¹²

The assumption that the Kingdom of God was a present reality that needed only to be evoked through fellowship and testimony was central to the first program issued by the Evangelism Commission in November 1931. In introducing that program, Pidgeon and McLachlan declared that the highest priority was the study and cultivation of the Church's "inner life" in the soul's relation to God. In a world in crisis, the Church must rediscover the source of spiritual power in God alone.¹¹³ To that end, the Commission urged the Church to re-examine its activities to ensure that its organized life reflected that inner renewal. It also called for a revived pulpit, and vivid, constructive thinking about the church's message, especially of the traditional doctrine of the soul's immediate access to God and the obligation to express that relation in individual and social life. That message, it further instructed, must give direction for members in the economic and social problems of the day so that

¹¹¹Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour: The Crux of the Gospel," NO (27 May 1931), 491, 504.

¹¹²John Dow, "The Preacher's Page, By Words," CJRT, Vol. 7, No. 4 (July-August 1929), 339.

¹¹³George C. Pidgeon, "The Kingdom of God Movement in Canada," NO (18 November 1931), 1097; and "The Christward Movement," [letter by G. C. Pidgeon and D. N. McLachlan on behalf of the Commission on Evangelism to the Presbyteries] in the same issue, 1101.

it was worked out in "Christianizing ...the whole of life" by showing how God's grace allows people to do his will in their situations.¹¹⁴ Lastly, the church sessions were urged to relate their tasks of organization and administration to a larger spiritual goal, and to devote more of their efforts to study and discussion of pastoral works like Ernest Thomas' The Message of Jesus for the Life of Today.¹¹⁵ As McLachlan added in an appended justification of the campaign, the church could no longer "replenish its failing lamps with borrowed oil" by compromising with negative criticism.¹¹⁶ The church had the answer to the world's need of a permanent basis for social justice and peace, but it must recover its practice of the presence of God which was the foundation of its spiritual ministry.

At the heart of this call to personal evangelism was the belief that the battle for the Kingdom of God was essentially an internal, psychological struggle. The threat of secularism, according to Roberts, was not merely a matter of external environment, but a matter of man's weak spirit and "native drift towards secularity."¹¹⁷ The "crux of the gospel," or the conflict between sin and redemption, was between man's "native" secularity and the divine spirit, and therefore took place in an intimate, internal encounter in which God addressed the "hidden foundations" of human personality.¹¹⁸

The internal hidden-ness of this spiritual struggle, according to Dow, meant that man's crisis before God's spirit was to be faced alone, apart from custom, institutions, and external supports. In that face to face encounter of spirits, man would finally discover in God a loving, familiar friend

¹¹⁴Pidgeon, "The Kingdom of God Movement in Canada," 1097.

¹¹⁵"The Christward Movement," 1101.

¹¹⁶D. N. McLachlan, "The Place of the Church in the Life of Today," NO (18 November 1931), 1101.

¹¹⁷Richard Roberts, "The Saints in the Bleachers: A Sermon preached in Sherbourne Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, Nov. 1st," NO (25 November 1931), 1117, 1134.

¹¹⁸Roberts, "The Quiet Hour: The Crux of the Gospel," 491, 504.

rather than a dreadful judge.¹¹⁹ Through that encounter, true human nature, though damaged by sin, could come to itself through the work of Christ's spirit within humans. What man needed, therefore, was a "psychical" transformation. In order to recover his "religious friendship with God" and rise to new potential, he must set aside his fearful view of God, remove the burden of unconfessed sin, and through prayer open himself to the window of the "Divine behind nature" and the "daily inflow of creative energy."¹²⁰

Their belief that redemption was essentially an internal matter of spirit meeting spirit helps to account for Roberts' and Dow's insistence that the coming of God's Kingdom required waiting upon God's transcendent grace rather than human programs. But their neo-Kantian interpretation of this relationship left them with a paradox in the process of "psychic" regeneration. On the one hand, their insistence that humanity could be redeemed only by transcendent grace reflected a coincidental pessimism regarding human effort to achieve the Kingdom of God on earth; hence the human need for external renewal. Yet their understanding of evangelism assumed the inherent divinity of human nature that need only be released. In Richard Roberts' interpretation, the source of the paradox lay in the human psyche itself. Human sin was rooted in the "native drift towards secularity" in the human spirit, or what Roberts also described as a "dark, strong undertow" within humans which drew man from God to his own self-service.¹²¹ But if man was true both to the inborn God-given dream of perfection that was his true self, and to the promise of predestined perfection revealed in Christ, he would turn in faith to the "adventure" of union with the personal God who answered that dream. The regenerating experience of God's spirit, then, was a convergence of God's grace seeking out and restoring the human soul, and man's reaching for God through piety and moral striving. Here the

¹¹⁹Dow, God's Eternal Plan: The Kingdom, 6.

¹²⁰Dow, God's Eternal Plan: The Kingdom, 7.

¹²¹Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; God So Loved the World," NQ (20 December 1933), 901.

exclusiveness of God's transcendent grace was moderated by the belief that God's spirit also lay within the human constitution.

While this interpretation of the process indicated a perennial tension within the psyche between man's inherent divinity and "world," it also suggested that regeneration depended on the turn of man to God. As Pidgeon declared in a rather circular claim, "[t]he only religious experience which can meet the longings of this age is one which finds in God the highest that our people have thought of Him."¹²² Christianity's thought about God was inescapably anthropocentric, for God answered to the inner longing and highest good that humans sought. Yet Jesus was still the unique and universal revelation that answered human longing. Though the "natural virtues" that could be found in religions the world over must be appreciated, according to Roberts, Jesus was the high light of revelation, and thus "the completion of all the fragmentary words of God spoken at various times to various people."¹²³ The Cross was the junction of the world's natural striving for God, and the display of God's love and affirmation of the world which induced humans to turn to God to satisfy their inner longings. In the cross, Christ became the "bridge of reconciliation" between a transcendent God and the natural striving of humanity.¹²⁴

In Roberts' treatment, the goal of this process of regeneration was self-transcendence. Like Christ's unqualified suffering love and triumph over against the paradoxical world of good and evil, so humanity must transcend their situation in the world and the temptations of the flesh.¹²⁵ As part

¹²²George C. Pidgeon, "Canada's Kingdom of God Movement, V. The Privilege of Youth," NO (17 June 1931), 562.

¹²³Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour: On Digging Ditches," NO (14 January 1931), 31.

¹²⁴Roberts, "The Quiet Hour: The Crux of the Gospel," 491, 504.

¹²⁵Roberts, "The Quiet Hour: The Crux of the Gospel," 491, 504.

of their "true original course," humanity was always seeking God in the pursuit of eternity.¹²⁶ Thus the essence of personality, he argued in language that Reinhold Niebuhr would make famous the following year with his Moral Man and Immoral Society (1932), was its "self-transcendence" by "going out beyond itself" and the circumstances of the world. This self-transcendence was an act of the will to love and seek out fellowship with another self, through which man realized the potential of human personality that remained as the hidden "impossible possibility" in human nature.¹²⁷

Cast as it was in terms of a perennial crisis within the human psyche, and in terms that set grace and nature in tension, the ultimate destiny of humanity remained ambiguous in Roberts' and Dow's theology. As the crisis deepened in 1931, Roberts, like Niebuhr, acknowledged that the dream of perfection was an impossibility in the present age. Given the perennial human entanglement in passions and feeble will, and the inequities of social conditions, the call of God presented a dilemma to sinful believers. Apart from grace, no perfection was possible; in the present age, perfection could be attained only in relative degrees, only "so far as in us lies."¹²⁸ Ultimately, the comfort that Roberts held out for Christians living in a time of threats of war and social crisis was that civilizations were merely "shadows," or "temporal things" which fall, while the Kingdom and the "true imperishable self" were unshakable eternal realities and inalienable inward, spiritual gifts that were not shaken by outward catastrophe. Humanity's ultimate hope, focused on a Christ within and a destiny beyond the temporal world, seemed also to abandon the temporal world to hopelessness.¹²⁹

Between 1931 and 1933, the prospects for this self-transcendence seemed bleak. In their

¹²⁶Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour: Our Inner Life," NO (5 July 1933), 501, 504.

¹²⁷Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour: The Marks of Personality," NO (10 June 1931), 539, 555.

¹²⁸Richard Roberts, "The Gospel at Philippi, 'What things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ,'" NO (16 September 1931), 875, 886.

¹²⁹Richard Roberts, "Solid Ground in a Shaking World," NO (7 October 1931), 747-48.

search for some appropriate way to cultivate personal religion, the United Church's Evangelism Commission, in 1932, invited the Anglican, Presbyterian, and Baptist churches as well as the Salvation Army to form an Inter-Church Commission, with George Pidgeon as chairman and the Anglican Canon Vernon as secretary. In its first statement, issued in February 1933 as the economic and international crises reached their depths, the Joint Committee proclaimed its call to evangelism with even greater urgency. With what seemed baffled frustration, it noted that even though politics, industry, and social life were directed mainly by those who professed Christianity, nevertheless most recognized that the social order was contrary to the will of God. In response to this reality, it urged yet "more sustained and better planned" efforts at evangelism and consecration of life. The time of distress, and seeming impotence of the church, called church members to repentance of the failure to realize God's intentions, and recognition of the need to "turn to a Greater than themselves for leadership and salvation."¹³⁰

Before the Joint Commission could develop its own programme, however, an alternative method of self-transcendence appeared in the meetings of Oxford Group Movement that first visited Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal in October 1932 under the leadership of Frank Buchman, an American Lutheran, and Samuel D. Shoemaker, a former American labour activist who was converted from Marxism.¹³¹ Given the urgency of the times, their predilection for "waiting on God," and their own search for a method of evangelism, it is not surprising that some members, most prominently George Pidgeon, briefly found the Oxford Group Movement attractive.

The Oxford Group was in most ways a twentieth-century reconstitution of the late-nineteenth

¹³⁰"Bulletin No. 1," quoted in ed., "Evangelizing Canadian Life," NO (15 February 1933), 149.

¹³¹Samuel M. Shoemaker, Jr., "House-Parties Across the Continent," Christian Century, Vol. 50, Pt. 2 (August 23, 1933), 1056.

century Keswick holiness movement.¹³² According to one participant in the original Oxford meetings, the Oxford Group Movement began with Frank Buchman's experience in the Keswick Convention of 1908.¹³³ Following that convention, Buchman, and eventually Shoemaker, developed a strategy of "life-changing" that was premised on "the secret transaction between God and the individual soul," consisting of the working of the Holy Spirit and the self-surrender of the individual will to God.¹³⁴ It was through this transaction in the soul of man, and thus through "free cooperation of conscious beings," the movement claimed, that the Spirit of God affected human society and transformed civilization. Thus its call for the surrender of self to God was not the end of individual freedom of will or responsibility, but rather it meant becoming a partner with God. According to the Group's apologist, its "doctrine of Guidance," emphasizing the work of a sovereign, transcendent God rather than human endeavor, was based on the same metaphysical principal as Karl Barth's, namely "the truth that God is still free to act, breaking in upon the world and upon men -- and that He does."¹³⁵ Unlike Barth, however, this principle was taken by Group members not as an "a priori theory," but rather as the fruit of "positive experience." In this sense, the Group claimed to be based on a personal relationship between God and soul that gave a first-hand experience of God and a Christ-centered, unified life in God-directed service.

As David Bebbington notes, the Oxford Group Movement was not merely reactionary fundamentalism, but a self-consciously modern movement that prided itself on being "up-to-date" and

¹³²See Chapter 1.

¹³³See the three-part series by Rev. J. P. Thornton-Duesbery, "The Guidance of God. A Study of the Oxford Group Movement," The Expository Times, Vol. 43 (1931-32), 251-54; 458-61; 502-5.

¹³⁴Thornton-Duesbery, "The Guidance of God," 251.

¹³⁵Thornton-Duesbery, "The Guidance of God," 252.

influential with cultural elites.¹³⁶ While rooted in the Keswick movement, its theology reflected the twentieth-century turn from liberal Protestantism to a renewed emphasis on divine sovereignty. Its commitments to freedom for both God and humanity, and a modern psychological method, mark it as distinctly twentieth century. These same features also made it attractive to Canadians seeking to revive personal evangelism. Though likely only coincidental, Richard Roberts' devotional column in the New Outlook came under the banner of "A Quiet Time" that seemed to recall the method of the Oxford Group.

The Oxford Group was controversial in part because of its systematic method of practicing what it called the guidance of God. The first of two steps in that method required a time of "quiet waiting upon God" to enable communion and "real 'conversation'" with God.¹³⁷ This time might include Bible reading, prayer, and silent waiting, all to evoke "guidance" through the direct experience of the Holy Spirit in the form of thoughts on a wide variety of matters such as warnings and premonitions and instructions on plans of action. But secondly, to "check" the threat of subjectivism and arbitrariness, the Group required "sharing" of one's confessions and illuminations with a group so that one's "guidance" could be tested by four "absolutes" of the Mind of Christ, namely honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love.¹³⁸ While such checks were not to replace direct confession and communication with God, they were intended to bring home the reality of confession through community in a way that would "make real" reconciliation between sinners, and the sense of forgiveness and release from sin.

Especially controversial was the Group's strategy of staging its house parties at prominent

¹³⁶David Bebbington, Evangelicalism in Modern Britain, A History from the 1730's to the 1980's (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 236-7.

¹³⁷Thornton-Duesbery, "The Guidance of God," 253.

¹³⁸Thornton-Duesbery, "The Guidance of God," 254.

hotels or the homes of elite patrons in order to make the quickest inroads to what it believed were the leaders of society.¹³⁹ The presence at its first meeting in Montreal in mid-1932 of prominent businessmen and churchmen like Leslie Pidgeon, a United Church minister in Montreal and board member of Montreal Theological College and brother of George Pidgeon, as well some members of the inter-church Joint Commission on Evangelism, gave the Group instant credibility. Likewise, its Ottawa meetings, held at the Chateau Laurier, included R. B. Bennett among the several thousand that attended over several days.¹⁴⁰ During the Montreal meeting, members of the Joint Evangelism Commission also invited the Group to Toronto.¹⁴¹ Here, in December 1932, the Group filled the King Edward hotel to overflowing with enthusiastic spectators for several straight nights.¹⁴² After Toronto, the Group moved on to hold house-parties and establish cells all the way to Vancouver.

As Robert Wright suggests, the Group initially impressed ill-informed Canadian Protestants, and with what seemed to be a highly effective method of personal evangelism, it quickly "sublimated" what remained of the Kingdom of God movement.¹⁴³ Bishop J. C. Farthing, Rev. Leslie Pidgeon, and D. L. Ritchie, all of whom attended the Montreal meeting, were according to C. E. Silcox reserved participants.¹⁴⁴ By the time that it got to Toronto, however, George Pidgeon enthusiastically described the Group as "the greatest spiritual movement in the history of Canada."¹⁴⁵

¹³⁹For a more extensive discussion of the Group's tour in Canada, see David B. Marshall, Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 213-9.

¹⁴⁰Shoemaker, "House-Parties Across the Continent," 1056.

¹⁴¹Claris Edwin Silcox, "The Oxford Groups in Canada," Christian Century, Vol. 51, Pt. 2 (September 12, 1934) 1137.

¹⁴²Shoemaker, "House-Parties Across the Continent," 1056.

¹⁴³Robert A. Wright, "The Canadian Protestant Tradition 1914-1945," The Canadian Protestant Experience 1760-1990, G. A. Rawlyk, ed. (Burlington: Welch, 1990), 173-4.

¹⁴⁴Silcox, "The Oxford Groups in Canada," 1137.

¹⁴⁵Wright, "The Canadian Protestant Tradition 1914-1945," 173-4.

Though more cautiously, Richard Roberts also welcomed at least the principle of the Group following its Toronto meeting. Roberts wondered whether the Group's belief that individual "life-changing" would automatically be sufficient for creating a Christian social order.¹⁴⁶ Change would have to go beyond the individual and include education in the complex conditions of society. Nevertheless, he surmised, the Oxford Group offered two principles that could be developed further. First, its emphasis on sharing one's experience of sin and redemption with others, under the guidance of the spirit, was the heart of the Christian ethic of mutuality and a sound use of mutual support reminiscent of the old Methodist class-meeting. But the principle of sharing could be extended much further into a genuine fellowship which shared all things, as in primitive Christian communism. Secondly, the Group pointed to the right source of voluntary change in its emphasis on the miraculous "baptism of grace" of Jesus Christ. Thus it recognized that right social relations began, not with policies, but with a restoration of personal relations with God.

As the ways of the Group became more familiar during 1933, however, some Protestant leaders became more suspicious. Especially critical was William Creighton, who editorialized that the meetings had degenerated into titillating, and in one case "disgustingly 'sexy,'" confessions of puerile preoccupations. But furthermore, he feared that the temporary sensation brought by the Group would leave the patient and faithful work of the church more difficult once the Group moved on and the sensation passed.¹⁴⁷ Richard Roberts also had become more wary of the group. Though appreciative of its emphasis on personal testimony, fellowship, and absolute moral standards, Roberts suspected that its demand for unquestioning adherence and its practice of exclusive fellowship and secretive "esoteric" methods smacked of an arrogant presumption to control God's spirit and claims

¹⁴⁶Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; Sharing," NO (4 January 1933), 7.

¹⁴⁷Silcox, "The Oxford Groups in Canada," 1138.

to infallibility.¹⁴⁸ He also argued that the practice of public confession was a "dangerous" assumption that not only led to unsavory public displays, but also suggested that private confession of one's deepest sins directly to God was ineffective. In a later work he would argue that though confession of sins like that practiced in the Group provided psychological release, as Carl Jung suggested, man needed further to be restored to right relations with God by accepting God's mercy and submission to his will.¹⁴⁹ Roberts further warned that the Group's notion of waiting for miraculous illumination on all variety of matters was a "naive" version of seeking God's guidance that, when applied to common life, seemed to involve "contempt" of God's gifts of reason, freedom, moral insight, and imagination, for the wise conduct of life. God had made humans, not to become "tame rabbits," but "men" and "partners" in God's purpose. Finally, the Group failed to relate its moral outlook to "the pressing social and political faiths" that were emerging at a time of crisis.

Despite the many similarities in their concerns for spiritual renewal, advocates of a revived liberal-evangelicalism became disenchanted with the Group as quickly as they had hailed it as a potential method for evangelism. By time that Frank Buchman began a second round of meetings in Halifax and Montreal during April 1934, with participation mainly by United Church businessmen and their wives, the joint evangelism committee was forging its own programme of personal evangelism.¹⁵⁰ In September 1933, it launched its Joint Campaign for the Evangelization of Canadian Life with a call to place "first things first" in realizing God's call, and in renewed evangelism to "bring home to each individual heart and life the Gospel of the Kingdom," and so to bring consecration into both individual and communal life.¹⁵¹ The Joint Campaign's first program

¹⁴⁸Richard Roberts, "The Oxford Group," Christian Century, Vol. 50, Pt. 1 (1 February 1933), 147.

¹⁴⁹Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; The Breaking of Bonds," NO (21 March 1934), 205.

¹⁵⁰Edith M. Luke, "Our Montreal Letter," NO (11 April 1934), 260.

¹⁵¹"A United Spiritual Movement," NO (20 September 1933), 961.

confirmed a strategy of personal evangelism of repentance and prayer, and study of the meaning of doctrines concerning God's sovereignty and Christ's Incarnation, atonement, resurrection, and the reality of his Kingdom. Although the program was similar to the concerns of the Oxford Group, it was also consistent with the insistence of Roberts and Dow on inner spiritual renewal. ~~Mo~~

broadly, the joint evangelism campaign reflected a consensus among most mainline Protestants, despite serious minority criticism, that the recovery of faith and the reform of society was to be achieved through evangelism and individual "spiritual" transformation. This commitment to personal evangelism became especially clear with the reports of two major commissions to the 1934 General Assembly of the United Church. Though it included a recognition of opposing views in its appendix, the majority report of the Commission on Christianizing the Social Order drew back from supporting revolutionary socialist action. It also declared that suffering love and the supreme value of persons, as displayed in the death of Christ for the sake others, was the fundamental moral principle of social life, and accordingly it called for a view of wealth and property that was subordinate to the service of personality.¹⁵² But it refused to specify, as instructed in its commission, any "first steps" toward the new order, asserting that this was a matter for experts in government and politics. By implication, the church was strictly a "spiritual" institution whose role, and in fact the best method for guiding development in the right direction, was education about Christ and the new creation of inner life. "Evangelism," the report declared, "must always be the first responsibility of the Christian Church."¹⁵³ Coincidental with its approval of the report of the Commission on Christianizing the Social Order, the General Council also welcomed the statement from the Commission on Evangelism, which reclaimed for the modern, liberal mainstream the term "evangelical," and defined the church's task in terms of evangelistic preaching. The original meaning of "Evangelism," it claimed, was an

¹⁵²UCC, RP, 1934, "Report of the Commission on Christianizing the Social Order," 234-5.

¹⁵³UCC, Yearbook, 1934, "Evangelism and Social Service," 102.

emphasis on preaching Christ's atoning death, and faith in that death as bringing forgiveness of sins. "Evangelism" understood thus could be liberated from its identity with the fundamentalist reaction to modern thought to a "positive" meaning as "a powerful interest in human redemption as this is seen in the crisis of personal experience." Emancipated from the legalism, dogmatism, and individualism of fundamentalists, Evangelism could rest "upon a few basic spiritual intuitions," including a "Christ-like" God, the acceptance of his will as the law of life, a sense of forgiveness and new spiritual strength, and the entry into the new life of the Kingdom of God. Understood in this way, "evangelism" began with the experience of Christ's spirit and call, and must grow into a "thought-out Christian programme of life."¹⁵⁴

From the belief that Christian life was rooted in the internal experience of God's grace and the crisis of the Cross, the commission presented evangelism as the solution to the urgent crises of the day. A modern reinterpretation of the old gospel was urgent, it claimed, due to the "rapid dissolution of spiritual life itself" under the "acids of modernity," the sins of greed, nationalism, and power, and the rise of a "materialistic" interpretation of life.¹⁵⁵ In fact the very idea of God was "fading away from great areas of Christendom," demanding a new evangelism to "conquer the intellectual habit that excludes the knowledge of God," and to liberate the masses from the grip of evil forces. In turn, the commission described the fellowship of the church and its preaching and theology as the primary agencies for evangelism, and expected that a revived sense of the presence of God would result in a "radiant goodness" that must penetrate social relations through personal morality. Accordingly, the commission declared that "the message and application of the Christian Gospel is indispensable to the solution of all personal, social and international problems."¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴UCC, RP, 1934, "Evangelism," 252-3, 256.

¹⁵⁵UCC, Yearbook, 1934, "Evangelism," 261-62.

¹⁵⁶UCC, RP, 1934, "Evangelism and Social Service," 62; and "Evangelism," 257, 260.

Coincidental with its approval of the report of the Commission on Christianizing the Social Order, the 1934 General Council also approved the statement of the Commission on Evangelism, and instructed the commission to proceed with its Joint Evangelism Campaign plans, including a program of preaching missions, study groups, evangelism training for theological students, and speaking tours held jointly with the four leading churches that made up the Joint Committee of Canadian Churches for Evangelization of Canadian Life.¹⁵⁷ Thus, the decisions of the 1934 General Council signified the triumph of a renewed, but now Augustinian liberal-evangelicalism in the United Church courts, while in the background it became the disappointing occasion for the formation of the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order.

III. Church and World

The two main reports delivered to the United Church General Assembly in 1934 indicated a renewed confidence and urgency among liberal-evangelicals, particularly in their self-identity as a "mainstream" church which could serve as the moral conscience to the nation, and in their new understanding of the relation between God's Kingdom and the world, and thus between Christianity and modern civilization. At the heart of their new modus vivendi was the Augustinianism that clergy-scholars like Roberts and Dow had struggled to articulate, and now, especially Roberts during his years as Moderator between 1934 and 1936, confidently proclaimed. Cast in terms of modern neo-Kantian idealism, their modern Augustinianism portrayed a hierarchy that distinguished between grace and nature, spirit and matter, faith and reason, and church and state. In that hierarchy, they expected that the sovereign divine spirit could permeate and rule natural life. Nevertheless, that hierarchy was also a limiting concept that kept liberal-evangelicals' views about the relation of God's Kingdom to the world and the technical application of spiritual principles to particular policies deeply ambiguous.

¹⁵⁷UCC, RP, 1934, "Evangelism and Social Service," 62-63.

While urging freedom and security as the fundamental requirement of social order, and thereby lending its support to the corporate liberalism of Prime Minister King's Liberal party, liberal-evangelicals also relativized all temporal "means" and located the hope of the Kingdom in a transcendent destiny.

The hope of reinvigorated liberal-evangelicals that a modern evangelism might transform modern culture, and thereby reconquer Christendom, was suggested especially in the report of the Commission on Christianizing the Social Order. The commission posed three views of the relationship between Christianity and modern culture, and in doing so anticipated the typology that H. Richard Niebuhr's Christ and Culture (1951) would make famous.¹⁵⁸ The main tradition of the church, it claimed, had always sought the redemption of society.

While it recognized that no perfect society could exist as long as men were sinful, it sought to purge society of its grosser evils, and so to regulate its practice that Christian people who desired to maintain the standards of Jesus might have the opportunity of developing a Christian civilization, and that all might have an environment helpful to Christian living.¹⁵⁹

The second, "sectarian" approach viewed Christianity as an individual matter, and assumed that the world was condemned because of its sin. Hence it tended to separate from the world and the culture of its age, and refused responsibility for changing the social order. The third alternative, it claimed, was the "Lutheran" view that the Church fed "the inner life of the Christian" through devotional discipline, "leaving the realm of civil order to the state." In contrast to the latter two alternatives, the commission identified with the mainstream tradition in which the church acted to transform culture. The aim of the United Church, the report claimed, "is to help to interpenetrate our civilization with the Spirit of Christ, and to transform those agencies and institutions of society which are foreign to

¹⁵⁸H. Richard Niebuhr, Christ and Culture (New York: Harper & Row, 1951).

¹⁵⁹UCC, RP, 1934, "Report of the Commission on Christianizing the Social Order," 238.

that spirit."¹⁶⁰

While holding out the aim of transforming society, liberal-evangelicals like Richard Roberts insisted that transformation be the product of God's grace. That the United Church General Assembly elected Roberts as Moderator in 1934 was strikingly appropriate, for by 1934 he more than any had settled on a resolute modern interpretation of Augustinian evangelicalism. At a Montreal Laymen's Association meeting in early 1934, before his election as Moderator, Roberts began to articulate his vision of "The Recapture of Christian Experience" using the parable of the Prodigal Son as a symbol of God's method of healing man's "backsliding" by grace.¹⁶¹ Following in a series of meditations on the topic during 1934, Roberts elaborated on what he described as the dialectic of sin and regeneration. The chaos of the present world was rooted in the moral anarchy and distress in human souls that arose from man's broken relationship with God.¹⁶² Yet man also had in the depths of conscience a divine "homing instinct," the "dream of perfection, which sought a place of belonging beyond the imperfections of life "in the flesh."¹⁶³ As Augustine's Confessions had put it, God had made man for himself, and man was restless till he found in rest in God. Likewise, Roberts claimed that man "in this world is away from home," alienated by sin from his true home and self in eternal fellowship with God.¹⁶⁴ The crisis of the cross was still occurring in the conflict of good and evil within the soul of each person, and it was only when one experienced and accepted God's Spirit within that he discovered both his true self, and that his adjustment to God was at the same time the

¹⁶⁰UCC, RP, 1934, "Report of the Commission on Christianizing the Social Order," 238.

¹⁶¹Edith M. Luke, "Our Montreal Letter," NO (28 March 1934), 225.

¹⁶²Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; The Breaking of Bonds," NO (21 March 1934), 205.

¹⁶³Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; The Recapture of the Christian Experience: III. The Home-Coming," NO (4 April 1934), 237.

¹⁶⁴Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; The Recapture of the Christian Experience: I. Prodigals All," NO (28 March 1934), 223; "The Quiet Hour; The Makers of the Cross: I. The Traitor," NO (2 May 1934), 321.

work of God's grace in him.¹⁶⁵

While appealing to Augustine's Confessions to describe the personal crisis of sin and redemption, he also used Augustine's City of God to describe the tensions of historical life. Like Augustine, he described humans as living in two worlds: that of the temporal "order of mortality" in which man must prove himself by obedience to law, and the eternal order of grace in which man was freed from being "hemmed in" by the temporal world.¹⁶⁶ While distinguishing them, however, he maintained that law and grace were not antithetical; instead, the law was the "school-master" that led humanity to strive Godward. Though this human striving could never be complete, it met God coming downward in the gospel of Christ.¹⁶⁷ History, therefore, was at once "the blundering and tragic search of man for God," and also "God's search for His foolish, headstrong, wilful child."¹⁶⁸

As noted earlier, Roberts' view of the relation between spirit and law, and grace and nature, envisioned a Platonic hierarchy of realms in which law and the natural order was subordinate to and the servant of grace and the freedom of the spirit. The present reality of the Kingdom, and the fact that man lived simultaneously in both worlds, meant that "the eternal should suffuse the temporal and transmute it into the sacramental."¹⁶⁹ Though the spirit worked within to transform humans into "rulers" and "servants of God," that work must bear fruit in the extension of grace into the world through human instruments. Though its source and destiny were transcendent, the reality of God's

¹⁶⁵Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; The Recapture of the Christian Experience: III. The Home-Coming," 237; Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; The Breaking of Bonds," 205.

¹⁶⁶Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; The Recapture of the Christian Experience: IV. Son Once More," NO (11 April 1934), 256.

¹⁶⁷Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; Our Inner Life, IX, The Fruit of the Spirit," NO (30 August 1933), 629.

¹⁶⁸Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; The Recapture of the Christian Experience: III. The Home-Coming," 237.

¹⁶⁹Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; The Recapture of the Christian Experience: IV. Son Once More," 256.

Kingdom in the present inward rule of God must issue in a new social order.

Though Roberts shared Reinhold Niebuhr's Augustinian sense of the tension of living in the present between two world, his emphasis on the triumph of God's moral spirit gave him greater optimism than Niebuhr. Though difficult to perceive in the midst of crisis, he wrote in 1933, the working out of God's redemptive plan was the "golden thread of meaning" to history and human life.¹⁷⁰ The fact that God pursued humanity, that despite human sin God could not be dislodged from the world, meant that despite the apparent meaningless of life in the present world, it belonged to the Kingdom of God. In a world in flux, where knowledge could provide only "provisional and precarious conclusions" and where action was hemmed in by "a welter of conflict and compromise, a chaos of mixed motives and cross-purposes," humans must either become cynics or look to Christ as the light in the wilderness. Christ's cross, he pleaded, was surely the guarantee of not only God's judgement, but the fulfillment of hope in the victory of transcendent and eternal Truth, Right, and Love.¹⁷¹ As he declared elsewhere in a 1934 series of meditations on the theme "In a World Gone Mad What is a Christian to Do?" God had not abdicated his sovereignty in the world: "He is still on his throne: and He will see to it that His righteousness prevails."¹⁷²

From 1933 through his tenure as Moderator of the United Church, Roberts made the themes of evangelism and consecration, "the New Man" and "the Divine Society," his constant refrain. Like the early church which had found itself living in a time of turmoil, the present apprehensive world urgently needed to find its foundation in "things above."¹⁷³ The heart of the gospel was the

¹⁷⁰Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; God's Plan for Every Life," NO (1 February 1933), 103, 106.

¹⁷¹Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; Jesus Christ the Same Yesterday, Today, and For Ever," NO (12 April 1933), 303.

¹⁷²Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; In a World Gone Mad What is a Christian to Do? I. The First Thing is to Keep His Head," NO (31 January 1934), 69.

¹⁷³Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour: The Spirit of Adoption," NO (18 January 1933), 55, 62.

assurance that God was working behind the scenes to fulfill humanity's potential sonship of God. And it was the church's task to make that work plain and real, and to urge people to submit to God's pursuit. "We must," he declared, "open the doors for the return of God into the common life of the world," in order to recover the eternal spiritual power to renew the everyday life of the world.¹⁷⁴

Roberts' Moderator's sermon of 1934 set out the theme, borrowed from the original 1914 constitution of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, of "'A Church for us all, And work for us all, And God's world for us all, Even unto this last.'"¹⁷⁵ The church was to be a world-wide commonwealth of Christian souls with the task of affirming "the primacy of spiritual values" and the priority of the Kingdom of God over business, nationalism, and pleasure. The earth, he claimed, was created for the spiritual development of immortal personality; it was the "forecourt of eternity," and the church's task was "to bear witness to this far goal, this destiny beyond all worlds," acting as the voice of Eternity calling to humanity across time. As Dow had argued in 1932, it was in the church that the divine fellowship with Christ was to be found, and the church, in turn, was to present to the world the incarnation of Christ's sacrificial spirit and the moral dynamic of man's political and social hopes.¹⁷⁶

Roberts' and Dow's idea of the church as a distinctly spiritual body suggested a significant change in the way that United Church officials viewed the task and organization of the church. This change was evident, for example in their shift from the goal of organic institutional church union to an ecumenical federalism. Initially, as the major Canadian Protestant denominations cooperated in their joint evangelism campaign, some United Church members hoped for further church union. Speaking in 1931 to the General Synod of the Church of England, E. H. Oliver, then United Church

¹⁷⁴Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; The Spirit of Adoption," 55, 62.

¹⁷⁵Richard Roberts, "'A Church for Us All,' Sermon Preached by the New Moderator, Rev. Richard Roberts, D.D., at the General Council, September, 13, 1934," NO (19 September 1934), 805-807.

¹⁷⁶Dow, "The Preacher's Page: Nature and Redemption," 407.

Moderator, urged a recovery of the mind of Christ and the unity of the primitive church to meet the unprecedented need of the world.¹⁷⁷ But what was meant by the unity of the primitive church remained ambiguous, while Roberts' and Dow's treatment of the church as a spiritual body defined in terms of free fellowship suggested little sympathy for institutional solutions to the social crisis.

Another indication of an ecumenical notion of spiritual unity was evident in George Pidgeon's very favourable review of John T. McNeill's Unitive Protestantism (1929).¹⁷⁸ According to Pidgeon, McNeill showed that unionism was inherent in the original character of Protestantism in three basic ways. First, Protestantism viewed the church primarily as a fellowship of those who shared the experience centered in Christ. In this sense, it held to a corporate consciousness. Secondly, Protestantism emphasized the catholicity of this fellowship, a catholicity which rested not on papacy or imperialism, but on fellowship rooted in vital relation with Christ. And thirdly, Protestants supported conciliarism rather than papal absolutism or monarchy, and in so doing advocated a constitutional principle which integrated unity and liberty. The church was to be governed, remarkably in accord with British constitutional ideals, "by the will of its members, as expressed in councils made up of their own responsible representatives."

These interpretations of church unity in terms of free spiritual fellowship were reinforced by ecumenical cooperation. The joint evangelism campaign itself was an occasion of denominational cooperation without requiring institutional uniformity. In September 1931, coinciding with that campaign, the Church of England, the Presbyterian Church, and the United Church tentatively discussed the principle of cooperation in sparsely settled districts, though they arrived at no specific resolution.¹⁷⁹ Even moreso, cooperation with global ecumenical organizations like the International

¹⁷⁷ed. "The Moderator Speaks to the Synod," NO (30 September 1931), 921.

¹⁷⁸George C. Pidgeon, "Protestantism and Church Unity," NO (3 December 1930), 1169.

¹⁷⁹ed., "Looking Toward Cooperation," NO (30 September 1931), 920.

Missionary Council also suggested a new "conciliar" way for the churches to present a common front against the world.

By 1935, in a discussion on prospects for further church union, Roberts declared his support for spiritual rather than institutional church union. The "new man" and the "divine society," he argued, were intimately related.¹⁸⁰ The "evangelical" principle was that each person was saved by the direct experience of God's grace, and had immediate, free access to God. But believers were also called to be a free fellowship of saints united in Christ. In both the "secular" and the "spiritual" fields, personality and community were co-ordinate, and the church needed a balance between the two. But that fellowship was to be rooted in spirit, and therefore also in freedom. In a follow-up article, he defined catholicity as a fellowship that was continuous with the historic church and its traditions, and that was comprehensive in its fellowship with all who professed Christ despite their differences in doctrine and ritual.¹⁸¹ The church, Roberts concluded, should seek catholic unity wherever possible, though on the grounds of comprehensiveness rather than compromise or uniformity.

In these emerging ideas of the church as a spiritual body, Canadian Protestants, even in the United Church, were moving toward a view of church unity that would be characterized by ecumenical cooperation rather than institutional unity. This new ecumenicity, modelled in the International Missionary Conferences throughout the twentieth century, would culminate in the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1945 out of the Faith and Work conferences at Edinburgh and Lausanne in 1937.

While this "catholic" view of the church located the spirit peculiarly in the church, it left the relationship of the spirit and church to the world ambiguous. In part, this problem was raised by Ernst Troeltsch, whose work, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches (1911, 1932), was reviewed

¹⁸⁰Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; The Body of Christ in Canada," NO (23 January 1935), 81-82.

¹⁸¹Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; The Body of Christ in Canada," NO (30 January 1935), 116, 128.

in new translation by John F. Moore in 1933.¹⁸² By Moore's reading, Troeltsch showed that Christianity originally had no connection with the social problems of its time, nor did it have a social gospel to preach. It was "essentially a religious phenomenon" concerned with salvation of the soul, monotheism, life after death, and personal holiness. The original Christian ideal meant "'renunciation of the material social ideal of all political and economic values,' for the spiritual 'treasures of peace of heart, love of humanity, fellowship with God...'" Likewise, the organization of Christianity was intrinsically distinct from the organization of the state, family, and economic order. Only as the Church became a "state within the State" did it become involved in social problems and need to relate its religious ideals to social affairs. Troeltsch's interpretation suggested that the church's direct involvement in society was in some sense a compromise with earthly power. As Moore commented, Troeltsch's treatment of Christianity in terms of an essentially spiritual and other-worldly orientation was "[a] very different account...from the popular gospel of the social prophets during the last thirty years." Moore nevertheless found it a "convincing" thesis, and proceeded to follow Troeltsch's survey of the historical interchange between Christianity and social relations, noting especially that Troeltsch considered the "radical ideals" of social reformers such as older chiliastic sects and modern Christian Socialists to be utopian fantasies and "child's play." Only Catholicism and "Ascetic Protestantism" had made a significant impact on the world. In the complexity of the modern world, Moore concluded, one must face the pessimistic but honest "brutal facts" that while the social meaning of Christianity must be sought, there was no absolute Christian social ethic to be discovered. The millennium was not "just around the corner;" rather, the final truth was that "the Kingdom of God is within us. We must hold to that -- and let our light shine."

Taken to its conclusion, Troeltsch's interpretation would confine the spirit to the church, while by implication "nature" would be regarded as religiously neutral and ontologically secular. Roberts'

¹⁸²F. J. Moore, "Christian Social Doctrine," The Canadian Forum, Vol. XII, No. 142 (July 1932), 387-88.

view of the church in the world, by contrast, insisted that the life of the spirit, since it was essentially moral, entailed also a "spiritual interest" in the world of social and economic affairs, in the hope of building a consecrated society such as the Christian Commonwealth envisioned by Charlemagne.¹⁸³ The consecration of the spirit must by its very nature be channelled into action in the world. "We can no longer be content with the joy of seeing souls saved," he claimed; "we must keep steadily in mind that souls are saved for a purpose. They are saved in order that they may engage here and now in the present enterprise of the Kingdom of God."¹⁸⁴ At the same time, however, he added a significant qualifier.

Let me not be misunderstood. I am not suggesting that that is all that they are saved for. They have a transcendental destiny, a destiny beyond time and space, a place prepared for them in the Church Triumphant in the presence of God. But this world is the stage on which they have to qualify themselves for citizenship in the heavenly Jerusalem....They qualify for the life of the heavenly City of God by the very labor of building the earthly City of God. Our evangelism must be evangelism for the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom of God here in this world, a City of God that indeed will never be wholly realized in this world; for it is of the very nature of that City that as soon as one perfection is gained, it will point out to a higher perfection beyond.¹⁸⁵

As a model of this vision of the Kingdom of God, Roberts commended the report on "Christianizing the Social Order" as a means to a sanctified community -- the "Beloved Community," as Josiah Royce had called it -- which lived in this world but with an eye to a heavenly eternal destiny.

Although he maintained that spiritual values must penetrate social life, Roberts described the relations between Church and State in terms of the ambiguity of living in this world with an eye on an otherworldly destiny, particularly by referring to the neo-Kantian distinction between two "levels"

¹⁸³Roberts, "'A Church for Us All,'" 805-807.

¹⁸⁴Richard Roberts, "The Moderator to the Church: IV. The Beloved Community," NQ (14 November 1934), 1002-1003.

¹⁸⁵Roberts, "The Moderator to the Church: IV. The Beloved Community," 1002-1003.

of life: that of "ends and values," and that of "ways and means."¹⁸⁶ In the "Beloved Community," ends and values were universal spiritual principles embodied in the teaching and Person of Jesus, and on which there could be no disagreement. The realm of means he identified with the structured life of economics and politics. Already in February 1931 he stated that though it was right to keep the Church and the State separate, the boundary between the two was in practice permeable. God could not be kept out of politics, for the whole world was subject to God's unchanging moral order and his judgements, and that moral rule was to be extended into the structured life of the world.¹⁸⁷

While Christians were to be "profoundly interested" in the realm of ways and means as the realm of practical moral action, this was also a realm in which there was room for justifiable differences of opinion. Here the ambiguity remained: Christians must be involved in economics and politics for the sake of the Kingdom, but there were no clear or specific norms for this realm. When it came to practical policy, Roberts avoided direct comment. God's Word, he claimed in a sermon on "Jesus and the Unemployed," offered no political or economic strategy to solve problems like unemployment. Rather, it offered a revelation of God's righteousness that penetrated beyond the "merely" economic problem to the more fundamental "human" problem of humanity's relationship to God.¹⁸⁸ Likewise, during the 1935 election, he refused to pronounce directly on election issues "except in so far as they manifestly affect the values and the ends of which the Church is the exponent and guardian...."¹⁸⁹

As matters of "ways and means," politics and economics were, according to Roberts, part of

¹⁸⁶Roberts, "The Moderator to the Church: IV. The Beloved Community," 1002-1003.

¹⁸⁷Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour: God in Public Affairs," NO (11 February 1931), 127, 140.

¹⁸⁸Richard Roberts, "Jesus and the Unemployed," NO (6 May 1931), 419.

¹⁸⁹Richard Roberts, "The Impending Canadian Election," NO (9 October 1935), 968-69.

a world of "relativity" and temporality.¹⁹⁰ Insofar as they were technical matters, they were matters of opinion whose value could only be determined by their results. For this the church had no special competence. He added that economic systems and political institutions were not eternal principles, but rather were relative to moral law and human ends. What passed as "economic laws" were simply descriptive statements of how processes worked under certain conditions. And those conditions and processes could be changed since they depended on persons. Under the transformation of human personality by the spirit of Christ, economics should, and could be directed to spiritual ends.¹⁹¹ Thus Roberts' approach tended to moralize social relations, while bypassing questions of practical application, in the belief that social structures were elastic and conformable to personal morality, and that the first concern of Christians in the realm of means should be to ensure that politics and economics conformed to the mind and spirit of Christ, and to spiritual ends like freedom, tolerance, and grace.

Roberts' comments on technical matters of politics and economics were related to his concern, and that of others like D. N. McLachlan and E. J. Urwick, to restrain the secularization of the sciences by asserting the claims of moral ideals over technical reason. In his inaugural address as chancellor and president of Victoria University in 1930, E. W. Wallace similarly defended the role of religion in the university at a time when secularization had become the norm for university education in Ontario.¹⁹² The very ideals that contributed to sound learning, Wallace argued, had been cultivated in a religious heritage. Moreover, if education was not merely knowledge of data, but training in life, then its training must include "adjustment to that ultimate aspect and movement" of reality that is completed in religion. A secularized education would deprive students of the central aspect of reality

¹⁹⁰Roberts, "The Impending Canadian Election," 968-69.

¹⁹¹Roberts, "Jesus and the Unemployed," 419.

¹⁹²Edward Wilson Wallace, "'Religion and Education,' Inaugural Address," NO (12 February 1930), 149-50, 167.

and of that which fosters the best will and character in humanity. Thus, Wallace argued, religion in education was necessary not only for the preparation of professional clergy and for advocating the faith of a sponsoring church, but as a corrective to a wholly secularized education, so as to enable man to grasp and adjust himself to the ultimate in reality.

It was against this background of concern about the development of a secular science of technical mastery that Roberts had attempted to relativize the structured world and subordinate science to spiritual ends. Even Christians, he argued in 1931, had become too preoccupied with reason, even to the extent of subordinating religion to the respectability of reason.¹⁹³ Though reason rightly prevented religion "from running to seed in credulity and superstition," the mystery and transcendence of religion could not be comprehended by reason. Behind reason, the human mind backed on to intuition, or conscience, and its openness to the voice of eternity by which God impinged unexpectedly on human thought. Though the experiences which reach humans through senses and reasoning did carry "hints and promises of something beyond themselves to those who are able to receive them," conscience was the instrument by which God spoke directly to humans.¹⁹⁴ So conscience was to direct the technical and empirical methods of science to serve spiritual ends.

Significantly, however, Roberts did not directly challenge the assumptions of science or its view of nature. To the contrary, his comments on economic "laws" emphasized the transience and flux of nature, and also a pragmatic view of critical reason as a technical imposition of human purposes on nature. In his Moderator's sermon, for example, he declared that society had not yet learned to "control the caprices of Nature" to "eliminate all dislocations of the economic process...."¹⁹⁵ Built into his efforts to moralize science was the assumption that the methods of

¹⁹³Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; The Crux of the Gospel," 491, 504.

¹⁹⁴Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; Our Inner Life, VII, How God Speaks to Us," NQ (16 August 1933), 597.

¹⁹⁵Roberts, "'A Church for Us All,'" 805-807.

positivist and pragmatic science were legitimate in their own realm, while that realm consisted of a temporary and relatively unreal world.

The meaning of Roberts' Augustinianism for the practical life of society and politics followed a similar pattern, for in the end his interpretation of spiritual ends affirmed the British liberal tradition, and also contributed to the construction of a corporate liberalism, or social democracy, during the mid-1930's. Though reticent to specify particular measures, Roberts called in his Moderator's sermon for the application of a "justice of grace" that would replace secular measures of the worth of people with a "spiritual" measure of what they needed to achieve full human personhood.¹⁹⁶ The Christian view of politics, he claimed,

is that the temporalities are meant to serve the spiritualities: and it requires that temporal circumstances shall be so ordered as to make a man free and able to rise to the height of his spiritual possibility; in other words, that the state should secure for the individual the temporal -- that is, the political and economic -- prerequisites of the good life.¹⁹⁷

Implicitly assuming the Medieval view of the state as the primary authority and guarantor of well-being in the natural realm, the first concern of Roberts and like-minded colleagues was to preserve freedom for spiritual personality. By the mid-1930's, Roberts was suspicious of growing regulation and regimentation by the state, especially in the new dictatorships of Europe. Communism, Fascism, and Hitlerism, he warned, were "doctrines of compulsion and uniformity" whose realpolitik was a faith in the use of force rather than spiritual reality.¹⁹⁸ In the face of totalitarianism, Roberts appealed to what he called the legacy of Gladstonian liberalism and Lord Acton's dictum that "freedom should be the regulative principle of a political philosophy."¹⁹⁹ Elsewhere he identified

¹⁹⁶Roberts, "'A Church for Us All,'" 805-807.

¹⁹⁷Roberts, "The Impending Canadian Election," 968-69.

¹⁹⁸Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; The Rock Whence Ye Were Hewn," NO (29 November 1933), 845.

¹⁹⁹Roberts, "The Impending Canadian Election," 968-69.

the principle of spiritual method and the protection of moral freedom with the British tradition and its genius for faith in freedom. Despite lapses of nationalistic jingoism, he argued, it was this faith that had compelled the British people to become missionaries of both the Kingdom of God and free self-government to the world. Indeed, there would be no real progress in the life of the world without orderly freedom and the spiritual reality.²⁰⁰

Like many in the mid-1930's, Roberts thus participated in an explicit return to liberalism in response to the spectre of totalitarianism. Indeed, his suggestion of a complementary relationship between the Kingdom of God and British constitutional freedom echoed the views of nineteenth and early twentieth century idealist evangelicals, though Roberts by no means would suggest that God's Kingdom was identical to a political system. Furthermore, Roberts, and in particular the Commission on Christianizing the Social Order, supported the formation of a new corporate liberalism which extended the state's role in providing for economic security, while insisting on the primacy of individual liberty and moral conscience. In part, this shift acknowledged that individuals were not self-sufficient moral agents, but rather were related to fellow-persons, and also to material circumstances. No less important in the shift, however, was the belief demonstrated by Roberts that "economic laws" were merely descriptive hypotheses, and that economic relations were subject to human, moral ends.

This revised liberalism had emerged among mainline Protestants during the early 1930's as a response to both the depression circumstances and to calls for social revolution. As we have seen, D. N. McLachlan's response to demands for more radical action in the late 1920's had insisted on a sharp distinction between moral personality and the inevitable "mechanisms" of the economic system. John Walker Macmillan, Professor of Social Work at Victoria University, also displayed this distinction, but his response to the emerging depression also suggested how economic mechanisms

²⁰⁰Roberts, "The Quiet Hour: The Rock Whence Ye Were Hewn," 845.

might be subordinated to moral ends. Macmillan had served as a Presbyterian minister, and was heavily influenced by the earlier idealist Christian socialism of W. J. Ashley at the University of Toronto and by Walter Rauschenbusch and Washington Gladden during his studies at Union Theological Seminary. During World War I, he became professor of Christian social ethics and practical theology at Manitoba College, where he worked closely with Salem Bland and J. S. Woodsworth, before moving to Victoria University. As Christie and Gauvreau note, Macmillan was devoted to a corporate view of society and moral reform, but he maintained that the individual remained the central, moral agent in society.²⁰¹

In his comments on unemployment, Macmillan chided the Canadian Manufacturers' Association's typical opposition to "the dole" and endorsed minimal state action to provide for basic welfare, but nevertheless rejected optimistic expectations that socialist revolution would solve the problems of the modern economy.²⁰² Unemployment, he argued, could not be completely eliminated, because modern business required a reserve supply of labour. This was true of all industrial systems, he claimed, and so presumably was not unique to the capitalist system. The causes of this "necessary" unemployment lay in the intricacies of an international industrial order, including seasonal fluctuations in work, the "cyclical rhythm" of depression and expansion, technological progress and its temporary dislocation of workers, and chronic casual labour in irregular unskilled trades. It was true that modern society had neglected the misery that came with progress, but that misery was also the product of the very mechanisms of the economic system. Though he agreed that relief should be given, Macmillan's interpretation of unemployment in terms of an intractable natural economic law insisted that there was no simple panacea. The problem was indeed systemic to the industrial system, and not just the fault of either the unemployed or the employers. The whole social

²⁰¹Christie and Gauvreau, 83-4.

²⁰²J. W. Macmillan, "Unemployment: Its Causes," NO (12 November 1930), 1098.

order, rather than a particular class, was responsible for a system which offered a technique of massive production but failed to "humanize" that technique to make it "serviceable to mankind." What the system needed was "an alliance of good will rather than a competition of hatred," so that the system, though intractable in itself, might be subordinated to moral and human ends. In his follow-up article, Macmillan suggested a strategy for humanizing industrial relations that included minimal state regulation. Since unemployment was first of all an economic problem, those who controlled business had the greatest responsibility and opportunity to solve its problems.²⁰³ Contrary to condemnations of capitalists as a class, he claimed that there were owners of large businesses who were considerate of their workers, and in fact had developed a scientific approach to labour management that recognized that secure workers were more productive, and that sought to keep their workers regularly employed. Despite these individual efforts at good will, however, the very independence and competitive economic individualism that business insisted upon prevented business as a whole from regularizing employment and standards of health and safety. Macmillan therefore suggested legislation to maintain regular standards of better business such as reduced working hours, unemployment insurance and public works to maintain a reserve labour supply, a nation-wide employment exchange, and public credit.²⁰⁴ Such measures, anticipating Keynesian economic theory, constituted a minimal amount of rational state intervention to mitigate and improve the mechanics of the system, and to liberate its participants so that they might more freely employ the good will that he believed was already present. Beyond these adjustments, Macmillan opposed the intrusion of the state into business unless the desired result could be achieved in no other way.²⁰⁵

²⁰³J. W. Macmillan, "Unemployment as a Problem of Business," NO (19 November 1930), 1122.

²⁰⁴See also Macmillan's concluding article, "Unemployment: the Remedies," NO (3 December 1930), 1170, 1186.

²⁰⁵Macmillan, "Unemployment: the Remedies," 1170, 1186.

This attempt to regulate what was thought to be the mechanics of the economic system to serve human ends was also the main theme of the 1934 Commission on Christianizing the Social Order. While the report shared the views of social democrats like Irene Biss and Harold Cassidy in acknowledging that the Depression was a collective crisis that involved all classes, it also insisted, in keeping with the liberal idealism of its chairman Robert Falconer and E. J. Urwick that recognition of collective responsibility did not "annul the moral responsibility of the individual."²⁰⁶ It also noted that the crisis resulted partly from historical processes and unknown natural forces, such as those which caused drought, that could not be controlled or altered. Furthermore, it claimed that the central root of the crisis was the removal of moral influences on economic activity. Paradoxically, while modern industry liberated modern man from the burden of meeting the primary needs of life by providing leisure, means of cooperation, schools, indeed all the attributes of a complex culture, it also had produced poverty in the midst of plenty. Modern industry had diverted its productivity from human service to an acquisitive and unregulated pursuit of wealth and power as ends in themselves. And this pursuit, in turn, contributed to a ceaseless push for productivity and profits, the treatment of workers as "hirelings," the detachment of business from morals, and national rivalry and conflicts.²⁰⁷

In its proposals for responding to the crisis, the Commission bent toward a combination of personalism and corporatism. The main rivals of Christianity, it claimed, were Communism and "Corporate Nationalism." Both of these repudiated "private aggrandizement" as the primary interest in life, and instead called for devotion to the social good.²⁰⁸ Christianity would have to be equally creative in suggesting a better way of life for both personal and social good. A Christian social order

²⁰⁶UCC, RP, 1934, "Report of the Commission on Christianizing the Social Order," 235, 239. On Urwick's role on the Commission for Christianizing the Social Order, see especially Christie and Gauvreau, 150-5, 239-40.

²⁰⁷UCC, RP, 1934, "Report of the Commission on Christianizing the Social Order," 242-44.

²⁰⁸UCC, RP, 1934, "Report of the Commission on Christianizing the Social Order," 244, 246.

would emphasize the value of life and love of neighbor, and repentance from greed and materialism. And its fundamental principle of social justice would be the supreme worth of every person, and the insistence that no person be treated merely as an instrument of another's private interests or wealth. Accordingly, the main features of "[a] society approximating to the Kingdom of God on earth" would include opportunity and responsibility of all "honest, capable and industrious persons" to earn a living for themselves in decent working conditions, and with freedom and leisure for developing all that was good; equitable treatment for all in industry; efficient supply of the material needs of life by industry; money not regarded as an end in itself or the measure of the worth of a person; and a willingness to yield self-interest for the sake of occasions of cooperation.

Roberts commended the Commission's call for an economic system that upheld absolute moral ends and the supreme worth of every person. Bare freedom was no longer sufficient, he claimed; rather, persons needed material security for freedom, while freedom itself must be qualified by moral ends.²⁰⁹ As he argued in his Moderator's sermon, the "justice of grace" included economic security for every willing worker to enable them to achieve full personhood.²¹⁰ He also pleaded that work be made available to all as necessary, not only for economic needs, but as an urgent antidote to the degeneration of idle hands, and hence as an essential part of "the discipline of moral personality" and of a healthy society. "God's world for us all," he proclaimed, meant essentially an open and free world of equal opportunity and access to knowledge, culture, creative work, and fellowship,-- "a world with a universal right of way," in which all would have the opportunity to discover the riches of life and grow into full personhood. The fulfillment of such ends would be none other than "the incarnate City of God."

Though reticent to suggest specific policies, Roberts favoured a system of unemployment

²⁰⁹Roberts, "The Impending Canadian Election," 968-69.

²¹⁰Roberts, "'A Church for Us All,'" 805-807.

insurance that would still uphold the duty of all to work, but would operate on the basis of the economic needs of workers, rather than being indexed merely to time worked.²¹¹ The duty to work, however, implied also the right to work. While an insurance system based on need would provide for workers during a time in which there was no work, Roberts also suggested a more democratic reorganization of the industrial system. Achieving social justice in economic matters involved three parties: workers; "industry," by which he seemed to mean management; and the consuming public. All three parties, he claimed, should have some say in the industrial economy, since each party had needs to meet, and each party had at stake its personal and moral dignity that entitled it to a voice in economic affairs.

In the end, the neo-Kantian Augustinianism adopted by Roberts and other liberal-evangelicals offered a moralized approach to the economic crisis that was remarkably similar to William Lyon Mackenzie King's Industry and Humanity, and that would be implemented gradually by King's Liberal government during the late 1930's and 1940's. In practice, his "Christian communism" was a corporate liberalism that identified humanity with the unique moral freedom signified in "personality," and that attempted to subordinate the structures of society to the renewal of this moral realm.

Nevertheless, Roberts and his colleagues claimed not to advocate specific measures regarding how spiritual ends were to be met. These specific and relative measures were matters for technical experts in government and business.²¹² In fact, Roberts' first advice in "a world gone mad" was that humans should "keep our heads" by questioning their own competence to take Christian action to solve the problems of the world and by refusing to be stampeded into fear.²¹³ Subsequent articles

²¹¹Roberts, "Jesus and the Unemployed," 419.

²¹²Roberts, "'A Church for Us All,'" 805-807.

²¹³Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; In a World Gone Mad What is a Christian to Do? I. The First Thing is to Keep His Head," NQ (31 January 1934), 69.

on the theme "what to do" did call for intelligent action based on discerning understanding of the causes of social problems and a "Christian justice" based on grace, and ultimately the development of requisite specific policies, but with a tolerant moderation that acknowledged that no judgement or policy was final.²¹⁴

Likewise, the report of the Commission on Christianizing the Social Order refused to specify particular "first steps" toward the new order. At the most, it commended trends toward provision for old age pensions, unemployment insurance, disability insurance, and public utilities. It also endorsed the calls of the Anglican Lambeth Conference and the 1931 Papal Encyclical "Quadragesimo Anno" for cooperation for the general good in industry and the distribution of wealth for the benefit of the many. But it also declared that the role of the Church was "to be the light rather than the engineer of the City of God, to point direction and reveal goals rather than to elaborate programs of successive changes."²¹⁵ The church's task was to foster understanding, good-will, and self-criticism. And in order to prophesy freely concerning the moral principles of social life, it must do so without identifying the Christian mission with any particular party or programme. Indeed, by the very nature of religion as moral spirit, the church must use persuasion and the shaping of public opinion against evil practices, rather than coercion or direct political action.

The two main ideas in this position are worth emphasizing. First, the Commission maintained that the creation of new inner life through the Church's preaching and evangelism was the primary task of the church and the surest method for guiding society toward the good.²¹⁶ Roberts was even

²¹⁴Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; In a World Gone Mad What is a Christian to Do? II. The Second Thing is to Keep His Eyes Open;" "III. The Third Thing is to Use His Brains;" "The Fourth Thing is to Watch His Step;" all in the following volumes of NO respectively: (7 February 1934), 85, 92; (14 February 1934), 101, 111; (21 February 1934), 121.

²¹⁵UCC, RP, 1934, "Report of the Commission on Christianizing the Social Order," 247-8.

²¹⁶UCC, Yearbook, 1934, "Evangelism and Social Service," 102.

more explicit on this point. In contrast to the Oxford Group or the social revolution demanded by Christian socialists, Roberts rejected the use of machinery and programs, and "cheap and easy" methods to achieve holiness and salvation.²¹⁷ The solution to the social crisis required not merely "quick remedies," but scrutiny of modern civilization in the light of the divine moral righteousness and a silent attendance to the word of God.²¹⁸ In short, the solution required God's transcendent grace, and for this Christians should appeal to the "detached" and sure foundation of God's reign.²¹⁹ In place of secular ideals characterized by real-politick, use of force, and a capitalist economy devoted to self-interest and commercial profit, the new life offered in Christ gave a spiritual view in which

the world we see is not all the world there is, that the greater part of life is out of sight, that the seen is but the foreground of the unseen, that man's destiny lies 'beyond the pomp of setting suns,' in a world of ends, invisible yet nearer than hands or feet, the world which Jesus called the Kingdom of God.²²⁰

According to Roberts, it was precisely the otherness of a transcendent Kingdom that gave the spiritual vision by which a "divine revolution" might make all things new. The coming of the Kingdom required first of all a return to the holy will of God and his authoritative "Thou shalt or Thou shalt not" of the Ten Commandments to provide a moral imperative that was more than merely the desire of man's own heart.²²¹ In the Ten Commandments, the Bible declared an unchanging moral order in the universe by which man sows what he reaps. Hence man was called to daily repentance, taking up the cross of Christ, and returning to the "footing of moral reality."²²²

²¹⁷Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; Is There No God in Israel?" NO (21 June 1933), 469.

²¹⁸Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; God in Public Affairs," 127, 140.

²¹⁹Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; In a World Gone Mad What is a Christian to Do? I. The First Thing is to Keep His Head," 69.

²²⁰Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; The Recapture of the Christian Experience: V. The New Mind," NO (18 April 1934), 284.

²²¹Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; The Ten Commandments Today," NO (1 August 1934), 625.

²²²Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; The Breaking of Bonds," 205.

It was from this emphasis on a transcendent Kingdom of grace that Roberts urged the church, during his tenure as Moderator, to a mission of evangelism. The church's mission was "spiritual renewal," and its method of creating the Christian Commonwealth was the "sword of the spirit" in the word of God.²²³ Evangelism and "cultivation of the inner life," he expected, would come to fruition in renewed passion for creating a Christian social order, so that the Joint Evangelism campaign was ultimately the means of realizing the goals of the report on Christianizing the Social Order.²²⁴ As Professor J. M. Shaw of Queen's Theological Seminary noted, Roberts' mission was getting at the "personal evangelism" that lay in back of and at the root of a "social gospel."²²⁵

Instead of the extraordinary activism of the FCSO and the sensational efforts of the Oxford Group and Pentecostalism, Roberts emphasized what he saw as the ordinary pastoral work of the church and its slow process of patiently building "stone upon stone."²²⁶ For this, the Church could only preach Christ in its quiet pastoral work:

the quiet, commonplace, unexciting life of the Church day by day is the most important single fact in the world at any time. Merely by existing the Church renders the world a service which cannot be assessed by any common measurement...By simply existing, the Church is a perpetual reminder that man shall not live by bread alone, but by the word that cometh forth from the mouth of God -- and that is the most important single piece of information that a man of flesh and blood can ever hear.²²⁷

Though disappointing to impatient idealists, the Kingdom of God was a "long-term undertaking" that would come only by "unwavering faith in God and in the spiritual nature of man." Admittedly, the

²²³Roberts, "'A Church for Us All,'" 805-807.

²²⁴Richard Roberts, "The Moderator to the Church: II. The Moderator's Mission," NO (31 October 1934), 954-55, 968.

²²⁵Prof. J. M. Shaw, "The Moderator's Mission in Kingston," NO (20 February 1935), 194.

²²⁶Roberts, "'A Church for Us All,'" 805-807.

²²⁷Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; Is There No God in Israel?" 469.

ordinary task of nurturing this faith did not make the church very impressive, nor did the fact that the church often failed to measure up to its own standards. The reality was that the church worked with inadequate means, and a membership of frail and feeble people who were "never more than partly redeemed." Though still "in the making," however, its sheer continued existence and the witness to grace in the ordinary generosity and charity of its members was proof, despite all crises, of the miraculous presence of God in its life.²²⁸

Secondly, as the Commission on Christianizing the Social Order warned, if the church was to prophecy freely concerning the moral principles of social life, and so serve as the instrument of such transcendent grace, it must be independent from the state and temporal entanglements.²²⁹ This concern to distance the church from the state was articulated especially by Clarence Edwin Silcox in a lecture "The Religion of Church and State: the Modern World," given in Montreal during 1934. Son of a Canadian social gospeller, Silcox was at the time Director of Inter-Faith Relations at the Institute of Social and Religious Research in New York. In 1936 he would become General Secretary of the Social Service Council of Canada, and also would work closely with the staff of the Board of Evangelism and Social Service. In his lecture, Silcox argued that the hope of union and a national Church assumed relations between Church and State that were fraught with implications in the modern world of nation-states, and especially with the threat that the church would be subordinated to the state, as Hitler had attempted to nationalize the Lutheran Church in Germany.²³⁰ Jesus' comments regarding "render unto Caesar," (Matt. 22:21), he claimed, were intended to avoid the hazards of pitting the church against the state, while asserting the general principle of legitimate, limited authority. Instead of either subjecting the church to canon law controlled by the emperor, or putting

²²⁸Roberts, "The Quiet Hour: Is There no God in Israel?" 485.

²²⁹UCC, RP, 1934, "Report of the Commission on Christianizing the Social Order," 248.

²³⁰Quoted by Edith M. Luke, "Our Montreal Letter," NO (7 March 1934), 152.

God over against the emperor, Jesus sought "to divert the attention of His hearers to those things which were spiritual and eternal. Behind the enunciation of this fundamental principle is a clear sense of the priority of the spiritual."

Like Jesus, Christians and the church had always to distinguish between, though not absolutely separate, superior moral principles and matters of political and economic expediency. Throughout its history, the church and the state had always overlapped, but co-existed in tension. In the Roman Empire, Christians were executed as scapegoats, but tolerated when it served imperial interests. While the supremacy of the church during the Middle Ages served as a check on robber kings, it became a privileged elite that fattened the clergy at the expense of the poor. And in turn, the Reformation brought a needed corrective, but was followed by fragmentation of the church and the rise of nationalism such that national churches confused religion and patriotism. This pattern of subordinating the church to political and social interests, in fact, had produced the struggle in Germany to prevent the subordination of the Church to Hitler's vision of the church as the "soul" of the German Volk, against which evangelical resisters insisted that the church must be the "conscience" of the nation, and thus separate from and ready to reprove the nation.

It was in this role as the conscience of the nation, Silcox concluded, that the church best served society. Apart from the church's acting as its conscience, society was faced with two options. One was an unrestrained "will to power" for the self, the race, class, or nation. A second was to put greater burdens on the state to solve problems and give all citizens ownership through the powers of the state, a prospect which suggested the continuation of post-Reformation nationalism that tended to totalitarianism. Compared with these, an independent church serving as the conscience of the nation could assume some tension through which life was interpreted in terms of independent Christian principles of service.

For Silcox, as well as for Roberts, an independent church was the correlative of its appeal to

transcendent grace and its prophetic, sacramental role of mediating the moral Kingdom of God into the life of the nation. Citing the example of the slow but enduring methods of the early Medieval church in Europe under Gregory the Great, Roberts epitomized the transcendent perspective and the long-term undertaking of spiritual renewal that were the prerogative of the church. Peace conferences and economic plans would not save the world unless humanity learned

that it is only by living in another world that you can save this world; that you cannot set in order the things that are on this earth unless your mind is set on things that are above; that we shall never control the things that are seen and temporal until we ourselves are subdued to the things that are unseen and eternal.²³¹

The Kingdom of God was not achieved by a human plan, but by God's plan which was embodied in the Person of Jesus and conveyed through the church. And to those who had Jesus within them, the world was not a meaningless or indifferent place. Living in the pattern of Jesus, humanity "creates and finds his own world; and that world is the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is at hand always and everywhere for the man who wills to live in it. And wherever the man goes the Kingdom goes with him."²³²

The ambiguity of living in two worlds, however, would become even more pronounced for Roberts with the deepening "madness" of the world in the late 1930's. Though Roberts had long emphasized that the Christian's hope lay in transcendent grace, in the landscape of deepening secularism and threats of totalitarianism and war, he now insisted on the inherent potential of man for divinity, quoting Thucydides' version of Pericles' famous speech which held out the vision of "a city where men have wings." Humans, Roberts claimed, were born able to rise to eternity. "A great thinker of our times has said," and no doubt he was referring to Niebuhr's Moral Man and Immoral Society, "that the mark of human personality is self-transcendence: the impulse that is in it to rise

²³¹Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; The Kingdom of God," NQ (31 May 1933), 421.

²³²Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; The Kingdom of God," 421.

beyond and above itself."²³³ Here he took issue with the "old theology" which taught man's tendency to fall. While there was a sense in which this was "tragically" true, the old theology failed to teach that man was also "born to rise." "We are of the earth, earthy; but it is in our bones that we are to rise about [sic] the earthy." Like Rodin's "thinker" and Plato's contemplative search for the "absent perfection" of Absolute Truth in "another hidden world," or like the ability of poets and musicians to capture "the Beauty above" in earthly forms, man's true nature and destiny, for those who would accept it, was to rise "beyond the track of the outmost store" to the throne of God.

Roberts' optimism included an explicit rejection of the Barthian emphasis on inherent human depravity. In the Incarnation, Christ had bridged the world of the Unknowable Absolute and human personality, revealing the Absolute in the form of human personality in an idiom understandable to man, and also had demonstrated the true image of personality.²³⁴ Especially in the latter sense, the Incarnation had shown that sin was no essential feature of human nature, but rather was "an intruder, an interloper." Rather than pessimism, the Incarnation gave promise that man might become "human plus." And in a following Easter 1936 sermon, Roberts affirmed the significance of the Resurrection for this world:

The significance of the Resurrection is that it happened in this world. The conflict of the forces that make for death is the perennial crisis of this human world,And the Resurrection comes to tell us that here in this actual human world, the forces of life are in the teeth of all appearances mightier than the forces of death,....²³⁵

Despite this hopefulness of redemptive forces, Roberts nevertheless portrayed the destiny of human perfection in terms that finally concurred with Augustine's otherworldliness. In an article concluding his Easter sermon, he warned that though humans in the temporal world had reason to

²³³Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; 'A City Where Men Have Wings,'" NO (8 May 1935), 467-68.

²³⁴Richard Roberts, "The Word was Made Flesh -- A Christmas Sermon," NO (11 December 1935), 1201.

²³⁵Richard Roberts, "Easter: If In This World Only...!" NO (8 April 1936), 330.

hope, the human dream of divine perfection could never be realized "in this world." The Christian ideal of perfection was an endless process of self-transcendence, and likewise the dream of a Christian social order would have no final end amid the tragedy of the unfinished present world "until we stand in the immediate presence of God."²³⁶ There was, Roberts explained, a fundamental tension between time and eternity: "Time is not long enough for man to attain perfection; he needs eternity. And so it is that if there is nothing but time, if in this life only we have hope in Christ, then are we of all men most to be pitied." Though Christians had a hope that was already present in this world, that hope consisted essentially in the opening of this world onto eternity.

Roberts interpreted this turn to an eternal destiny in terms of a shift in orientation from the historical past to the existential present and future. In an article entitled "Nunc Dimittis," written in December 1937 as the spectre of Nazi and Communist dictatorship and the prospects of war in Europe grew, Roberts differentiated between history and the hope of religion.²³⁷ History was the "commentary of events upon the hidden workings of the moral order of the world." As such, it was a storehouse of moral wisdom which taught that what man sows, so shall he reap. While history concerned past events, however, religion looked forward to "a divine far-off event to which the whole creation moves," and for which God had come to the present temporal order. Hence the Kingdom of God was a "coming concern" which arrived from the future eternity and acted as a continuous Advent in the present. Despite the growing indifference to religion in modern secular society, that eternal presence of God in the Spirit would continue to come to and preserve a faithful remnant, and through that remnant and the movement of history God would at some unknown moment "recall His people from their apostasy" and "put to flight those powers of darkness that to-day lay waste the face of the

²³⁶Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; If In This World Only...! (Concluded)," NQ (15 April 1936), 352.

²³⁷Richard Roberts, "'Nunc Dimittis;' Some Thoughts for a Clouded Christmas," NQ (10 December 1937), 1144.

earth."²³⁸

While this eschatological orientation was the basis of hope that this world was open to the eternal, it nevertheless meant, not so much the transformation of this world, but, as Roberts explained in a later article on the Resurrection, the promise of liberation from the "dark prison of mortality" in "nature."²³⁹ The openness of the world to eternity freed modern man from pessimistic secularism, which he defined as "the dreary doctrine that the world we see is all the world there is," for in the Resurrection the Eternal invaded the temporal. Indeed, he claimed, the Resurrection and its sign of an eternal destiny was a tremendous comfort that was "necessary to my sanity." If life was to end in nothingness, "then this is condemned as a stupid and wasteful universe; and whatever God be over it He is a God not for our worship, but for our contempt." Finally, Roberts' modern Augustinianism affirmed humanity's need of hope and meaning in a world gone mad. And the hope that it offered was the assurance that life on earth was merely the first steps toward eternity,-- "no more than a pilgrimage toward a goal which recedes from us the nearer we approach it."²⁴⁰ And in that brief interlude human life on earth was to prepare for eternity by striving to build the walls of the Eternal City "in this world of time and place."

IV. Conclusion: the Revival of Liberal-Evangelicalism

In his comments on the ecumenical conferences held in 1937 at Oxford and Edinburgh, Roberts identified two central features of the emerging renewal of liberal-Protestantism. First, he pointed to a universal church which, as symbolized in the resistance of the "Confessing" church against Hitler in Germany, stood against a world that was characterized by the "reign of secularism," and that it was

²³⁸Roberts, "'Nunc Dimittis;'" 1144.

²³⁹Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; Stones Rolled Away," NQ (26 March 1937), 271.

²⁴⁰Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; If In This World Only...! (Concluded)," 352.

called to redeem.²⁴¹ In answer to that call, secondly, the church had turned to "theological revival." What now was "contemptuously described as nineteenth century liberalism" had been a necessary, if temporary movement that claimed the freedom to examine creeds, thus laying the foundations for religion to rediscover its feet and reclaim its rightful place in the modern world.

Roberts' comments rightly indicate the significant reorientation of mainline liberal-Protestantism that had occurred especially during the period of 1928 to the mid-1930's. In a virtual reversal of nineteenth-century liberal-evangelical progressivism, Roberts, along with colleagues like John Dow, D. N. McLachlan, George Pidgeon, and C. E. Silcox, had turned to an emphasis on the need of transcendent grace, on an apocalyptic vision of the Kingdom of God, and on a view of the church as a sacramental institution in the world. They had done so, not simply out of disinterest in social reform, but rather out of sense of the depths of the challenge of modern secularizing culture. Disillusioned with the adequacy of human efforts and structural change to resolve the depths of crisis in human sin, their first concern to was to reclaim the grounds of Christian hope in the sovereign grace of God. In so doing, they paralleled the work of Karl Barth and Reinhold Niebuhr in identifying Christianity and the Kingdom of God with a transcendent source and destiny. And from this turn to Augustinian themes of a transcendent divine reality and God's sovereign grace, they claimed both the assurance of meaning and freedom for human life in a world in crisis and the perspective from which to prophetically critique and transform modern secular society.

Despite their turn to classic Augustinian themes, their interpretation was, as Roberts emphatically claimed, not old-time orthodoxy, but the "liberal" and "modernist" theology of the apostle Paul. For Paul, he claimed, the life of the Gospel was not right opinions or creeds, but inward direction of the spirit and the "right disposition" to life motivated by love of God and neighbour was

²⁴¹Richard Roberts, "A Theological Renaissance," Christendom, Vol. 2 (1937), 539.

the "living soul" of the gospel.²⁴² Roberts' own contribution to what he called the revival of theology, in The Contemporary Christ (1938), complemented this theme of the inward experience of the spirit by interpreting the "contemporary" Christ as the "living" Christ of the Holy Spirit.

Among mainline Canadian Protestants, this "modern" interpretation of Augustinian themes was rooted in the British tradition of neo-Kantian idealism, rather than Barth's existentialist dialectics or Niebuhr's realism. Their neo-Kantian assumptions were the central core in their continuity with nineteenth-century evangelicalism. In that neo-Kantian framework they divided the world into a hierarchy of the ontic realities of spirit and nature, identifying the transcendent grace of God with its presence in the world through the Incarnation and in the presence of the divine spirit in man's true personality and its moral ideals. With this neo-Kantian idealist revision of the Platonic features of Augustine, Canadian liberal-evangelicals like Roberts attempted to preserve a "vertical axis" of spiritual relations between humanity and God. This idealism was notably in sharp contrast to Barth's declaration of a radical chasm between God and humanity, and even to Niebuhr's pessimism. For Roberts and his colleagues, faith in the presence of transcendent divine grace in the world affirmed confidence in the identity of the human spirit with God, and in the significance of human freedom and moral effectiveness to transform social relations. Consequently, Canadian advocates of this revised liberal evangelicalism remained optimistic that moral regeneration would "Christianize" the social order. To that end, they continued to claim a voice for moral ends in the midst of a world in crisis.

Despite their confidence in spiritual reality, however, there remained a deep ambiguity in the modern Augustinianism of liberal-evangelicals like Roberts. Though it has been argued that Canadian Protestants like Richard Roberts had settled on a neo-Kantian apologetic as a new and creative

²⁴²Richard Roberts, "The Quiet Hour; The Gospel at Philippi, VII, 'We are the Circumcision,'" NO (9 September 1931), 851, 862.

synthesis of modern thought and historical theology,²⁴³ their neo-Kantianism included Augustinian and Platonic influences. Indeed, they recognized the reality of human sin, and also claimed the "really real" world of spirit, but at the same time they regarded the "natural world" as a transient and temporary reality that was mere mechanism, and potentially in tension with spirit.

The result of this version of Platonic realism shot through liberal-evangelicals' understanding of the relationship between God's Kingdom and the world. Like Niebuhr, especially in his Moral Man and Immoral Society (1932), they were suspicious of structures as associations of power, but at the same time they were optimistic that the eternal ideals which relativized temporal structures might also penetrate those structures. In particular, their advocacy of a social order that would serve personal ends contributed to emergence in Canada of a corporate liberalism characterized by expanding the role of the state to moderate the impact of the capitalist system, but without fundamentally altering the socio-economic system itself. Likewise, while claiming a voice for spiritual and moral ideals to counter the weight of secular science, they assumed that the techniques of science, neutral in themselves, might be used to direct relative natural structures to human ends. Thus, their differentiation of the Kingdom of God from any temporal, relative structures ultimately surrendered those "technical" sciences and relative social structures to secularization.

²⁴³Michael Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century: College and Creed in English Canada from the Great Revival to the Great Depression (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 266-67, 290.

Chapter 7: Revolutionary Christianity

The Christian socialist movement that was begun in several Canadian cities in 1930-31 and culminated in the formation of the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order also had its roots in the deepening crises of the late 1920's. Although in many ways the heir to the earlier social gospel movement, the new generation of Christian socialists, lead especially by John Line, John King Gordon, and Gregory Vlastos, was profoundly different insofar as it shared in the post-1928 struggle to articulate the reality of God and the unique significance of the gospel and the Kingdom of God for a world that was both secularized and in crisis. The new Christian socialists were disillusioned with the impact of capitalism and imperialism on western society, and with the apparent complicity of liberal-Protestantism in that social order. In contrast to the late nineteenth century progressive vision of the coming of God's Kingdom in western civilization, they professed a "radical religion" which differentiated sharply between God's Kingdom and contemporary western civilization. This differentiation was the premise of their hope for a revolutionary, eschatological coming of God's Kingdom on earth.

This "radical" and revolutionary understanding of the Kingdom of God drew from new currents of post-war theological and philosophical "realism." As William Cavert suggested concerning the new generation of younger American theologians of the 1930's, they shared Karl Barth's insistence on the reality of a transcendent God who was distinct from, and indeed whose holy will was in conflict with, the reality of sin that was embedded in contemporary human culture and ideals.¹ Like Richard Roberts in his revised Augustinianism, the new Christian socialists found in Barth's ideas the perspective from which to deepen their criticism of western culture, and the hope of an apocalyptic Kingdom that might restore meaning and justice to a chaotic world.

¹Samuel McCrea Cavert, "The Younger Theologians," Religion in Life (1936), 522-3.

In contrast to the revival of liberal-evangelicalism, however, they combined this theocentric realism with variations of philosophical "realism." Two aspects of this shift to philosophical realism were especially important for Christian socialists. First, it included a shift from metaphysical idealism to an existentialist realism that, like Emil Brunner's "crisis theology," challenged the analogia entis that was central to the personal idealism of liberal evangelicals. While John Line would mediate this shift with the "realist idealism" of Alfred North Whitehead, Gregory Vlastos would move most completely to an existentialist position. Secondly, they emphasized a critical scientific method that assumed the "reality" of the structural and historical context in which human personality was defined, and to which human knowledge was limited. As R. B. Y. Scott would demonstrate, this realism included a renewed interpretation of Biblical theology in its socio-historical context. More broadly, the new Christian socialists would draw on the ideas of Karl Marx, R. H. Tawney, and the British Christian Marxist John Macmurray to develop a "realist" interpretation of the structures of modern capitalist society so as to critique them in the light of God's Kingdom.

It was this combination of theological and philosophical realism that gave Christian socialists their revolutionary dynamic. On the one hand, they asserted the radical disjuncture between God's Kingdom and modern western culture, challenging both the liberal-capitalist social structure and the individualism and optimistic anthropocentrism of the liberal Protestant tradition that supported the capitalist system. By breaking with neo-Kantian metaphysical idealism, they also repudiated both the analogia entis that identified human personality with a divine spiritual essence, and the progressive confidence that the agencies for building God's Kingdom were immanent in the moral nature of humanity. On the other hand, they insisted that the in-breaking of God's Kingdom, understood as the absolute ethic of love, must be experienced and applied in the "real" structures of human society.

In contrast to Roberts' treatment of the battle for the Kingdom in terms of an internal psychological crisis and a tension between spirit and structure, the new Christian socialists identified

the tension in terms of a conflict that encompassed social systems, and pit a revolutionary divine order based on love, freedom, and mutuality against a secular and self-centered modern order. Thus they rejected both liberal progressivism and the "supernaturalism" of Barth and Niebuhr, arguing instead that God's Kingdom was not in some transcendent world, but was an eschatological and revolutionary movement encountered existentially in the world and in the realities of social relations. Christians, therefore, must "get in line" with its revolutionary arrival by the "real" application of the radical gospel ethic of love in the structures of society, and thereby participating in the transformation of modern civilization.

By the late 1930's, however, Christian socialists found their hybrid difficult to maintain. To borrow Richard Roberts' picture of the church at intersecting axis, their realism had attempted, like Brunner, to collapse the vertical into the horizontal axis by locating the active and absolute Word of God in the prism of experience. When, by the late 1930's, ethical principles like freedom and pacifism seemed to come into conflict with each other, the consensus of Christian socialists in interpreting the absolute will of God in the world broke down. Also, more implicitly than explicitly, the difficulty of reconciling a personal transcendent God mediated to the world exclusively in Christ with Whitehead's idealist ontology which identified God as the ground of being that was disclosed in the recognition of other persons, proved untenable and ended in a division especially between Line and Vlastos.

I. Towards the Socialist Fellowship

At its height in 1936-37, the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order was still a rump of some 1200 active members, mostly United Church scholars and ministers, spread in small cells across most of Canada's major cities. Among its active members were progressives and social gossellers from the early 1920's like Rev. H. A. Horrick, founder of the Alberta School of Religion in 1925, Ernest

Thomas, field secretary for the United Church's Board of Evangelism and Social Service (BESS), William B. Creighton, editor of the New Outlook, William Alva Gifford, professor of Church History at United Theological College and Rev. R. Edis Fairbairn, a long-time ardent pacifist. "Associate" members, who sympathized with the concerns of the FCSO, included J. S. Woodsworth, Salem Bland, and even Richard Roberts, who would write the preface to the FCSO's 1936 manifesto, Towards the Christian Revolution.²

The intellectual leaders and most active members of the movement, however, were a new generation of scholars and clergymen that included John King Gordon, John Line, Gregory Vlastos, Eugene Forsey, Robert Belgarie Young Scott, Rev. John W. A. Nicholson, William G. Smith, Eric Havelock, Rev. Robert J. Irwin, and Martyn Estall. Gordon was especially pivotal in the network of Christian socialists. After helping to found a Christian Socialist movement in Vancouver in 1930, Gordon moved to Montreal, where he taught Christian Ethics at United Theological College until his dismissal in 1934. In Montreal, he joined a nascent Christian socialist group that included Forsey, professor of Political Science at McGill, R. B. Y. Scott, professor of Old Testament Theology at United Theological College and a rising scholar in Biblical Theology, and William A. Gifford. With Forsey, R. B. Y. Scott, Frank Scott, and Leonard Marsh, Gordon also was part of the Montreal wing of the League for Social Reconstruction (LSR) that was formed in January 1932. Other founding members of the LSR who also would become prominent in the FCSO included Line, Vlastos, Havelock, and Fairbairn.³ Some of these, including Gordon and Eugene Forsey, would also be present at the Regina meeting which founded the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). After his final removal from United Theological College, Gordon would run unsuccessfully as a CCF

²Towards the Christian Revolution (TCR), R. B. Y. Scott and Gregory Vlastos, eds. (Kingston: Ronald P. Frye & Co., 1989 [1936]).

³Roger Hutchinson, "Introduction," Towards the Christian Revolution, xvi.

candidate for Vancouver in the 1935 federal election, and he would serve as a part-time field secretary for both the CCF and the FCSO, until he left Canada in 1937 for a publishing and diplomatic career in the United States and with the United Nations.⁴

According to Gordon, Scott, Line, and Vlastos provided the "radical spiritual leadership" of the movement.⁵ R. B. Y. Scott was a young professor of Old Testament studies at Union College, Vancouver from 1928 until his move to Union Theological College, Montreal in 1931. Line, meanwhile, from his position at Emmanuel College after 1927, was instrumental in founding the Movement for a Christian Social Order that grew out of the 1930 Toronto Ministerial Conference.⁶ He was commissioned to present the ideas of the group at the public meeting to found the Movement in 1931, and he would continue to press its concerns in the Toronto Conference and in the Commission on Christianizing the Social Order. During the early 1930's, he also participated in the inter-denominational Alberta School of Religion, sharing the podium with Reinhold and H. Richard Niebuhr, Harry Ward, John Macmurray, and Willem Visser't Hooft. Line would be the first secretary for education and publications for the FCSO. Vlastos, though somewhat more isolated after arriving at Queen's to teach philosophy in the early 1930's, was involved in the "Theological Discussion Group" that was centered at Union Theological Seminary in New York and included leading American "realist" theologians such as the Niebuhrs, Henry P. Van Dusen, Wilhelm Pauck, Walter M. Horton, and John C. Bennett.⁷

Vlastos helped to organize the April 1934 meeting in Kingston at which the several Christian

⁴Brian J. Fraser, "From Anathema to Alternative, The Gordons and Socialism," A Long and Faithful March, Harold Wells and Roger Hutchinson, eds. (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1989), 45.

⁵J. King Gordon, "A Christian Socialist in the 1930's," The Social Gospel in Canada, Richard Allen, ed. (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1975), 138-9.

⁶Rev. J. Russell Harris, "Towards a Christian Social Order," New Outlook (NO) (17 June 1931), 577.

⁷Cavert, "The Younger Theologians," 520-1.

Socialist movements joined to found the FCSO, and he would be a perennial officer of the FCSO's executive until the mid-1940's. With some thirty members present, the founding conference selected Gordon as Chairman, and John Line as vice-Chairman in charge of the Committee on Research. Other members of the Executive Committee included Vastos, W. F. Kelloway, N. A. McMurray, and R. Edis Fairbairn.⁸ The conference also settled on a constitution which established the FCSO as a "fellowship," thereby embodying the principle of "freedom in community," and defined its task as research, study, and public education concerning the implications of the Christian ethic for modern society and economic life. According to Gordon, the FCSO's constitution was based on the Manifesto of the LSR, which called for a social order "in which the basic principle of regulating production, distribution and service will be the common good rather than private profit."⁹ Most importantly, the FCSO declared its purpose to "awaken and strengthen, throughout the Church, the religious will to achieve social justice."¹⁰ Thus it would advocate a distinctly Christian socialism.

By 1936, now under the chairmanship of R. B. Y. Scott and with Gordon as its paid field secretary, the FCSO had organized units in all of the conferences and presbyteries of the United Church, and even in Tokyo.¹¹ Also in 1936, it published its main work, Towards the Christian Revolution (1936). The main parts of the work, consisting of philosophical, theological, and socio-political analysis, were produced by Line, Scott, Vlastos, Forsey, Gordon, and Vlastos. Additional parts were contributed by Eric Havelock, Classics professor at Victoria College and also a member of the FCSO; J. W. A. Nicholson, a United Church minister at Bedeque North, P. E. I.; R. Edis

⁸Richards, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order," 217.

⁹Gordon, "A Christian Socialist in the 1930's," 129-30.

¹⁰Richards, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order," 217.

¹¹A. L. Richards, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, 'National Conference,'" NO (20 May 1936), 484. The decision to organize on the basis of the United Church structure was made in 1935. See A. L. Richards, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, 'Annual Conference,'" NO (29 May 1935), 560.

Fairbairn, another United Church minister at Canfield, Ontario; and under the pen-name "Propheticus," Martyn Estell, then a philosopher at McMaster University and later at Queen's.

Though undoubtedly an eclectic group, the members of the FCSO were knit together by two main factors. First, they were parts of a network of personal contacts that reached into a wide variety of institutions that included the church, the university, government advisory boards, the CCF, labour and farmer organizations, and other less formal institutions like the LSR and the Alberta School of Religion. Despite their small numbers, these contacts were pursued with remarkable energy and effect. Secondly, they were bound together in the common goal of working out the meaning of the gospel in the structures of society. More specifically, they understood the gospel and its relation to society in terms of a "radical realism," arriving at an interpretation that identified the gospel as an absolute ethic of love which was best approximated in socialism, and which must revolutionize western social structures.

II. The roots of "Radical Religion"

The turn of the new Christian socialists to a revolutionary interpretation of the Kingdom of God involved simultaneously a disillusionment with liberal Protestantism and a move toward theological and philosophical "realism." On the one side, they shared the disillusionment of the post-war generation with a civilization that, by the late 1920's, was becoming explicitly secular while its social order was increasingly in crisis. In this context, modern liberal Protestantism seemed not only ineffective in transforming western civilization, but also entangled in its debasement. On the other side, their interpretation of that debasement was shaped by their engagement in the new currents of realism in both theology and critical social analysis.

Despite their disillusionment, it is important to note that their turn to realism was not the abandonment of the ethical interpretation of the gospel that was central to liberal Protestantism. To

the contrary, their realism included the attempt to affirm the authentic "reality" of absolute ideals. Indeed, their theological realism, as Cavert suggested in describing American realist theologians, involved a search for the objective reality of God's sovereign will.¹² At the same time, they also sought to relate that divine reality more effectively to the historical-structural life in which people live.

John Line captured this search for reality, and accompanying dis-satisfaction with liberal-Protestantism, in his impression of the views of students at the 1929 Student Christian Movement Conference at Elgin House, Ontario. Youth, he claimed, were now not so frankly critical of the church or impatient for rapid social reform as they were immediately after World War I, for they had become more conscious of the depths of the task of Christianity in the world and the need of sure foundations, and were more "puzzled and grieved" at the complacency of the church.

There is in the minds of many students a deep desire for simplicity and reality in the religious life and for directness in accepting the whole radical programme of Jesus and relating it to the needs of men; but it doesn't seem to them that the Church as a whole is demanding this or very exclusively bent on securing it, but is going quite composedly her established ways.¹³

Line's comments reflect the intimate connection between recovering the reality of Christian foundations and asserting the real significance of the gospel for social life in the development of Christian socialism. Concern for the reality of both God and humanity was built into their "radical religion."

That search for "reality in the religious life" had been a concern for modern Protestants especially since World War I, reaching a crisis in the developments of 1928. As part of that search, Line, like Richard Roberts, had attempted to locate a distinct divine reality in Biblical revelation and, through vitalism, in the experienced world. And as he indicated in his devotional address to the Maritime Conference of the United Church, Line was especially concerned to recover the moral power

¹²Cavert, "The Younger Theologians," 522-3.

¹³John Line, "Religious Activities Among Students," NQ (16 October 1929), 1045.

of Christianity and its relation to practical life. At a time of crisis in the world, he warned, Christians were losing the art of using the moral and regenerative forces of Christianity in meeting practical needs. "We need a type of prayer life," he pleaded, "that involves a more definite and dynamical content of ethical and religious experience."¹⁴ Christian devotion, according to Line, should be expressed in seeking to transform the world.

For the young Gregory Vlastos, this search for reality led to disillusionment with liberal Protestantism and its apparent lack of radical commitment to the gospel ethic of love. Born in Constantinople in 1908 to a father who was a Greek Christian and a mother who was the daughter of a Scottish missionary, Vlastos immigrated to the United States with his family while he was still a child. Vlastos graduated from Roberts College and Chicago Theological Seminary, where one of his teachers was Henry Nelson Wieman, before taking his Ph.D. in philosophy and social ethics at Harvard University.¹⁵

Vlastos' earliest writings reflected the "realism" of Henry Nelson Wieman, and also paralleled the turn of Reinhold Niebuhr to realism. As William Hutchinson notes, Wieman's bete noir was the idealist sentimentalism of liberal Protestantism that reduced Christianity to merely human ideas, and particularly to saccharin "sugar and spice" ideas that glossed over the reality of sin and conflict in the world.¹⁶ Similarly, Vlastos' youthful writings on the prospects of a clerical vocation, published in 1928 and 1929 in Charles Clayton Morrison's Christian Century, posited a deep conflict between the "common sense" of liberal Protestantism and "radical religion." As a college senior, Vlastos wrote,

¹⁴"The United Church in the Maritime Conference, Devotional Addresses," NQ (6 July 1927), 18.

¹⁵Gregory Vlastos, "What is Love?" Christendom, Vol. 1 (1935-36), 116. Vlastos' birth year is estimated here, based on Vlastos' description of himself in 1929 as twenty-one years old. Vlastos, "Through the Eyes of Twenty-One," The Christian Century, Vol. 46, Pt. 1 (19 June 1929), 806-8.

¹⁶William R. Hutchinson, The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 269-70.

he had discovered in religion the "one thing worth living for and dying for;" the one thing that, in contrast to the "cleverness and self-consciousness" of the modern world, demanded total sacrifice and promised a new way of life.¹⁷ In contrast to this "one thing," Vlastos described the "common sense" preoccupation of modern liberal Protestants with practicality, cultural refinement, and intellectual dilettantism as "the enemy of religion." Their obsession with intellectual respectability and a practical moderation that kept "religion in its place" left liberal Protestants vulnerable to the doubts raised by science. It also left them with a diluted Christian morality that spoke only platitudes on obvious standards like the Ten Commandments, but stifled the explosive, revolutionary morality of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount as impractical in the present world.¹⁸

While a student pastor in rural Montana, Vlastos concluded that the refined moderation of liberalism had little real practical meaning for "that Sunday congregation whose faces haunted me day and night, even in my sleep." In his search for something relevant to say to his parishioners, he resolved to renounce "common sense" in favour of "religion:"

I preached a sermon on the cross. I spoke about the foolishness of the cross, its shame, its failure, its defeat. And I told them that this was Christianity. They listened. The Sunday before they had looked out of the window as I spoke, and then congratulated me at the end. Now they listened, and did not say much after church."

The radical religion of the cross, Vlastos claimed, was the authentic religion that opened up moral possibilities; it was "the faith of great dreamers," in contrast to practical reasonableness and institutional organization.¹⁹

From the late 1920's, Vlastos declared his determination to be both radical and modern. Rather than fearing the facts of modern science, he would regard them as merely relative, "just facts,"

¹⁷Gregory Vlastos, "The Religion of a Fool," The Christian Century, Vol. 45, Pt. 2 (4 October 1928), 1193-95.

¹⁸Vlastos, "Through the Eyes of Twenty-One," 806-7.

¹⁹Vlastos, "The Religion of a Fool," 1195.

that were subject to change and new interpretations. Thus Vlastos' modernism implied the relativity and limits of empirical knowledge and was pessimistic about discovering a divine essence or absolute in the natural world. On the other hand, his determination to be "radical" assumed the "reality" of moral absolutes that were not merely the product of human rules or "philosophy." Henceforth, he declared, he would preach the Sermon on the Mount, not as a legalistic list of "Do's and Don't's," nor as a philosophy, but as an ideal or a vision of spiritual reality to be pursued in an adventure of "foolhardy, aggressive good will," wherever these might be found. Admittedly, he conceded, his radicalism was idealistic, but "[b]etween a dead church and a romantic church, I choose the romantic church. So did Jesus, and Francis, and Luther."²⁰

In the early development of John King Gordon, disillusionment with liberal Protestants' lack of conviction, such as Line and Vlastos expressed, was deepened through contact with critical social analysis. As he explained it, Gordon's road to radical Christian socialism was marked by four main "accidents."²¹ Born in Winnipeg in 1900, Gordon was the son of Charles W. Gordon (Ralph Connor), one of the most outspoken progressive social gospellers in the Presbyterian Church prior to World War I. Thus, Gordon was raised in the "social passion" of liberal-evangelical progressivism and its optimistic effort to work out Christian ideals in practical social life.²² The idealism of that social passion would stay with him, yet, as Brian Fraser notes, during the 1920's Gordon became disillusioned with much of progressive liberal-evangelicalism. Between 1921 and 1924, the second "accident" of his Christian socialist career, Gordon studied at Oxford under a Rhodes scholarship. Here he encountered the Christian socialism of Richard Tawney. Upon reading Tawney's Acquisitive Society, which pointed to the role of Protestantism in the development of liberal-capitalism, Gordon

²⁰Vlastos, "Through the Eyes of Twenty-One," 806-7.

²¹Gordon, "A Christian Socialist in the 1930's," 122.

²²Fraser, "From Anathema to Alternative, The Gordons and Socialism," 44-5.

could "almost feel the scales falling from my eyes," as he later recalled.²³ Contacts with the Fabian socialism of J. A. Hobson, L. T. Hobhouse, and the Webbs through his Trinity economics professor F. L. Ogilvie, and his reading of Marx, improved his vision even further concerning the structures of liberal-capitalism and the complicity of liberal-Protestantism in those structures.

Between 1924 and 1929, with an interlude of study in Church History and Hebrew at Manitoba College, Gordon served as a student missionary in the lumber camps of British Columbia and at a camp on the Winnipeg River where a paper mill and townsite were under construction. Here, in his third "accident," he discovered practical difficulties in building community, and the features of the "benevolent feudalism of a well-run company town," for which his Pastoral Theology courses had not prepared him.²⁴ Like Vlastos, it was especially in the pastorate among rural and working-class people that Gordon struggled to relate the gospel to practical life.

Finally, between 1929 and 1930 Gordon pursued his graduate studies in Christian Ethics at Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University. Here he served as graduate assistant to Reinhold Niebuhr and Harry Ward, and also came into contact with John C. Bennett. Niebuhr had arrived at Union only in 1928, a year after his repudiation of liberal Protestantism in Leaves from the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic (1927), but before the development of his views in Moral Man and Immoral Society (1932). By 1927, after serving as a pastor in Detroit, Niebuhr had become utterly disillusioned with "the brutal facts of modern industrial life" and the "anachronistic" morality of the churches which failed to regenerate human social ethics to a genuinely redemptive morality.²⁵ In

²³Gordon, "A Christian Socialist in the 1930's," 123.

²⁴Gordon, "A Christian Socialist in the 1930's," 125.

²⁵Reinhold Niebuhr, Leaves From the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic (Cleveland and New York: World Publishing, 1929), 95, 100. See also the following articles by Reinhold Niebuhr: "Why I am Not a Christian," CC, Vol. 44, Pt. 2 (15 December 1927), 1482-83; "What the War Did to My Mind," CC, Vol. 45, Pt. 2 (27 September 1928), 1161-63; and "Let the Liberal Churches Stop Fooling Themselves!" CC, Vol. 48, Pt. 1 (25 March 1931), 402-4.

Niebuhr especially, according to Gordon, the tension between the absolute claims of the gospel ethic of love and the realities of an unjust, power-dominated society were palpable.²⁶ In Ward, however, there was no such tension; Ward simply pointed to a "revolutionary social ethic which could be restated in terms of contemporary socialist theory and practice." Notably, Gordon would sympathize with, and select carefully from, both Niebuhr and Ward.

Gordon's experience at Union Seminary illustrates how the cross-currents of the "search for reality" in theology and social analysis came to intersect in the roots of the new Christian socialism by the late 1920's. The crux of this intersection can be identified with the period from 1929 through 1932, for it was during this time that the nascent Christian socialist movement emerged through two coinciding developments. First, scholars like Line and Vlastos encountered, and selectively borrowed from, the theological realism of Barth and Niebuhr. And at the same time, secondly, they and others began to urge that the reality of the gospel must be related to social structures in terms of revolutionary socialism.

Line encountered the ideas of Barth in the midst of his struggle to justify claims to the metaphysical reality of God, partly to establish the basis for moral absolutes that could be apprehended within experience. As late as February 1929, in an article reviewing developments in the sciences since the turn of the century, Line claimed that the theistic physics suggested by scholars like British astronomer Sir Arthur Eddington, demonstrated that beneath the mechanical laws and external phenomena of nature lay a realm of free spiritual energy which eluded science.²⁷ For Line, this vitalism preserved a place for freedom and spirit in the world without escaping into a Cartesian dualism between mind and the physical world, for vitalism transformed the Newtonian mechanistic

²⁶Gordon, "A Christian Socialist in the 1930's," 125-6.

²⁷John Line, "The New Physics and the Religious View of the World," Canadian Journal of Religious Thought (CJRT), Vol. 7, No. 1 (January-February 1929), 6-17.

cosmology into an organic interpretation of a world in process led by the impulse of an undefined spiritual reality. Vitalism, according to Line, meant that modern humanity no longer lived in a closed universe; to the contrary, it was reasonable to postulate "creative spirit as the foundation of the world," and to interpret evolution as a continuous divine creation or a series of emergents.²⁸ It also meant, he claimed, that the real world was "unseen and inscrutable," and could only be disclosed in terms of ultimate moral convictions analogous to human personality.

By 1929, however, this vitalist apologetic had become dubious under the scrutiny of critics like George Hunter and George Sidney Brett. And as Richard Roberts acknowledged in his The Christian God (1929), vitalist efforts to locate God within the evolutionary process seemed to leave God subservient to the process of emergent evolution and less than the whole of natural reality.²⁹ This crisis of vitalist idealism coincided with the arrival of Barth's ideas to North America. Shortly after his review of Eddington's interpretation of the new physics, Line reviewed the English translation of Barth's The Word of God and the Word of Man (1928), thereby offering one of the first introductions of Barth to Canadian readers. Considering Line's commitment to critical science and vitalism, the radical separation of God and world that he found in Barth's ideas must have been startling. Urging preachers to read the work, he described Barth as "a fascinating and disturbing writer; his paradoxes fall like sledge-hammers on our conventional and complacent habits of thought."³⁰

It was, however, Barth's trenchant criticisms of western society and liberal Protestant religion that Line quoted most extensively. Among the themes that impressed him were Barth's denunciation of the mundane, yet radical depravity of the human will and the utter failure of human morality to

²⁸John Line, "The New Physics and the Religious View of the World," 16.

²⁹Richard Roberts, The Christian God (New York: MacMillan, 1929), 82.

³⁰John Line, "Barth and Barthianism," CJRT, Vol. 6, No. 2 (March-April 1929), 102.

transform life; his declaration of the judgement of God upon modern capitalism and his call for radical Christian righteousness; and Barth's critique of the liberal, idealist attempt to project God from the human mind, particularly the psychological and experimental approaches of Schleiermacher and Ritschl. Line also noted Barth's renewed Calvinism in his insistence on the chasm between a transcendent God and humanity, and in his portrayal of the crisis involved in the confrontation between humanity and God's sovereign will.

Most of all, Line was struck by Barth's proclamation of the eschatological in-breaking of God into human life in order to judge and transform it. As he later explained, from among Barth's ideas Line found his doctrine of eschatological crisis a valuable principle, namely that "God does take sides, things happen in the world of which He is the decisive cause, if the better day is ever to dawn for which good men long, it will be not through human invention and efficiency only, but because God lives and speaks and acts."³¹ In fact, Barth's early participation in the "strange prophetic" movement of the Blumhardts who had emphasized the power of God to break into human life and transform it, and in the "religious-social" enthusiasm in Switzerland that had brought Barth to participate in "Religious Socialism," provided a model of revolutionary Christianity for Line.³²

Line's appreciation of Barth was selective, however. On the one hand, according to Line, Barth's ideas provided a much-needed complement to the immanent theology of the day, including Line's own work.³³ In particular, he welcomed Barth's emphasis on the distinction between God and the world, and his view of the eschatological crisis between sinful modern civilization and the judgement and revolutionary transformation of God. But he rejected Barth's treatment of Christ's work on the cross and in resurrection as "meta-historical;" though it might satisfy those seeking an

³¹Line, "Barth and Barthianism," 102.

³²Line, "Barth and Barthianism," 98.

³³Line, "Barth and Barthianism," 98.

"aneo-Christology," or a transcendent, other-worldly Christ, Line clearly had little enthusiasm for Barth's super-historical or hidden view of Christ and redemption.³⁴

Though somewhat later, Gregory Vlastos similarly welcomed Barth's condemnation of liberal optimism and anthropocentrism, but rejected his turn to dogmatics. In a sympathetic review of Wilhelm Pauck's 1932 exposition of Barth, Vlastos agreed that Barth was the "prophet of a new Christianity" in calling modern Christians, as had Henry Nelson Wieman, away from the optimistic ego-centrism of the liberal idealist tradition to the objectivity of God and a theocentric religion.³⁵ Vlastos welcomed Barth's rejection of attempts to forge a human way to God or to make God the object of human religious experience such that man might claim to possess the absolute, and his insistence that Christ comes as God's way to man, and thus as a unique revelation and a revolutionary interposition into human affairs.

But Barth's turn to "church dogmatics" to claim God's own self-revelation to the faithful, and his attempt to explain the Trinity as "the movement of God within himself," seemed to return to what Pauck called "supernaturalistic metaphysics."³⁶ According to Vlastos, such attempts to explain God in "obsolete categories" seemed contradictory to Barth's own principle that God could not be made an object of human thought, and that all beliefs about God were human and relative, and therefore inadequate and provisional hypotheses. Furthermore, such a turn to supernatural speculation diverted attention from the need of practical reform and renewed submission to God's sovereign will in other areas. As Vlastos quoted Pauck: "[w]e must attack all self-sufficiency in personal and social life, in

³⁴Line, "Barth and Barthianism," 101.

³⁵Gregory Vlastos, "Karl Barth, Prophet and Dogmatist; review of Karl Barth, Prophet of a New Christianity? By Wilhelm Pauck. Harper & Brothers, \$2.00," The Christian Century, Vol. 49, Pt. 1 (6 January 1932), 19-20.

³⁶Vlastos, "Karl Barth, Prophet and Dogmatist," 19-20.

marriage, in politics, economics, art and philosophy, and particularly in religion, church and theology."³⁷

Line's and Vlastos' estimates of Barth were similar to that of Reinhold Niebuhr, who had reviewed the English publication of Barth's The Word of God and the Word of Man already in late 1928. Niebuhr, too, welcomed Barth's emphasis on the word of God distinct from all human relativities, on God's sovereignty and grace in Christ, and on the crisis between God and history.³⁸ More than Line and Vlastos, Niebuhr appreciated Barth's vision of a transcendent God beyond history, but he too criticized Barth's claim to declare the Word of God from beyond the relativities of rational comprehension as simply the claim to an absolute on the basis of a new subjectivism. Barth's pessimism about civilization and his attempt to escape the relativities of life took flight in metaphysical absolutes from the daily struggles of moral and social injustices. Niebuhr rejected what seemed Barth's attempt to escape the historical relativities in which humans were bound, and which differentiated God and humans. Not surprisingly, Line, Gordon, and Vlastos would sympathize with these early concerns of Niebuhr.

In summary, Line and Vlastos favoured the theological "realism" of Barth and Niebuhr, but that sympathy was limited by their commitment to an anthropological "realism" which insisted on locating humans firmly within their socio-historical context. As Line wrote in 1936, Barth's "crisis theology" was a timely protest against the optimistic anthropocentrism of liberal modernism.³⁹ Barth had expressed the crisis not only of modern western society, but the roots of that crisis in human sin before the reality of God's holy will. Line, along with others like Gregory Vlastos, would appropriate

³⁷Vlastos, "Karl Barth, Prophet and Dogmatist," 19-20.

³⁸Reinhold Niebuhr, "Barth -- Apostle of the Absolute," The Christian Century, Vol. 45, Pt. 2 (13 December 1928), 1523-24.

³⁹John Line, "The Theological Principles," Towards the Christian Revolution, R. B. Y. Scott and Gregory Vlastos, eds. (Kingston: Ronald P. Frye & Co., 1989 [1936]), 42-3.

Barth's emphasis on the transcendent reality of God, and especially his declaration of radical eschatological judgement on the structured "natural" order of modern society. More specifically, Barth's insistence that God "took sides" in the conflict in the world, and that he was working within the world to judge and transform it, provided renewed urgency for a social gospel movement that was shorn of the optimism and evolutionism of the earlier progressive social gospel. This eschatological judgement of the secularized social order of modern western society would be the central theme of the new Christian socialist call for Christian revolution. While Line and his colleagues would insist that the inbreaking of God's Kingdom was uniquely God's action in history, they would call humans to get in line with that revolutionary Kingdom.

On the other hand, however, they also repudiated the "supernaturalism" of Barth and Niebuhr and their location of redemption and the Kingdom of God -- the reconciliation of essence and existence or of ideal and real -- in a transcendent or otherworldly destiny. The radical chasm posed by Barth and Kierkegaard between God and humanity seemed to minimize the mediation of Christ. Also, the "irrationalism" of Barth's method of "dogmatics" as the paradoxical human proclamation of the Word of God seemed to concede the separation of thought and religion. For Line and Vlastos, this new dualism threatened to secularize thought and render God inaccessible to reason and irrelevant for life in the world.⁴⁰

In part, this criticism of Barth's supernaturalism assumed the premises of critical realism. Line and Vlastos rejected any attempt to remove humanity from the socio-historical nexus of human existence. Nor could humans claim either an ontological identity with God or some transcendent standpoint beyond the world. As most writers in the 1936 publication Towards the Christian Revolution would claim, human knowledge could only be empirical, and hence any claims concerning the coming of the Kingdom of God would have to be related to the socio-historical world. In a 1935

⁴⁰Line, "The Theological Principles," 42-3.

article which attempted to reconcile Barth's wholly Other with an objective God experienced in the world, Vlastos declared that claims about God must begin with "God in our world," in the midst of the realities of fear, starvation, and crime.⁴¹ As Henry Nelson Wieman had argued (in contrast to both Barth's "supernaturalist" metaphysics and liberal personal idealism), God and his judgement were to be experienced in the world, "empirically," rather than postulated as a metaphysical or sentimental idea. This empiricism was necessitated partly by scientific method, but also by moral realism. According to Wieman, one could not know the God of love and grace without recognizing the God who upheld his law and the judgement that is justly due to a sinful and dark world.⁴² As Vlastos wrote echoing Wieman, claims about God must begin with realities of the world, lest God's love be turned into a sentimental "illusion and an escape."⁴³ The alternative to empirical realism was to concede the world to mere secularism.

Barth's declaration of the transcendence of God was thus two-edged: on the one hand, it challenged all human pretensions, but it also raised the problem of how God was related to and revealed in a relative and fallen world. As Line attempted to resolve this dilemma in a way that would answer the threat of skeptical naturalism but also challenge the premises of liberal Protestantism, he would attempt to move beyond the neo-Kantian dualism between spirit and nature.

Shortly after reviewing Barth's work, Line published a series of critical reviews on John Dewey's The Quest for Certainty (1929) and the development of a secular Humanist movement in which he attempted, against the tide of skeptical humanism, to clarify the metaphysical grounds for Christian morality and certainty. While appreciative of the experiential and functional concerns of William James' pragmatism, Line balked at Dewey's instrumentalist view that knowledge concerned

⁴¹Gregory Vlastos, "God of Wrath," The Christian Century, Vol. 52, Pt. 1 (24 April 1935), 539.

⁴²Hutchinson, The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism, 269-70.

⁴³Vlastos, "God of Wrath," 539.

only one's subsequent acts, and that repudiated an ultimate reality that was "antecedent" to knowledge in favour of a reality which was merely the constructed product of knowledge.⁴⁴ On this point, Line parted company from Dewey, and from the pragmatic Chicago theology of E. S. Ames, because of their turn away from the apprehension of "One who antecedently is." For Line, pragmatic instrumentalism denied the possibility of thought about a real God, ultimate meaning, and the moral impulse of "ameliorative action."

For similar reasons, Line rejected the emerging movement of secular Humanism because of its repudiation of any transcendent reality above humanity's own ideals.⁴⁵ Though the ideas of modern secular Humanists like Irving Babbitt, Paul Elmore More, and Bertrand Russell exalted human values, Line wrote, they denied that those values were related either to the non-human world or to a divine purpose comparable to human purpose. The new Humanism was rooted in positivist scientific method which regarded the natural world as mechanical, while it elevated humans and human values over against nature. Besides the utter skepticism of pessimistic "futilitarians" like Joseph Wood Krutch, the new Humanism presented two main problems, according to Line. First, it created an insuperable dualism between the human mind and nature so that moral experience was left unrelated to any universal metaphysical reality. Consequently, the moral "ought" was separated from "what is."⁴⁶ Secondly, the new Humanism assumed a naturalized cosmology which denied the possibility of knowing God, and focused instead on the love and good of humans as the real object for religion. In short, the new humanism presumed to subordinate nature and religion to humans and claimed, as in Bertrand Russell's new naturalism, that it was humans alone who created and conferred value.⁴⁷

⁴⁴John Line, "Knowledge, Metaphysics, Religion," CJRT, Vol. 7, No. 5 (September-October 1930), 391.

⁴⁵John Line, "How Humanism Came and What It Is," CJRT, Vol. 8, No. 2 (March-April, 1931), 103.

⁴⁶Line, "How Humanism Came," 107.

⁴⁷Line, "Knowledge, Metaphysics, Religion," 393.

Line's response to this secularized humanism reflected two crucial concerns that were informed by new forms of metaphysical idealism. First, he insisted that religion and morality depended on what Alfred North Whitehead had described in Religion in the Making (1926) as the "metaphysical backing" to reality in some affirmation of ultimate, transcendent reality. Life could have no meaning if reality were merely "mutabilities."⁴⁸ The failure of humanism to relate "is" and "ought" lay in its repudiation of a metaphysical reality as the basis for absolute values. Secondly, Line maintained that religion had to do with the entry and realization of transcendent mind and values into world. Here he quoted a forthcoming article by John Baillie, who by this time was at Union Theological Seminary, and who also was moving beyond the psychological limits of personal idealism: "[t]here is no other way of explaining our human experience than as the progressive invasion of an originally animal nature by a higher order of reality which exists itself eternally in changeless perfection."⁴⁹ Citing A. E. Taylor's The Faith of a Moralist, Line claimed that moral experience must be taken as revelatory of a metaphysical reality. Indeed, religion was the hope of the unity of ought and is; it was "not creatureliness, but the experience of being an ally of human and cosmic righteous powers."⁵⁰

To this point, Line's argument seemed to move in the same direction as the revived neo-Kantian idealism of Roberts and Dow that claimed knowledge of God through a moral intuition of faith that was superior to science. But here the similarity ended. As Line would complain in his 1931 paper to the founding meeting of the Movement for a Christian Social Order, liberal Protestants and their neo-Kantian apologetic held to a "static" view of humans that falsely claimed an ontological

⁴⁸Line, "Knowledge, Metaphysics, Religion," 396.

⁴⁹John Baillie, "The Psychological Point of View," The Philosophical Review (May 1930), quoted by Line, "Knowledge, Metaphysics, Religion," 396.

⁵⁰Line, "How Humanism Came," 108.

identity with God, and separated humans and morality from nature. In contrast, Line's solution to both naturalist skepticism and neo-Kantian dualism was the "teleological view of existence" offered by Walter M. Horton in his Theism and the Modern Mood (1930). According to Horton, in Line's account, belief in a cosmic order and a creative, redemptive God which exceeded humanity did not contradict the scientific conclusion that nature was indifferent, nor did the absence of "value-traits" in the data of science disprove ultimate reality or its characteristic of value.⁵¹ Instead, that scientific interpretation was a crucial assumption of human striving to transcend nature and seek the triumph of good in the midst of indifferent nature.

Though awkwardly stated, Line seemed to suggest two major revisions to the neo-Kantian framework. First, he seemed prepared to locate humans fully in a natural nexus that was indifferent in the sense of being ontologically distinct from God. In this way, as he would make much more explicit in later works, his view of humans in nature challenged the analogia entis and its assumption of an identity between God and what liberal Protestants claimed was a divine essence in human personality. Religion, according to Line, did not mean an ontological status that either identified humans with God or required man's separation from the order of things. Rather, he emphasized, religion, or spirituality, could be seen as a "Divine-human moral relationship," a relationship that linked humans morally rather than ontologically with the righteous divine reality that governed the world.⁵² While challenging the analogia entis, however, this was still a Kantian distinction between natural reality and moral ends. As Line put it, paradoxically, the fact that the world of nature seemed impersonal and indifferent to the human venture only confirmed a "Righteous Ordering transcending the practices of men."⁵³ That order also called humans to pursue the moral good as an end in itself

⁵¹Line, "How Humanism Came," 106.

⁵²Line, "How Humanism Came," 108.

⁵³Line, "Knowledge, Metaphysics, Religion," 394.

rather than for ulterior motives related to the gain of natural goods.

The second revision implied in this "teleological view of existence" was a shift to a theocentric and eschatological perspective. From their point of view, humans were located firmly in nature and had no ontological connection to God. Conversely, however, as John Baillie had suggested, religion had to do with the entry and realization of transcendent moral or spiritual values into the world.⁵⁴ Thus the religious relation between God and humans was initiated by God and consisted of a process of realizing God's will that was experienced existentially in the present and future.

Line's revisions of neo-Kantian dualism, along with his rejection of "supernaturalism," may best be compared to Emil Brunner's existentialist version of crisis theology, which Line had preferred to Barth's super-historical Christology.⁵⁵ In what James Smart calls a "widening gulf" among crisis theologians during the late 1920's, Brunner rejected Barth's turn to dogmatics, insisting instead that God could only be known by humans empirically, or existentially, within the world.⁵⁶ Ultimately, Brunner would maintain that there remained a connecting point, "a remnant of the divine image, a fragmentary capacity for God, untouched by sin" in human nature. In contrast to Barth's idea of the total impact of sin in the world and the hiddenness of God's rule in a broken world, Brunner distinguished between the realms of natural order and moral personality. Sin and redemption affected only the unique moral relationship that existed between the person of God and human persons.⁵⁷ Consequently, God's ordering of the creation still stood, including the constitution of humans as

⁵⁴John Baillie, "The Psychological Point of View," The Philosophical Review (May 1930), quoted by Line, "Knowledge, Metaphysics, Religion," 396.

⁵⁵Line, "Barth and Barthianism," 101.

⁵⁶James D. Smart, The Divided Mind of Modern Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), 150.

⁵⁷Smart, The Divided Mind of Modern Theology, 150-1. Paul G. Schrotenboer, "Emil Brunner," Creative Minds in Contemporary Theology, Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 111.

image-bearers who, like God, are personal beings morally related to each other and to God. So also, despite sin, human reason still approached the revelation of God's will in nature. Sin was confined to the broken relation between the claim of God's Word on humans to love him, and the rebellion of humans against that claim -- a rebellion that permeated and distorted all personal relations. Efforts to seek God in rationalism and legalism, though they approached God, were ultimately the height of sin since they failed to respond in love to God and the higher free ethic of love toward God. It was only in reconciliation with God in love that human reason and mastery of the world were corrected and subordinated to love and community.

As Paul Schrottenboer points out, Brunner's anthropology was strictly empirical insofar as he considered, not the original constitution and norms of creation, but the present reality of human sin and responsibility before God, while assuming the scientific view of nature as rationally ordered.⁵⁸ For Brunner, as he declared in The Theology of Crisis (1930), Christianity was primarily concerned with ethics rather than with how to conceive of reality, for the unique realm of sin and responsibility involved moral relationships rather than ontological and rational order.

Notably, Line would later dispute C. E. Silcox's criticisms of Brunner. More importantly, like Brunner, Line had emphasized that religion concerned only the unique moral relationship between God and humanity. The ontological constitution of humans as image-bearers remained, as did the order in nature. This had several implications. First, Christianity was not in tension with nature; it neither entailed the removal of man from the order of things, nor, as Line later argued, was "religious experience" something "superimposed on normal human nature." Instead, it was but "the realization of possibilities proper to it, the enhancing of its authentic powers" by the recognition and acceptance of the moral ideal of the Kingdom proclaimed by Jesus.⁵⁹ Secondly, nature remained ordered, and

⁵⁸Schrottenboer, "Emil Brunner," 113-4.

⁵⁹John Line, "Conditions of Religious Renewal," The Christian Century, Vol. 53, Pt. 1 (3 June 1936), 800.

humans remained part of nature rather than abstracted from nature, though nature itself was now subordinated to a relative and value-neutral reality. As he put it in 1930, Line had become wary of identifying God in vitalist terms as the divine impulse immanent in natural processes, and thus over-using biology to exalt what was merely the natural process of evolution.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, science could still grasp the reality of that natural order.

In place of the difficult dialectics of the German crisis theology, however, Line adopted Alfred North Whitehead's "realist" idealism to describe the relationship between God and the world. In particular, he welcomed Whitehead's interpretation of God as the "principle of concretion," which to Line suggested the recovery of an experimental metaphysics which, while using experimental science, pointed to a "metaphysical backing" to reality.⁶¹ Although Richard Roberts also had appealed to Whitehead's ideas, he had done so for the purpose of moving from experience to a transcendent God. By contrast, Line saw in Whitehead's principle of concretion an idea of a God who, though transcendent, was present in and ordered the particular world.

Though subtle, Line's revision of the neo-Kantian duality of spirit and nature was crucial in laying the intellectual ground-work for the new Christian socialism. His efforts suggested a way to reconcile an empirical scientific realism with a moral interpretation of Christianity, and more particularly with an interpretation that claimed a transcendent God who nevertheless entered eschatologically into history to call humans to obey his will, and to revolutionize human relations. Here the fundamental antithesis between the Kingdom of God and the world was not between the supposed ontological dualities of spirit and nature, but the moral tension between the will of a transcendent and sovereign God and rebellious, immoral humanity. By the mid-1930's, Christian socialists would assume that sin and salvation were intrinsically moral and experienced in social

⁶⁰Line, "How Humanism Came," 99.

⁶¹Line, "Knowledge, Metaphysics, Religion," 396.

relations, and that therefore the Kingdom of God meant a revolution in social relations.

The implications of these revisions for the development of a new Christian socialism would become especially apparent in Line's 1931 paper to the founding meeting in Toronto of the Movement for a Christian Social Order, which was one of the precursors to the FCSO. Indeed, coincidental with his reconstruction of the metaphysical grounds of "radical religion," Line and others had also begun to advocate a social interpretation of the gospel. As Brian Fraser notes, this "social gospel" was not merely the claim that the internal transformation of personal character should be manifest in a revived social morality, but rather that sin and salvation were intrinsically ethical and relational, so that the meaning of the gospel was to be found in the very quality of social relations.⁶²

There is little indication that Line, Gordon, or any others in the FCSO were consciously explicit about this difference until the 1930's. Perhaps buoyed by Richard Roberts' 1929 interpretation of the Kingdom of God as a revolutionary "spiritual communism," and his call for Christian social action, Line, Gordon, and other nascent "radicals" likewise began to advocate a more effective application of the gospel to the growing social crisis. Informed by their realism, however, they attempted to relate Roberts' call for spiritual revolution to social structures, and thereby translate his interpretation of the spiritual Kingdom of God into a Christian socialism.

The new Christian socialist movement began to emerge during 1930 with initially independent efforts in several Canadian cities. At the Toronto Conference meeting of the United Church, for example, some members, including John Line, concluded that Christians were failing "to realize the social implications of the Kingdom of God."⁶³ Thereafter, those members began to organize a "Movement for a Christian Social Order," which was formally launched at a public meeting on 26 April 1931 with R. J. Irwin as President, J. Russell Harris as Secretary, John Line as Convener of

⁶²Fraser, "From Anathema to Alternative, The Gordons and Socialism," 45-7.

⁶³Rev. J. Russell Harris, "Towards a Christian Social Order," NO (17 June 1931), 577.

educational work, and E. Crossley Hunter as Convener of field work. Subsequently, rallies were held and wings of the movement established in Hamilton and Montreal, while the executive urged the secretaries of the Religious Education department of the United Church to adopt and spread the ideas of the movement. At the same time, John King Gordon helped to found a Christian Socialist Movement in Vancouver in 1930. When he moved that same year to Montreal's United Theological College, where he taught Christian Social Ethics from 1930-33, he joined a recently formed Christian Socialist Movement lead by William Alva Gifford and Eugene Forsey.

What the new Christian socialists meant by the Kingdom of God was that the "spirit," or ethic, of Christ was inescapably related to the material and social dimensions of human life. Consequently, the revolutionary Kingdom of God must transform western political and economic structures, and must include the embodiment of God's will, revealed in Christ's spirit of love, in a new social order. On this basis, they claimed that the Kingdom of God could best be approximated in socialism. As John Line claimed at the founding meeting of the Movement for a Christian Social Order in 1931, "[w]e desire to be an aggressive militant Christian social movement."⁶⁴ The movement's founding statement emphasized the supreme value of human worth and condemned the present social and economic order for its sacrifice of human values to the interests of wealth and property. Christianizing the social order, it declared, "would entail the socializing of the organized agencies of production."⁶⁵

The Toronto movement's statement illustrates the combination of "militant" Christian idealism and concern for social structures that characterized the Christian socialist movement. In comments during the early 1930's, both Line and Gordon insisted that socialism must be linked to spiritual reality, and therefore must be distinctly Christian. At one "street-corner" meeting of the Movement

⁶⁴"Mostly About People and Churches," NO (6 May 1931), 414.

⁶⁵Rev. J. Russell Harris, "Towards a Christian Social Order," NO (17 June 1931), 577.

for a Christian Social Order in September 1931, for example, Line criticized Marxist communism for its "unspiritual economics." In contrast, he insisted that religion, specifically humanity's spiritual relation with the transcendent God, was the essential feature of social morality, structures, and change. Man seeks, Line claimed, a foundation in something beyond himself. In the same speech, however, he also criticized the "smugness" of the church and suggested that communism offered ideas for constructive change that would be "relevant for Christian society."⁶⁶

John King Gordon also called for a sympathetic appreciation of the Communist experiment. In 1930, while still a pastor in British Columbia, he criticized Moderator James Endicott's call to prayer for Russia on account of its "anti-religious" policy.⁶⁷ Gordon agreed that "no liberal Christian can but deplore" the "anti-religious" policy of the Soviet government, and he refused to endorse the political program of the Communist party. Nevertheless, he pleaded for a more sympathetic view of the relative good in soviet communism, thereby suggesting that Christianity and communism were not inherently antithetical. Communist anti-religious policies were understandable, he argued, in the light of the failure of the Church in the past to realize the social implications of the gospel. Furthermore, he added, soviet communism might offer more social idealism than had the Russian Orthodox Church, which had been aligned with the oppressive Czarist regime. The church, Gordon concluded, should appreciate the "amazing experiment in the remaking of a society," and should promote good will between Russia and the world.

Thus, while they shared Richard Roberts' insistence on an idealist "spiritual" socialism that preserved human personality and freedom and absolute moral ideals, Line and Gordon claimed that Christian ideals, since they concerned moral relations, were intrinsically social and must be experienced and manifested in social relations. Like John Dow, Line illustrated this idealist socialism

⁶⁶ed., "Professor Line on the Soap Box," NQ (23 September 1931), 910.

⁶⁷"Our Readers' Forum; J. King Gordon, 'Understand Before We Criticize,'" NQ (16 April 1930), 278-79.

by commending the British labour movement as an expression of spirituality and idealism. The British labour movement, he claimed, "personified the outcome of religious experience."⁶⁸ Nevertheless, Line and Gordon rejected Roberts' juxtaposition of spirit and nature and his focus on "psychical" change and "self-transcendence," insisting instead that spiritual methods must be related to policies and to the "realities" of a structured world.

This different emphasis was evident, as Eileen Janzen shows, in Gordon's sermons between 1929 and 1931. Gordon described the Kingdom of God as an inner reality and realm of values consisting of the spiritual and creative aspects of human nature. The Kingdom was "that state of harmonious dwelling together in which each individual by exercising his will in accordance with the principle of its true value attains to the highest degree of self realization."⁶⁹ As a spiritual reality, the Kingdom was contrasted with the material and mechanical world of nature and natural human instincts to power and acquisition. In this respect, Gordon's ideas were similar to Roberts' juxtaposition of spirit and nature, and also to the emerging theory of Niebuhr's Moral Man and Immoral Society (1932) that human society naturally was characterized by group egoism and the pursuit of power. And like Niebuhr and Roberts, Gordon identified the nature of sin as a conflict within the individual between natural selfish impulses and the "spiritual urge" to realize the good.

But unlike Niebuhr, and more explicitly than Roberts, Gordon rejected any dichotomy of these two realities. "The material realm," he claimed, "is God's world. In this world the Kingdom is to be realized."⁷⁰ Daily human life was lived in relation to both community and the material world,

⁶⁸"Mostly About People and Churches; Religion and Labour," NO (26 November 1930), 1142.

⁶⁹John King Gordon, "Easter Sermon," n.d. (1929-1931 file), Gordon Papers [private collection], quoted in Eileen Calder Janzen, "King Gordon's Christian socialism and the Kingdom of God," Studies in Religion, 16 / 3 (Summer, 1987), 353-4.

⁷⁰John King Gordon, sermon, "The Christian Shape of Things to Come," n.d. (1929-1931 file), Gordon Papers [private collection], quoted in Eileen Calder Janzen, "King Gordon's Christian socialism and the Kingdom of God," Studies in Religion, 16 / 3 (Summer, 1987), 354.

without which they would perish. "[W]e are long past the point," Gordon declared, "where we can...insist that to maintain the spiritual is to emphasize its importance to the exclusion or suppression of the material." Rather than conflict between the two, Gordon expected the spirit of Christianity to transform material life and social structures.

Line's 1931 paper on "The Fundamental Unity of Spiritual and Social Religious Values," commissioned for the founding of Movement for a Christian Social Order, likewise repudiated the juxtaposition of spirit and nature posed by Roberts, Dow, and D. N. McLachlan in their rejection of socialist revolution. While Roberts portrayed an ambiguous tension between spiritual and material forces, and called for personal evangelism and internal self-transcendence rather than revolution and "new schemes of social reclamation," Line called for a more explicit relation between spiritual reality and structured experience, and indicted the neo-Kantian ontology and social naivete of liberal Protestantism.⁷¹ The theological traditions of the uniting churches, he argued, were based on a static view of human nature that denied formative processes, and relied solely on divine intervention for change. Consequently, the promise of spiritual revival through church union had borne little fruit, for its spiritual life remained vague and equivocal. The subsequent decline of belief in miracles, in turn, had brought despair about the prospect of any change in human nature. In the mean-time, as R. H. Tawney and Max Weber had demonstrated, Protestant abdication of reform and the subsequently secularized Protestantism were intimately related to the spirit of capitalism. In the current crisis, he argued citing A. E. Taylor's Gifford Lectures The Faith of a Moralist, the decisive issue for the church was not the threat of science and nature to its theology, but the challenge of the social order to the possibility of a "real" Christian morality that related spirituality to social relations.⁷²

⁷¹John Line, "Fundamental Unity of Spiritual and Social Religious Values; The Substance of an address Given Before the Toronto Ministerial Association," NO (18 March 1931), 253, 264; and (25 March 1931), 274, 285.

⁷²John Line, "Fundamental Unity of Spiritual and Social Religious Values; The Substance of an address Given Before the Toronto Ministerial Association, II" NO (25 March 1931), 274.

Like Gordon, and also Brunner, Line thus assumed that humanity's existence in social relations was given, and that Christianity was essentially an ethical reality concerned with "how one may rightly exist in the midst of that reality."⁷³ As James Denney and Karl Barth had argued that Christ was known and witnessed to only in the historical life of the church, so Line claimed that religious life was always "conditioned by the faith of the Church; apart therefrom it could not exist."⁷⁴ Though it naively had neglected the real need for regenerative spiritual powers, the older "social gospel" had rightly recognized that there could be no false dichotomy between individual spiritual experience and the well-being of society, for "the salvation of any one of us is not complete without the salvation of us all." It was in the spiritual fellowship of the community that the "supra-individual" quality of spiritual life was experienced. Hence the knowledge of God was often achieved, not by "cultivating religion directly," but "by losing oneself in some ultra-personal aim."⁷⁵

Since spiritual life was intrinsically communal and characterized by "solidarity," the "personal aims" of religion could not be separated from the well-being of social structures, for to do so would diminish not only the social meaning of the gospel and the welfare of the poor, but also the fullness of spiritual experience. Since spiritual states were inter-related with socio-economic aims and practices, unjust social structures which obstructed spiritual life and frustrated the quest of the Kingdom of God were to be rooted out for the sake of the spiritual well-being of all members of society. Economic strife and injustice, for example, left its victims embittered, while those who worshipped at the shrine of Mammon were equally spiritually desolated. By contrast, the "spiritual value" of a more humane economy that was "ruled by friendliness" and provided for the means of life

⁷³H. Emil Brunner, The Theology of Crisis (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1930), xiii.

⁷⁴Line, "Fundamental Unity of Spiritual and Social Religious Values," 253.

⁷⁵Line, "Fundamental Unity of Spiritual and Social Religious Values, II" 274.

for all would produce a corporate spirituality that "would be revelatory of God himself."⁷⁶

Line concluded that the church's task was not only to call people to love God, but to tell them how to do so by relating the gospel to structured life. As long as the Church refused to engage in specifics, it would remain smug in the midst of disorder and despair, and would become inert and cowardly. The Church's claim to declare the will of God, Line warned, would remain "directionless and helpless unless linked to a methodology or some structural idea."⁷⁷ Christians would have to abandon their individualistic and optimistic anthropology, with its Kantian notion of an abstracted spiritual essence, and develop a "realistic" anthropology that related spiritual life to structured existence.

Line's argument in 1931 laid the foundation for his later articulation of the philosophical and theological principles of Towards the Christian Revolution. The centerpiece of those principles would be his critique of the analogia entis claimed by liberal Protestants, and his assertion of both a "Radical" religion that shared Barth's emphasis on the otherness of God and a "realism" that God's will, and man's moral response, were inextricably bound to the structured realities of life in the world. Without denying the presence of spiritual reality in the world and its relation to moral personality, Line, as well as Gordon, thus insisted that spiritual reality must be related to the structures of society. Human life was lived in the midst of social relations, and therefore the effects of both sin and the spirit of the gospel inescapably penetrated those relations. Christians must therefore repent of their participation in the capitalist social order that was in crisis, and work toward implementing the gospel in a revolutionary spiritual social order.

III. The Coming Revolution; the Revival of Prophecy

⁷⁶Line, "Fundamental Unity of Spiritual and Social Religious Values," 253.

⁷⁷Line, "Fundamental Unity of Spiritual and Social Religious Values, II," 274.

After 1931, and especially by 1933, advocates of the new Christian socialism became increasingly urgent in their call to implement the gospel in a revolutionary social order. They did so in the context of a deepening social crisis, and what seemed to them an intransigent church establishment whose focus on personal evangelism only complied with the existing social structures. As they worked through the church courts and through alternative organizations like the movements for Christian socialism and the LSR, leaders of the Christian socialist movement took up the call for a prophetic declaration of the meaning of the crisis. As they did so, they also repudiated what they regarded as Reinhold Niebuhr's move to a supernaturalist perfectionism. Instead, Line, Gordon, and their colleagues believed that the growing crisis in the social order and in international tensions was itself a revelation of God's judgment on the manifest sin of western liberal-capitalism, and of God's working in a revolutionary historical process.

The revival of a radical prophetic critique of history emerged partly in response to the focus especially of the United Church establishment on evangelism and theological study that followed from the appointment of an Evangelism Commission in 1930, its version of the Kingdom of God movement and its dalliance with the Oxford Group Movement, and its work toward the 1933 Joint Evangelism project. In contrast to this action, Line, Gordon, and others urged the church courts to adopt a clearer condemnation of the capitalist social order, and measures toward a cooperative, socialist order, with moderate success. In the 1931 Toronto Conference of the United Church, Salem Bland and John Line won support for their call for government action to reorganize the human and economic resources of the dominion "to bring immediate relief to the workless, hope to the despondent and embittered, and guide our country into a closer union than we have ever known."⁷⁸ This action by the Toronto Conference was reinforced by resolutions for social action especially from the western provinces like the British Columbia conference, which called for a "revolution of Jesus Christ" that would transform

⁷⁸E. Ryerson Young, "The United Church in Toronto Conference," NO (8 July 1931), 640.

the competitive capitalist system into a cooperative system in which human personality, love, and service were the supreme motive of business.⁷⁹

Again in the conferences of 1933, Christian socialists won narrow successes. Despite opponents who considered such matters beyond the competence of church courts, the Montreal and Ottawa Conference of the United Church, with William A. Gifford as President, approved a strong condemnation of the capitalist order and issued declarations in support of proposals like unemployment insurance, control of combines, pacifism, and repeal of Section 98 of the Criminal Code so as to restore freedom of speech.⁸⁰ It also reinstated John King Gordon to his position in Christian Ethics at United Theological College after his 1933 dismissal, largely on account of his advocacy of socialist revolution. At the Toronto Conference, there was clear tension between those who emphasized vital personal spirituality and those who urged social action.⁸¹ Under John Line's sponsorship, the Conference approved by a relatively narrow margin of 121 to 97 the report of the Evangelism and Social Service Committee which declared support for socialist measures such as the socialization of banks, as part of a "Christian economic order."

In 1932, meanwhile, Line served, along with Ernest Thomas, as a corresponding member on the sessional committee to review the Board of Evangelism and Social Service 1932 report on "The Church and Industry." The revised report of the committee clearly bore the stamp of their influence, for it argued that personal religion and spiritual experience, while certainly a valuable merit of the evangelical tradition, was not sufficient for the present crisis.⁸² In the face of what had become "a

⁷⁹J. K. U[nsworth], "The Annual Sessions of British Columbia Conference," NO (10 June 1931), 546; and (15 July 1931), 665, 673.

⁸⁰G. S. "Montreal and Ottawa Annual Conference," NO (5 July 1933), 507-8.

⁸¹"The Toronto Annual Conference," NO (12 July 1933), 523-25.

⁸²United Church of Canada, Yearbook and Record of Proceedings of the General Council, 1932, 53, 78, 98-99, 286-90.

mass or collective problem," traditional advice about personal responsibility and thriftiness failed to do justice to the complex forces that were affecting human welfare. Indeed, it threatened to leave those forces to be "led by sheer secularist aims." A new age of social relations was upon western society, especially in the realm of economic relations. What was needed was a fresh interpretation of Christianity that would be expressed not only in terms of individual ideals, but also in a way that contributed to a just economic order and "a holy community achieved in this world according to God's righteous purpose." Accordingly, the report called for an interpretation of the Kingdom of God "into social terms" that included unemployment insurance as "a direct requirement, under the existing condition of things, of the teaching and ideals of Jesus" concerning the need of opportunity and welfare for all.

Despite the appearance of success in conference resolutions, however, the preference of the mainline churches for a joint evangelism campaign, and the refusal of the United Church's Commission on Christianizing the Social Order to endorse revolutionary social action, suggested an intransigent resistance to Christian socialists' efforts. Meanwhile, behind the relatively smoothed edges of committee reports was an increasingly urgent criticism of the church's apparent preoccupation with pietist evangelism while it naively complied with a secularized capitalism that was consuming the social order.

Some of that urgency, and indeed bitter criticism of the church, was evident in letters from preachers in response to articles by Pidgeon and Roberts on the Kingdom of God Movement during 1931. One preacher wrote that Pidgeon's views of the Kingdom of God brought to mind Marx's description of religion as "the opium of the people."⁸³ So long as the church merely reiterated "the fact of the mystic presence of God, and the joy of an abundant ethereal life," then those faced with "real" problems would abandon religion as an opium. It was simply a waste of time to plead for the

⁸³Jos. Wm. Bainbridge, "Our Readers' Forum, 'Canada's Kingdom of God Movement,'" *NQ* (17 June 1931), 568.

presence of God, for God is already in fact "the one throbbing Reality of Life." What was needed was the redemption of an economic system that blasphemed and robbed God and disgraced the cause of Christ by siding with Mammon against God.

Other readers reflected a similar frustration. Reiterating Marx's comments on religion, one complained that Pidgeon had "not yet struck reality."⁸⁴ The Kingdom of God, he argued, must make a clearer break from acquisitiveness, especially as it existed within the church itself, and proclaim a more just distribution of goods. Yet another was frustrated with Roberts' view of the Kingdom. "This is the thing we have been listening to all our lives -- the power of the Gospel to save and transform the lowest of humanity," he complained, yet western society continued to produce slums, in fact more quickly than men were rescued to Christ from them. "If the Gospel be such a wonderful thing then let it manifest its power in keeping men and women from the fearful degradation of slum life."⁸⁵ Finally, one preacher writing under the pseudonym of "Archibald Ray" despaired that there was no longer room in the church for a prophetic message that related the meaning of the principles of Jesus and the presence of God to contemporary society.⁸⁶ His parishioners, especially the wealthy and "solid" members of the church seemed to insist on confining religion to personal salvation rather than social justice, and to prefer a "fine," but inoffensive preacher.

The themes of these criticisms were developed further by William Creighton in his editorials in the New Outlook for 1931. As the depression deepened, and the Geneva peace talks failed, he claimed, the church itself was on trial and must show that its high claims were sincere and being made "real" in life and service.⁸⁷ During World War I, the church had failed to show that the spirit of its

⁸⁴E. M. Cook, "Our Readers' Forum, 'The Kingdom of God Movement,'" NO (29 July 1931), 713.

⁸⁵D. T. McClintock, "Our Readers' Forum, 'The Social Gospel,'" NO (29 July 1931), 713.

⁸⁶Archibald Ray, "What to Preach -- That is the Question," NO (18 January 1933), 54.

⁸⁷ed., "The Church on Trial," NO (11 February 1931), 124.

Master was its "great ruling passion." It now had a chance to redeem its prestige, but there was little evidence that it was ready to substitute righteousness for piety. Mankind was undoubtedly determined to move on to a more humane, Christ-like society; it remained for the Church to decide whether it would lead that progression, or surrender its leadership to other forces.

Creighton's sense that the church faced a pivotal change, that a social revolution was already under way, was reinforced by his reading of Harry Ward's Which Way Religion? (1930), which Creighton quoted extensively in March 1931. Ward presented a choice between synthesis with Communism or growing irrelevance for Christianity. According to Ward, Russian Communism offered a "germ of good" in its emancipation of the masses from being "beasts of burden" to "conscious makers of a new society," thereby bringing salvation to the masses by transforming them into creative personalities. Russian Communists had recognized the strategic role of economics in determining social institutions and limiting the capacities of human development, and had set these means of existence under the control of spiritual values of life. If Christianity could not match the Communists in such sacrificial transformation, it would be replaced in the coming revolution of the masses. "Whatever else it is the religion of tomorrow will be," Creighton quoted Ward, "the religion of the masses....The faith of the future will find its central task in applying the ethical principles which Jesus represents to the conquest of the means of existence. That much it will owe to Marx and those who have followed him."⁸⁸

By September 1931, after the United Church General Assembly established its Commission on Evangelism, Creighton argued that the vital issues for the church were not in the field of doctrine, but those of human welfare and human relations. Questions about industry, international and race relations, marriage and family, were "the real battle lines of this generation" and the challenge which

⁸⁸ed. "Which Way Religion?" NQ (4 March 1931), 201.

the church must satisfy. To address these, the church must rediscover its prophetic role in society.⁸⁹ In following editorials, he complained that though the commission rightly observed the crisis, its strategy of traditional revival shrank back from organized practical "production."⁹⁰ Though prayer and study were indeed needed, he warned that if the church had no gospel for the present crisis, it would be discredited. The message of prophets like Jeremiah concerning God's judgment had never been popular or comforting, but they nevertheless faced the facts of the need for profound change, and even saw God working out his purpose through them. The modern church must likewise eschew its comfort and prophesy concerning God's present judgment in history in a way that accepted all of the "counsels of God," including those of Lenin and Marx. "We dare not seek to use God for our ends," Creighton declared, "...We must get in line with the creative purpose, and that seems to point to drastic reorganization of life in many fields."

To Creighton's plea for a prophetic interpretation of the crisis as God's eschatological judgment and action in history, J. W. A. Nicholson added that Communism was the outstanding sign of that Day of the Lord, and "the most heartening experiment yet made in human history." Like Ward, Nicholson believed that the coming of industrial democracy was inevitable -- indeed was upon western civilization, and that the model of that new system was Russia's application of the principles of human freedom and welfare to industry. Russia had challenged the "captains of industry" and was "dedicated to the interests of the common people," and its idealist leaders were successfully implementing that dedication in its Five Year Plan. Though its policy of atheism denied "the abstract and aloof divinities of our misnamed Christian creeds and rituals," Russia's social system affirmed its faith in the striving divinity of humanity. "It is manhood enthroned," he claimed, "and while not a perfect substitute for deity, it is so much better than our coronation of the dollar." To be sure, he

⁸⁹ed., "If the Church Would Be Saved," NO (9 September 1931), 848.

⁹⁰ed., "A Spiritual Message for the Crisis," NO (16 September 1931), 872.

conceded, the Russian model must be "evangelized." Nevertheless, it was an improvement over western commercialism, and it provided inspiration for repentance for past sins of the social system, and for a new and "real" cooperative order that would incorporate labour, capital, the knowledge of experts, political administrators, and the Church in a democratic order that served the interests of the masses. Such an order would make the new day, not a day of violence and doom, but the herald of the Kingship of Christ.⁹¹

Compared with the Russian promise of a real "flesh and blood" cooperative society, Nicholson bitterly attacked the 1934 decision of "the 'Big Four' churches" to focus on evangelism as a hypocritical "spinning of the prayer wheel." The frantic efforts of the campaign to "quicken the spiritual life" with various acts of piety, charity, calls for surrender and confession, and even the singing of the Hallelujah Chorus on Easter morn, meant little more than "business as usual!!! -- the rush for pleasure and the scramble for gain."⁹² The church's refusal of further action to Christianize the social order indicated that it expected little to follow from its spiritual revival. In that case its impressive dramatizing of the state of man's relation with God was a ritualistic potion against harm - - a routine spinning of the prayer wheel -- that offered a brief emotional glow but envisioned no active partnership with God for human good. Such hypocrisy, according to Nicholson, was in stark contravention of the cry of the prophets against Israel's "meaningless and hypocritical performances" of ritual religion while doing nothing about its "stark brutalities and gross injustices in human relationships."

In all of these pleas for a new prophetic message, several themes stand out. First was the insistence that redemption properly concerned not merely, or even primarily, an internal and personal

⁹¹J. W. A. Nicholson, "'Evangelize the Inevitable,'" NQ (8 April 1931), 324.

⁹²Rev. J. W. A. Nicholson, "Realism in Religion, Giving the Prayer Wheel Another Turn," NQ (21 March 1934), 206.

"spiritual" life, but instead involved the relations between people and thus the very structures of social life. Secondly, the failure of liberal-evangelicals not only missed the point of the gospel, but in doing so naively left the church on the side of an unChristian and crumbling social order with the risk that Christianity would be discredited and marginalized in a new order that would be secularized. Thirdly, they pleaded for a return to a prophetic message that, like the Old Testament Jeremiah and Amos, would relate God to contemporary society and declare his judgment and principles for complex modern social structures. The recovery of that "prophetic" model emphasized the crisis between a sovereign and holy God and the manifest sin of modern society, but also assumed that God was active in history in such a way that the course of history revealed his judgements. Fourth was a growing sense of frustration with both the church and western society which seemed to persist in path of folly, and likewise the sense that the radical minority, like the Biblical prophets, were lonely voices in the wilderness.

Leaders of the Christian socialist movement like Line, Gordon, and Vlastos, would elaborate on these themes to develop a revolutionary interpretation that, as Gordon later suggested, gave expression and direction to those angry and disillusioned with liberal-evangelicalism and the capitalist system.⁹³ Like Augustine's theodicy after the attack on Rome, they would offer a way to make sense of the experience of crisis, but would do so in a way that challenged the established order and liberal-evangelicals with the declaration of God's judgement in the social crisis.

In early 1933, having visited Russia with Eugene Forsey in a tour led by Sherwood Eddy in 1932,⁹⁴ Gordon issued his challenge, "Dare the Church Be Christian?" in a sermon in Toronto. The church, he declared, must choose "between throwing in our lot with the great masses of common

⁹³Roger Hutchinson, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order: 1934-45," A Long and Faithful March, Harold Wells and Roger Hutchinson, eds. (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1989), 18-19.

⁹⁴Gordon, "A Christian Socialist in the 1930's," 141.

people who have had held up to them this vision of a day of emancipation, or else face a deserved annihilation."⁹⁵ Jesus' "manifesto of the Christian Church" included the ideals of fellowship and emancipation from oppression. And Jesus had identified with the masses of common people, rather than with the wealthy and powerful, for it was the masses who were open to his ideas and would "carry his message." Thus the church's origin and identity lay with the masses and their hope of emancipation against the established order.

Woven through this challenge was a portrait of the church set against the world, but unlike Roberts, Gordon portrayed that tension, not as a "spiritual" community ambiguously related to natural structures, but rather as a community dedicated to Christ's ideals and set against a society dedicated to ideals that were antithetical to Christ. The church always has had to stand, according to Gordon, "with its particular estimate of human life, with its particular idea of the basis of human society, over against a society founded upon essentially different principles, and that probably in this time, more than any other time in the history of the world, is true."⁹⁶ In a survey stamped with the ideas of R. H. Tawney, Gordon portrayed the history of the church as a series of repeated compromises between "the ethics of Jesus and the ethics of the society in which the Church lives." While monasticism attempted to magnify the contrast between the ethics of Jesus and those of society, its flight from the world failed to face the task of capturing society for the Church. Likewise, modern evangelical Christianity, while attempting to build up the fellowship of believers, ignored "the fundamental needs of society in which the Christian must live today." The Medieval Catholic Church at least had made some attempt to make a claim on the social life and "try to bring it more into harmony with the teachings of Jesus Christ." Though diluted, it had succeeded in embodying the principles of Jesus in

⁹⁵J. King Gordon, "'Dare the Church Be Christian?' A Sermon preached at the Metropolitan Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, March 12, 1933," NO (22 March 1933), 253.

⁹⁶Gordon, "'Dare the Church Be Christian?'" 253.

a "Christian civilization."

In this regard, as Tawney had argued, Protestantism had produced ambiguous results. Its religious revolution coincided with the emergence of economic and political changes which it did not control. Consequently, it could only state its ethics in terms of individualistic morality. The great tragedy, as Weber had shown, was that these individual ethics were also useful in business, so that Protestants also became materially successful. Consequently, Protestantism helped to define the structure of capitalism, but in so doing contributed to a social structure in which the church had no significant public role. The modern Protestant church therefore faced the dilemma of moral bankruptcy: either it must frankly withdraw from society, or, if it reasserted its individualist morality, it only reinforced the existing status quo on which its own existence has come to depend.

Neither option in that dilemma was acceptable to Gordon, for both represented departures from the original Christian tradition and message of social justice, righteousness, and equality over against the world. But the church of the day seemed more interested in preserving its survival by identifying with the wealthy and powerful, as in the methods of the Oxford Group movement, while trying to pacify the people with other-worldly hopes. "Dare the Church be Christian," he challenged, "dare it assert its fundamental message; dare it try to realize its own life; dare it try to carry out those social principles of Jesus Christ?" Pacification of the masses would ultimately fail, for it was neither the true message of Christianity nor was it "of the people." Fine resolutions by church councils like the 1932 final report on "The Church and Industry" were meaningless unless the church truly grasped what the issues were and where the conflict lay, and was prepared to go into society and "throw in our weight as Christians on the side of the oppressed against the oppressor." Hence the church's choice: join the masses in a revolution that was inevitable, and that was in some sense the essence of Christianity, or be annihilated.⁹⁷

⁹⁷Gordon, "'Dare the Church Be Christian?'" 253.

John Line followed up on Gordon's challenge in 1933 by declaring that western civilization had arrived at the end of an epoch, and anticipating the emergence of a revolutionary order, he urged that Christianity take the lead in the revolution that already was under way.⁹⁸ The present social crisis was not merely a normal cyclic depression in capitalism, he argued, but marked a fundamental change in the social order. But what would that new order be like, and what, Line wondered, did it mean for the church to be active at such a time? The crisis seemed to present a divinely-given opportunity -- a kyrios -- that opened upon a new horizon for Christianity.

The present crisis was, Line claimed, similar to that faced by the church of the 400's during the fall of Rome. That epoch became Christianity's opportunity to free itself from its "Erastian servitude" to the empire and its entanglement in a secular order, to reach its "mightiest days" in Medieval Europe. While Roberts had moved to greater sympathy with Augustine's Platonic interpretation of the City of God, Line here adopted an anti-Platonic revision of Augustine such as Roberts' of earlier years. Augustine's theodicy in The City of God, Line claimed, had inspired a new age of Christianity with its vision of a universal City of God that was based on a common faith and "heavenly" moral principles which were fundamentally different from the "earthly" principles which were swept away with Rome. Though "heavenly" in their orientation however, those principles were nevertheless "set up among men," and enabled Christianity to become the primary agency for meeting the tide of barbarism that swept away the secular order and for rebuilding Europe, setting it on the "path to the City of God[.]"⁹⁹

Like the early Medieval Church in the disintegrating Roman empire, Line urged, the modern church must dissociate itself from the crumbling secular order of capitalism so that it might take the lead in recreating a new City of God. But there were two sides to this action. On the one hand, the

⁹⁸John Line, "Are We at the End of an Epoch? What should the Church Do?" NO (14 June 1933), 454.

⁹⁹Line, "Are We at the End of an Epoch?" 454.

church must assert its freedom from the present order: it must "first eschew what she would transform."¹⁰⁰ Yet its freedom, secondly, was in order to be in the lead of rather than outside of "the line of human advance." Here was the decisive difference even between Line and Roberts. At the height of crisis in the social order, Roberts turned increasingly to a Platonic Augustinian interpretation of a Kingdom of God which ultimately was transcendent and otherworldly, while Line preserved an emphasis on the presence of the Kingdom amid the "realities" of structured temporal relations. Line's intent, he claimed, was not to reduce the crisis of the age to a merely economic problem. The deeper crisis was indeed moral and religious, but this depth was not separate from economic concerns. To the contrary, the capitalist economic and social order had demonstrated by the concrete results of its concentration of wealth, unemployment, and social and international tensions, that it was morally unjust and unsuited to human needs. As a system, it affronted Jesus' teachings concerning the rights and worth of man. On this account, the church must respond by leading the revolutionary advance to a new epoch which would recreate at once both the City of God and humanity's "House of Life."¹⁰¹

Gordon's and Line's manifestos thus portrayed the antithesis between God's Kingdom and the world in terms of the conflict, not between spirit and nature, but between two social systems within historical reality that embodied conflicting principles. Accordingly, they identified the Kingdom of God with the emerging revolutionary impulse of "the masses" seeking emancipation, which was in conflict with a "world" defined as the established system of liberal-capitalism ruled by the "powerful" social elite. Thus their "prophetic" declarations emphasized that the judgement and Kingdom of God were active within history and social relations.

This anticipation of revolution was also reflected in the culmination of Line's "teleological

¹⁰⁰Line, "Are We at the End of an Epoch?" 454.

¹⁰¹Line, "Are We at the End of an Epoch?" 454.

view of existence" into what he later called an "eschatological" view of experience. In contrast to supernatural and other-worldly locations of God's Kingdom, Line in early 1934 called for an "eschatology of the future that would be satisfying and reasonable," and thus an eschatology which was disclosed within the world of temporal and structural reality.¹⁰² Thus the social crisis was also the sign of the eschatological in-breaking of the Kingdom of God in the present conflict.

This eschatological interpretation of history marked the intersection of a theological "realism" that claimed the distinct reality of God and the tension between God and humans due to sin, and a social "realism" that characterized the social scientist approach of the LSR and that located humanity firmly in the structures of temporal existence. The insistence of the new Christian socialists on an intimate connection between these two realities, however, was in contrast not only with the reconstructed liberal-evangelicalism of Roberts, but also with the direction taken by Reinhold Niebuhr's absolute distinction between a personal, ultimately otherworldly ethic of love and power relations in social groups. Already in 1928, Niebuhr had suggested that mass social units like the nation lacked the moral will needed to restrain the pursuit of power, and that work for social justice could only be a relative good.¹⁰³ By 1931, he claimed that the human tendency to evil was greatest when expressed through instruments of social power and force, while the absolute moral ethic of love was limited to personal relations.¹⁰⁴ The ethical struggle that was central to Christianity was thus a conflict between personal morality and power structures, which he also identified with a conflict between what he called the ideal and the real, and between God and history. These arguments culminated in Niebuhr's famous works of the 1930's, especially his Moral Man and Immoral Society

¹⁰²"Personal Enrichment and Its Social Implications; Correspondence from London," NO (3 January 1934), 11.

¹⁰³Reinhold Niebuhr, "What the War Did to My Mind," The Christian Century, Vol. 45, Pt. 2 (27 September 1928), 1161-62.

¹⁰⁴Reinhold Niebuhr, "Let the Liberal Churches Stop Fooling Themselves!" The Christian Century, Vol. 48, Pt. 1 (25 March 1931), 404.

(1932) and his An Interpretation of Christian Ethics (1935). Here Niebuhr defined the ethic of love as an otherworldly ethic of perfection or an "impossible possibility." The very nature of that ethic meant that the essence of personality was achieved in self-transcendence. Though it might be partially realized in individual personal relations, the ethic of love could not be implemented in the power relations of collective society. Within the finite structures of historical humanity, relative justice in the protection of equality was a second best to the transcendent ethic of love. By 1933, Niebuhr's newfound sense of the relativity and inadequacy of all social structures and policies would lead him to abandon pacifism and socialist programs as utopian.¹⁰⁵

In his review of Niebuhr's An Interpretation of Christian Ethics (1935) Vlastos applied the same criticism to Niebuhr's own apparent turn to "supernaturalism" that he made of Barth's work. In particular, he criticized Niebuhr's interpretation of the ethic of Jesus and the Kingdom of God as "a mythical expression of an impossible possibility under which all human life stands."¹⁰⁶ Vlastos concurred with Niebuhr's view of the relativity of human civilization and the taintedness of all human moral efforts, and the notion of conflict between God and contemporary culture. But he rejected Niebuhr's otherworldly location of the ideal, particularly his "perfectionist" interpretation that the Christian ethic of love could only be apprehended in "faith in a transcendent unity of essence and existence, of the ideal and the real world[.]" a unity that also could only be apprehended by man in the temporal world as myth. This interpretation, according to Vlastos, was evasive, for it leapt beyond the empirical world and left unresolved just what the meaning of the Christian "myth" was. Also, like Barth, Niebuhr gave no grounds for claiming to speak of a "transcendent unity of essence and existence." And finally, Niebuhr's identification of the ideal with individual morality contained,

¹⁰⁵See, for example, Reinhold Niebuhr, "Why I Leave the F.O.R.," The Christian Century, Vol. 51, Pt. 1 (3 January 1934), 17.

¹⁰⁶Gregory Vlastos, "The Impossible Possibility; review of An Interpretation of Christian Ethics, by Reinhold Niebuhr. New York: Harper & Brothers, \$2.00," Christendom, Vol. 1 (1935-36), 390-94.

Vlastos warned, a "lingering individualism."

According to Vlastos, Niebuhr's view of the impossible possibility implied a return to a metaphysical idealism comparable to Barth's dogmatics. And his individualist and transcendent interpretation of the ethic of love obscured the relevant meaning of love. His perfectionism left to actual ethical practice only a "pragmatic possibility," and it would also encourage "less realistic Christians" to ignore the call to apply love in actual social relationships: "they will continue to cultivate the precious emotion of love in personal relationships trusting that the 'transcendent unity of essence and existence' will take care of the violations of love in organized society."¹⁰⁷ In fact, Vlastos commented in a 1935 article on the nature of love, Niebuhr's description of personality and the ethic of love in terms of self-transcendence postulated a psychologically impossible goal. In reality, all expressions of the self are inescapably related to the self's interest and realization. Conversely, identification with another gave one no privileged transcendent stand-point from which to know the good, nor did it enable one to discover the good of the whole community.¹⁰⁸ From a realist perspective, man could achieve no autonomy from the context of historical and structural relations.

Similarly, Gordon's review of Niebuhr's Reflections on the End of an Era (1934) argued that Niebuhr had over-reacted to the shallow optimism of liberal Protestantism by swinging to an "extreme form of self-renunciatory and ascetic religion" that regarded all human impulses as "evil per se."¹⁰⁹ In doing so, Niebuhr lost sight of what Gordon suggested was the ambiguity within human nature. On the one hand there was an impulse to self-interest that was illustrated especially in the nineteenth-

¹⁰⁷Vlastos, "The Impossible Possibility," 393.

¹⁰⁸Gregory Vlastos, "What is Love?" Christendom, Vol. 1 (1935-36), 124.

¹⁰⁹J. King Gordon, "The Twilight of this Age," review of Reinhold Niebuhr, Reflections on the End of an Era, in The World Tomorrow (1 March 1934), 116-7.

century "economic man." On the other hand, man's natural "will-to-live" was represented in the "urge to self-expression," which Gordon considered, while making "full allowance for the optimistic sentimentality" of disciples of J. J. Rousseau, to be the creative good in man. The former impulse to self-interest was easily "transmuted into a will-to-power which takes the form of the exploitation of others[.]" while the second "may express itself in the highest search for cultural and spiritual development and frequently represents the ethical basis of revolution where individuals realize they are denied what is necessary to their highest development." For Gordon, the presence of these two impulses meant that man may produce evil in society that obstructs the best intentions, or alternatively may produce conditions which encourage spiritual development.

In contrast to what he regarded as Niebuhr's fatalism and pessimistic world-flight, Gordon saw the possibility of meaningful action to advance the Kingdom of God in society, though without the earlier social gospel's optimistic assumption of inevitable human progress. As Eileen Janzen shows, Gordon countered Niebuhr's "religious absolutism" with the equally important emphasis on the prophetic vision in which the absolute was "not only the conviction of sin, but also the assurance of the ultimate triumph of God's purposes in history."¹¹⁰ Where the "secular realist" despairs, and the "pure mystic retires to gain solitary consolation," according to Gordon, the "Christian realist rejoices" in the assurance of ultimate victory. Niebuhr therefore should be able to say "'Except the faith of a Christian exceed the faith of a Marxist, he shall in no wise enter the Kingdom of Heaven.'"¹¹¹ As he put it in a later review of Niebuhr's Beyond Tragedy (1937), the Christian view went beyond the Greek view of tragedy, for it saw the cycle of human pride and the gods' vengeance as broken by redemption. The purpose of divine judgement was for human salvation. "Beyond the tragedies of the kingdoms of this world," therefore, "there is the Kingdom of God. And since the Kingdom of

¹¹⁰Janzen, "King Gordon's Christian socialism and the Kingdom of God," 357.

¹¹¹Gordon, "The Twilight of this Age," 117.

God is in history as well as beyond history, man is never quite abandoned to his tragic fate."¹¹²

Here was the hope that motivated Christian socialists to work for the coming of a revolutionary Kingdom of God. This eschatological, prophetic hope grew partly out of the idealist roots of the liberal Protestant tradition in Canada, and out of the conjunction of Barth's declaration of a holy, other God with the realist social analysis of the historical and structural context of human life. From this conjunction, they interpreted the Kingdom of God as the work of a holy and transcendent God who was other than man, but nevertheless acted in judgement and transformation through human personality and within the realities of human historical processes and social relations. The full articulation of this prophetic vision was worked out between 1934 and 1936, culminating in the publication of Towards the Christian Revolution.

IV. The Hope of Revolution

By 1934, the main foundations of the Christian socialist movement had been laid. Christian socialists had formed a network of informal organizations, and had developed an eschatological interpretation of history that expected the emergence of the Kingdom of God in the social revolution. That expectation also was sharpened by the deepening crisis in western civilization on account of the depression, the failure of the Geneva peace talks in 1932, and the rise of Hitler to power in 1933. In the absence of significant changes to address these crises, and what seemed to them the continued compromise of the church with the status quo, Christian socialists had become increasingly urgent in their call for prophetic preaching and action.

The result of that vocal prophetic criticism, by 1934, was at least the partial alienation of Christian socialists from the establishment of mainline Protestantism. This alienation was especially

¹¹²J. King Gordon, "Beyond Tragedy," Gordon Papers [private collection], n. d., quoted in Janzen, "King Gordon's Christian socialism and the Kingdom of God," 359.

demonstrated in the experience of Gordon, whose radical criticism of liberal-evangelicalism and the capitalist social order soon brought down upon him the wrath of the board of United Theological College in Montreal, many of whose members were established Montreal businessmen and churchmen such as Leslie Pidgeon. Ostensibly for economic reasons, but widely acknowledged as due to his vocal social criticism, Gordon was released from the College in 1933. Though he was reinstated temporarily by the Montreal Conference with the support of friends and students, the board nevertheless proceeded with his dismissal in 1934. This action confirmed the view of Gregory Vlastos and Eugene Forsey that the church was hypocritical. Forsey, for instance, declared his withdrawal of financial contributions to the church, arguing that a church which considered a chair in Christian Ethics superfluous in the present crisis could have no credibility in its profession of concern for social justice.¹¹³

Coinciding with their dissent from the 1934 report of the Commission on the Social Order and the General Assembly's preference for evangelism, the Gordon case marked the separation of Christian socialists from the church establishment. It was in this heightened polarization that the various Christian socialist movements united to form the Fellowship for a Christian Social order in Kingston in April 1934, with Gordon as Chairman and Line as Vice-Chairman responsible for Research. The purpose of the fellowship, its constitution declared, was to "awaken and strengthen, throughout the Church, the religious will to achieve social justice." The grounds for this purpose, stated in the first point in its Basis of Agreement, was the confession that God was "the creative power in the world, seeking to realize the Divine order of justice and redemptive love in human life[.]" and Jesus was "the fullest revelation" of the nature of God. Moreover, it added, God seeks the cooperation of humans

¹¹³See ed., "The Case of Montreal College," NO (11 April 1934), 252, and letters to the editor by Eugene Forsey and Gregory Vlastos in NO, (14 November 1934), 1022.

in the establishment of that new social order in which "man can fulfil his highest life."¹¹⁴

The remainder of the Basis declared the FCSO's criticism of the capitalist order and its proposal for addressing the crisis. As Gordon noted, the FCSO's platform was modelled after the LSR's Manifesto declaring capitalism to be a "threat to peace and democratic government," and advocating a new social order based on "a planned and socialized economy" that included public ownership of utilities and other industries, nationalization of banks, and social security legislation.¹¹⁵ Likewise, though striking more at the ethics of capitalism, the FCSO Basis declared that the capitalist system was rooted in "the impulse to possess" which was contrary to "the needs of the soul" and the gospel ethic.¹¹⁶ Meanwhile, the capitalist system failed to provide the material security that all people needed in order to be free from the "material distractions" in the way of the "true ends of life." A further point also denounced war as an extension of capitalist acquisitiveness working through nationalism and imperialism.

As an alternative to the capitalist system, the FCSO pledged itself to non-cooperation in war, and looked forward to the creation of a new cooperative social order in which the community would own the institutions that produce wealth, and in which wealth would be used to provide the material means of the good life for all. Such an order would liberate people from "cramping concern over getting a living or piling up a fortune, and from the necessity of exploiting their fellows and so have opportunity to practice the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount." As a step toward that new social order, it urged acceptance of the "discipline" of Christian living in the group's fellowship and the need for collective action, and adopted a role of research, study, and public education concerning the

¹¹⁴A. L. Richards, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order," NO (27 February 1935), 217.

¹¹⁵Gordon, "A Christian Socialist in the 1930's," 129-30.

¹¹⁶A. L. Richards, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order," NO (27 February 1935), 217.

implications of the Christian ethic for modern society and economic life.¹¹⁷

For its first two years, the FCSO would devote itself to fleshing out the meaning of this program in an outpouring of articles and other publications. Its identity as a revolutionary movement meant that much of its effort was devoted to criticism of the established liberal tradition, as much as to constructing alternatives. The product of this scholarship, especially in the 1936 publication of Towards the Christian Revolution, reflected the mature thought and "radical religion" of the Christian socialist movement, but also crucial ambiguities, so that by 1937, serious rifts within the movement already were apparent.

Line's introduction to the theological and philosophical principles for the "Radical Religion" called for in Towards the Christian Revolution elaborated the main points of his 1931 paper on "The Fundamental Unity of Spiritual and Social Religious Values." Now with sharper clarity, Line identified two central features of the new Christian socialism that distinguished it from the liberal Protestant tradition, including the older social gospel movement. First, the radical religion of the movement arose from a religious renewal and the demand for a theology that, like Barth's, reflected the new sense of despair in immanent, progressive agencies for the Kingdom of God, and looked to a transcendent source in hope for social justice and deliverance.¹¹⁸ Secondly, advocates of the new "Radical Religion" insisted, in virtually every article, on beginning from the empirical "realities" of human experience and structured life. In this sense, they shared the progressive Protestant commitment to experience, modern critical science, the practical moral meaning of the gospel, and the liberal ideals of freedom, equality, and the value of humanity. But in particular, as Line demonstrated, they would borrow the sociological ideas of R. H. Tawney and Max Weber to critique the structures of liberal-capitalism.

¹¹⁷A. L. Richards, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order," NQ (27 February 1935), 217.

¹¹⁸Line, "The Theological Principles," 27.

Line's identification of these two concerns, namely the reality of a transforming divine will and the reality of social structures, indicated that the "Radical Religion" of the Christian socialists was developed in reaction to liberal Protestant tradition and its role in modern western civilization. Much of Line's introduction was devoted to criticizing modern Protestantism's naive participation in the development of a capitalist social order. The root problem of capitalism, he argued, lay not in a conflict between free spirituality and mechanical natural laws, but in the excessive individualism that was fostered by the "romantic" view that the essence of personaiity was a deposit of inherent rights and tendencies, or even of some divine substance.

Here Line attacked the heart of the neo-Kantian duality of spirit and nature, and its analogia entis. Line argued that both "orthodox evangelicalism" and "liberal modernism" had contributed to this romantic individualism. The focus of orthodox evangelicals on immediate personal experience of the Holy Spirit had reduced religion to an individualized personalism and separated it from the "social nexus" and responsibility for social conditions.¹¹⁹ Their notions of inherent individual rights and spirituality had promoted capitalism as well as the liberal claims that self-determination and self-interest were fundamental laws of human nature and the necessary basis of social order. Thus evangelical individualism had justified the unrestrained pursuit of capitalist self-interest, but to the benefit of only a privileged class. In turn, though liberal Protestants like Friedreich Schleiermacher brought the benefits of historical critical thought, the autonomy of the religious "a priori," and the absolute value of individuals, the evolutionary optimism and anthropocentrism of their Romantic modernism naively assumed that the agencies for realizing the good were present already within humanity. Hence liberal modernists identified the Kingdom of God with their own merely human utopian ideals, and expected that utopia to arrive by a law of progress and good will that were built

¹¹⁹Line, "The Theological Principles," 29.

into the nature of things.¹²⁰

It was no wonder, Line suggested elsewhere, that modern Protestants gave a "wistful welcome" to new religious movements like the Oxford Group movement and a host of other retreats and missions designed to revive the certainty and "direct dependence upon God" that was lacking in modern religion. But the premise of Protestant evangelicalism was flawed, he argued, because it had split Christian experience in half. Its identification of Christian experience, as John Dow had described it, as a "lone transaction between his soul and God," created the equally abstracted "Religious Man" that paralleled the "Economic Man" and his pursuit of a private self-interest.¹²¹ World War I and the Depression had brought the collapse of the liberal-capitalist social order, and also demonstrated that evolutionary optimism was unwarranted, while the Depression showed individualist moralism to be untenable in an age when even the hard-working and virtuous found themselves "out on the street" due to forces beyond their personal control. And in the midst of doubt, the efforts of skeptics to find solutions to the crisis of liberal society gave rise to alternatives which magnified individual self-interest in Nietzsche's will-to-power, or alternatively in the exaltation of the communal ego in totalitarianism.¹²²

Line's introductions set the stage for the "Radical Religion" of Christian socialism by repudiating the liberal-evangelical dualism of nature and spirit and the pivotal concept of the essential spiritual identity of humans with God in the analogia entis. In its place, Line and his colleagues would redraw the lines of relationship between God and humans. There were, then, two sides to this critical reconstruction. On one side, Line and others distinguished God ontically from humans and the world, and thereby opened the way for emphasizing the transcendent judgement of God on human

¹²⁰Line, "The Theological Principles," 39-40.

¹²¹John Line, "Conditions of Religious Revival," The Christian Century, Vol. 53, Pt. 1 (3 June 1936), 801.

¹²²Line, "The Theological Principles," 31-3.

sin. In reconstructing a "Radical" view of God, Line appealed first of all to Barth's "timely protest" against liberal attempts to make God a projection of human ideals, and his insistence on a Wholly Other sovereign and transcendent God. Without accepting Barth's view of the utter disparity between God and the world, Line declared that Radical Religion shared Barth's realism concerning human sin and the judgement of God in the world. On another side, Line and his colleagues portrayed humans as "essentially" related structurally to their social environment. The fruit of these two "realisms" was the eschatological hope of God's acting and taking sides in the conflict of "real" forces in history.¹²³

Gregory Vlastos reinforced these twin emphases in a 1935 article in the Christian Century on the "God of Wrath," which attempted to reconcile a "Wholly Other" God with the objective experience of God in the world. Vlastos argued that liberal habits of contrasting the Old Testament God of wrath with the New Testament God of forgiveness was a refusal to accept the sovereign authority of God and the reality of human sin. Liberals had become "embarrassed" by divine punishment and consequently also by the Old Testament prophets and the last judgement, and tried to abstract a sentimental God from the realities of the world. Despite liberal attempts to limit and refine God, Vlastos declared, God was not in question and needed no justification, for the very nature of God was such that "he is there" and sovereign, and hence his judgement was not open to question. Thus Vlastos turned the tables, arguing for recognition of the reality of sin and God's just judgement. Not only was God's judgement against human sin just, as Augustine had argued, but only the God of wrath could "keep us from turning the God of love into an illusion and an escape."¹²⁴ As Wieman had argued, one could not know the extent of God's love and grace without recognizing the dark realities of the world and its need of judgement.¹²⁵ In short, it was only by beginning with the

¹²³Line, "The Theological Principles," 42, 49.

¹²⁴Vlastos, "God of Wrath," 539.

¹²⁵Hutchinson, 269-70.

realities of the world that the meaning of God's love was discovered.

In asserting that God was at once a transcendent and yet active in and disclosed in the world, FCSO members rejected the absolute chasm and dialectic posed by Barth and instead developed a "prophetic" eschatological view of God's Kingdom coming into history. To reconcile God's transcendence with his action in the world, they emphasized the Old Testament view of God as upholder of law, and also Alfred North Whitehead's "realist" or organic idealism. Only in a few cases did they refer to the role of Christ. In a dispute with C. E. Silcox, for example, Line defended Emil Brunner's treatment of Christ as a unique historical incarnation of the divine and the "once and for all" mediator, and his argument for continuity in the early church's teaching on the divine nature of Christ. The "Liberal" view that Christ was merely a supreme human model of transcendent ideals, according to Line, was the product of Enlightenment and Hellenic philosophy.¹²⁶ Similarly, in a review of a work by F. Ernest Johnson, a former Ontario and at the time Executive Secretary of the Department of Research and Education of the Federal Council of Churches of America, R. B. Y. Scott argued that the liberal interpretation was a refusal to accept the radical apocalyptic claims of the ethic of Jesus. Jesus' ethic, Scott claimed, was not merely an interim ethic, but the reflection of a timeless ideal that was to be applied in the present order, and that in fact was breaking into the present order.¹²⁷ Hence, he argued, the Kingdom of God was not to be accomplished merely by a long progressive application of education, for God's Kingdom already was under way in the epochal change of the day.

¹²⁶For the debate between Silcox and Line, see "Among the New Books: 'The Church Controversy in Germany, by Anders Nygren; Recent Developments in German Protestantism, by Dr. Otto Piper; The Mediator: A Study of the Central Doctrine of the Christian Faith, by Emil Brunner,' reviewed by C. E. Silcox," NO (26 June 1935), 657; and "Our Readers' Forum; 'A Defence of Dr. Brunner,' by John Line; 'Mr. Silcox Replies,' by C. E. Silcox," NO (14 August 1935), 802-3.

¹²⁷"Among the New Books: 'The Church and Society, by F. Ernest Johnson,' reviewed by R. B. Y. Scott," NO (26 June 1935), 657.

This interpretation of Christ, however, focused on his Incarnation of God's constantly-present will, and thus his confirmation of the Old Testament view of God as upholder of his law. In his explication of the Biblical principles of Christian revolution, Scott appealed especially to Old Testament theology, a field in which he would become a leading scholar in the modern recovery of Biblical Theology.¹²⁸ The Bible, he argued, enshrined the faith of the church and thus the normative principles for the guidance of the Spirit.¹²⁹ And the Old Testament, especially the prophets, affirmed that God, unlike all other gods, was uniquely holy and sovereign, and radically other than creation. At the same time, it portrayed God as sovereign in history, ruling it by his law and interacting covenantally with and through people. And the particular character of that rule was redemptive insofar as it declared special care for the poor and oppressed. Notably, he argued that the Old Testament prophets came to the realization that God's holiness was that of a person, with a moral will, and so they came to hope for a Messiah who would complete the emancipation of the poor, a role which was claimed by Christ.¹³⁰ Thus Christ affirmed the covenantal law of life displayed in the Old Testament, and also confirmed that the law was to be fulfilled in a unique and free moral relationship between God and humans.

The Kingdom of God, then, according to Scott, was "the timeless life-principle of the life of persons-in-fellowship, of the community of the Divine Covenant."¹³¹ This Kingdom both transcended time and space, and yet was to be realized in temporal structures. While it could not be

¹²⁸See J. S. Moir, A History of Biblical Studies in Canada (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1982), 67, 70-73. At the same time that he was involved in the LSR and the FCSO, Scott also helped to found the Canadian Society for Biblical Studies in 1933 after the failure of the CJRT in 1932. Scott served as Secretary-Treasurer of the society from 1933 to 1940.

¹²⁹R. B. Y. Scott, "The Biblical Basis," Towards the Christian Revolution, R. B. Y. Scott and Gregory Vlastos, eds. (Kingston: Ronald P. Frye & Co., 1989 [1936]), 75.

¹³⁰Scott, "The Biblical Basis," 89, 91.

¹³¹Scott, "The Biblical Basis," 94.

reduced merely to "meat and drink," nor could any particular social order be identified as the final form of the Kingdom, nevertheless, "Thy Kingdom come on earth" was the eschatological hope of the Bible.

Scott's emphasis on the prophets, and on a timeless divine will which was the law for life, was translated by John Line into the terms of Whitehead's "realist" idealism. Line had long sought the metaphysical basis for moral absolutes. Seeking to avoid both a vitalist monism and a return to neo-Kantian dualism, his concern was to assert the otherness of an absolute God, and yet relate that absolute to the world so that it was accessible to human knowledge. Although he had espoused Whitehead's ideas in the late 1920's, it is not surprising that he also was sympathetic with the Neo-Thomism of Jacques Maritain, then at the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies founded in 1929 in Toronto, as a way to relate the order of nature and the superior transcendent moral order. According to Line, the Neo-Thomist recovery of metaphysics suggested a recovery of both the transcendent, self-revealing God and the "nobler possibilities and affinities" of man that was less pessimistic and "irrational" than Barth's dialectic. According to Line, Maritain provided a recovery of the metaphysical ground of being on the grounds of philosophical reason, while his neo-Thomist theme of the mind's creative reflection on the data of experience offered the recovery of man's "self-transcending capability," his freedom in the midst of his unity with nature, and a reorientation of human life to transcendent, metaphysical reality.¹³²

While favourable to Neo-Thomism, however, Line claimed that Alfred North Whitehead offered a simpler and sufficient "realist" ontology.¹³³ In 1930, he had welcomed Whitehead's interpretation of God, in Religion in the Making (1926) as the "principle of concretion" as a way to

¹³²John Line, "Catholic Theology and Modern Culture; Books By Jacques Maritain," Christendom, Vol. 1 (1935-36), 739. See also Line, "The Theological Principles," 43.

¹³³Line, "The Theological Principles," 43.

affirm, by the procedures of experimental science, a "metaphysical backing" to reality.¹³⁴ In his subsequent Adventures of Ideas (1933) Whitehead offered an "organic metaphysics" which seemed to correspond to a teleological realization of the divine will, understood as moral ideals, within the historical-structural world. Whitehead portrayed the "slow drift of mankind towards civilization" as the product of the gradual but revolutionary permeation of ideas like the dignity of humanity, freedom, moral suasion, and the triumph of science.¹³⁵ Contrary to Ernst Troeltsch's interpretation that Christianity's original concern was an otherworldly hope, Whitehead argued that early Christianity had transformed western society in such a way as to make the high, impracticable moral ideals of love, mercy and forgiveness increasingly practicable for individuals. Until it became an "instrument for conservation" in the Middle Ages, Christianity had provided the "dreams of an unrealized world," and thus the dynamic and revolutionary ethical ideas, that could give rise to moral civilization.

Since the Reformation, however, Christian ideals had been transposed into a secularized, naturalistic, and liberal ideology that defined society in terms of individual competitiveness and biological conflict and determinism.¹³⁶ By restricting thought to logic and the empirical world, modern science, according to Whitehead, had destroyed the harmony of the "Platonic-Christian" vision in which the order of law was subordinate to the reality of high ideals. His survey therefore appealed for a renewed Platonic "realism" that recognized ideals like the good and the beautiful as fundamental to the nature of reality, but would also see those "real" ideals as organic, or in the process of being actualized in finite events.

Gregory Vlastos's "God of Wrath" demonstrated the way that he and his colleagues

¹³⁴Line, "Knowledge, Metaphysics, Religion," 396.

¹³⁵See Steward Basterfield's review of Whitehead's Adventure of Ideas in "The Philosophy of Civilization," The Canadian Forum, Vol. XIII, No. 156 (September 1933), 468-70.

¹³⁶See Steward Basterfield's review of Whitehead's Adventure of Ideas in "The Philosophy of Civilization," The Canadian Forum, Vol. XIII, No. 156 (September 1933), 468-70.

synthesized the Old Testament (and Barthian) view of God with the ideas of Whitehead. In contrast to Augustine's sense of the ultimate inscrutability of the divine will, Vlastos argued that God's judgements were experienced in the logic of events, such as the destruction that followed disregard for God's law for life, because God was active in the world. God, according to Vlastos, was

that pattern of the world which makes good possible -- and compelling. He is the creative order of the world; that in the world wherewith and whereby life goes on, and multiplies. And because he is that, he is the God of wrath...so that those who will not find the good within him, must know the destruction outside him.¹³⁷

Like Line, Vlastos appealed to Whitehead's notion of God who was both transcendent and the "principle of concretion" within the world in order to identify the ground of being with a sovereign creator God. Especially in Vlastos' case, however, this "realist" idealism would lead to an existentialist interpretation of humanity's relationship with God in which the experience and disclosure of God occurred in the course of events and the encounter of the "Other" in one's social relations with other persons. Like Brunner's use of Martin Buber's concept of "I-thou," Vlastos would claim the discovery of the transcendent, not by escape from the structural-historical situation, but in the recognition of the humanity of the "other." In doing so, he would collapse the transcendence and personality of the Old Testament God into the experience of community.

For Line, however, Whitehead's ideas seemed to offer an alternative to the neo-Kantian dualism of spirit and nature and its analogia entis, for it seemed at once to distinguish between the reality of a sovereign and infinite God and the reality of humans bound to structures and processes of existence, and yet to admit the eschatological entry of God's revolutionary will, and thus the realization of "real" moral ideals, in the historical process. Though no object could supplant the infinite reality of God, each particular creaturely object related to and contained the totality of

¹³⁷Vlastos, "God of Wrath," 540.

being.¹³⁸ Also, Whitehead's view of God as the ground of being, and his elevated view of the reality and force of ideas in transforming social structures, affirmed a "teleological view of existence" in which the natural order was subject to purposeful personal activity. This was a modern, but "metaphysically" grounded version of historicism which translated the objective world into a process, without denying its ontic reality. Finally, Whitehead's depiction of the gradual process whereby revolutionary ideas developed by a small group penetrated complex social relations to create the conditions for actual social reform offered a model of how the FCSO might effect a "Christian revolution" in Canadian society.

In the second half of their revision of the neo-Kantian problematic, members of the FCSO also attempted to reconstruct the meaning of personality to relate the individual to society in such a way that did not deny personality, but rather interpreted persons as individuals-in-community. In his critique of the individualist and "romantic" anthropology of liberal Protestantism, Line argued, like Niebuhr, that human personality consisted of mixed potentialities which were shaped through social interaction. Though Line agreed with the liberal Protestant premise that society existed for the freedom and self-realization of personality, he maintained what he called the "realist" view that human personality was lived in a dialectic between inner individuality and external environment: persons were organically related to the environment of communal relations in such a way that they belonged to one another, yet they were self-conscious individuals who postulated ideals for and willingly served the communal whole. This participation in a social environment did not leave individuals without personal responsibility; to the contrary, it was the fact that their individuality must be lived in community that prevented it from becoming merely anarchic. Thus, liberty was lived in a "field of relations," and therefore required a context of "just relations" defined as equality. If liberty meant autonomous participation in a common life, then, as the neo-Thomist Jacques Maritain suggested,

¹³⁸Line, "The Theological Principles," 43.

freedom could not be merely individualist. Rather, communal and individual self-realization were reciprocal and co-dependent.¹³⁹

Vlastos described this relational nature of personality in the more sharply existentialist terms of John MacMurray, the British Christian-existentialist-Marxist who had appeared in Canada on several occasions. In a review of MacMurray's writings on the ethic of love, Vlastos argued that the tension that some, such as Reinhold Niebuhr, saw between the absolute ethic of love and social structures was rooted in a false definition of the self. The social sciences, he claimed citing Macmurray, showed that the "self" was a social entity rather than an abstracted individual. "The self is its relations[,] he claimed, for it was social relations that gave the self its identity and world of meaning.¹⁴⁰ As Line had earlier argued, one's relation with God was not exclusive of "the order of things," but rather was experienced in social relations.¹⁴¹ "The fact is," Vlastos wrote, "that we are one."¹⁴² Hence humans experienced the will and judgement of God in social relations. As children bore the suffering caused by their parents' sins, and desperate workers suffered unemployment due to a sinful economic system, so sin and its effects were always corporate, and likewise individuals could not plead innocent from the sins of the social system of which they partook.

Along with insisting on the social nature of personality, FCSO members argued that individual life was organically related to material reality. Though liberal Protestants feared that materialism, and the pursuit of wealth and control over the material world, was the greatest threat to Christian "spirituality," Line argued that personality included material needs and aspects, and that Christianity

¹³⁹John Line, "The Philosophical Principles," Towards the Christian Revolution, R. B. Y. Scott and Gregory Vlastos, eds. (Kingston: Ronald P. Frye & Co., 1989), 13-14, 22.

¹⁴⁰Gregory Vlastos, "What is Love?" Christendom, Vol. 1 (1935-36), 124.

¹⁴¹Line, "How Humanism Came," 108.

¹⁴²Vlastos, "God of Wrath," 540, 541.

was both spiritual and material. R. B. Y. Scott added that in addition to belonging to social structures and customs that determine his action, man also had bodily needs that had to be met. "As his spiritual nature is interdependent with his physical organism," Scott argued, "a certain level of physical well-being is a necessary component of the good life."¹⁴³

FCSO members insisted that this view of the social and material nature of humans did not mean the loss of either personality, or the moral freedom and responsibility of the individual, or the inwardness of the gospel. Rather, Vlastos argued, it meant that "one's heart is itself conditioned by one's place in society," and so also the salvation of one's soul was a matter of having a place in the Kingdom of God.¹⁴⁴ In a different tack, R. B. Y. Scott argued that freedom was qualified by man's relationship to God. Scott assumed that "personal freedom" was an inherent good and part of man's constitution as a moral agent and image-bearer of God. But the fact that freedom was part of man's constitution as image-bearer meant that it was subject to God's purpose for human life.¹⁴⁵ Freedom in Christ, therefore, was freedom which served his ideals and Kingdom, namely the greater good of abundant life for all.

From this structured identity of personality, FCSO members argued that sin and salvation were intrinsically social and structural. The implication of this interpretation was that humans were not entirely sinful by nature. As John King Gordon had argued in response to Niebuhr, persons were driven by two conflicting impulses: acquisitive selfishness, and the urge to seek the highest cultural and spiritual development.¹⁴⁶ Though it must be acknowledged that humans may do evil, they also

¹⁴³R. B. Y. Scott and David A. MacLennan, "The Christian Contribution to Rebuilding of Society, Pt. II," NO (13 March 1935), 266.

¹⁴⁴Gregory Vlastos, "Jesus' Conflict With the Pharisees," Christendom, Vol. 2 (1937), 100.

¹⁴⁵R. B. Y. Scott, "Individual Freedom," NO (22 January 1936), 86.

¹⁴⁶Gordon, "The Twilight of this Age," 117.

may serve good in the battle for the Kingdom. John Line, for example, claimed that it was human civilization that had made humans "base and bellicose." Human nature was not essentially depraved; rather it was malleable and therefore subject to change through "organized tendencies" in the ethical relations of the community. Though not explicitly referring to Brunner, Line's view was similar to Brunner's insistence that the human constitution remained unchanged by sin, and that religion was a moral relationship and thus a matter of action, rather than a change of essential nature. Hence, while current tendencies in society evoked humanity's "unworthier impulses," changing those organized tendencies might renew spiritual life.¹⁴⁷

Other members of the FCSO would make similar arguments maintaining that the problem of sin was systemic rather than a depraved human nature, and hence they would maintain both that the solution to sin was social, and also that human nature had impulses for both good and evil. J. W. A. Nicholson, for example, argued in contrast to the personalism assumed in the evangelism campaign that the great sins of society were not in direct personal relationships, but in indirect, impersonal relations such as the commercial circle of investor, worker, and consumer.¹⁴⁸ It was the organized system of capitalism, which was based on the spirit of greed, that subordinated "the irrepressible goodness in human nature itself" to obstruct its positive influence on society. The solution to that system of greed was to bring organized enterprise into harmony with the will of God by serving primarily the public rather than the private interests. And the church's task, therefore, was to take the lead in an educational campaign to direct human powers to cooperative service, and in this way to make God's will the authority and power in the life of both citizens and corporate life.

The belief that sin lay especially in structures, and that humans were potentially, if not inevitably, good, and also that God was active in the historical process, was the basis for optimistic

¹⁴⁷Line, "Fundamental Unity of Spiritual and Social Religious Values, II," 274.

¹⁴⁸Nicholson, "Realism in Religion, Giving the Prayer Wheel Another Turn," 206.

confidence that remedial social action was could be effective in transforming the social order. This optimism also enervated the League for Social Reconstruction. As Michiel Horn writes, "The LSR preferred to assume the underlying rationality and benevolence of mankind, just as it assumed that it was in command of the important facts."¹⁴⁹ More specifically, it confirmed the idea that social reform could begin with education.

Throughout their articles on the Christian revolution, as well as their navigation of new currents of theology and philosophy, FCSO members assumed the primacy of the empirical approach of realism and that, as Line had suggested, their new metaphysics and social theory must be experimental and satisfying to reason. Hence Line accepted without question the scientific conclusion that nature was indifferent, and likewise Vlastos accepted the "social science" definition of the self as a matter of course. It was this confidence in empirical science that gave ready assent to the structural analyses by Weber, Tawney, Ward, and even Marx, of the social and historical significance of Christianity. John Line also continued to apply the scientific method in theology, in contrast to Barth's view of the utter incapacity of nature and reason to disclose God's Word. In his brief comments on the matter, Line in particular continued to define theology itself as a science with the task of describing human religious experience.¹⁵⁰ Theology, like all sciences, was an inescapably human word, and so admittedly limited and relative. Its task was to describe and conceptualize human experience of God or a moral ideal, and to reconcile it with the intellectual outlook of the age.

Their confidence in scientific theology and social analysis was reinforced by the notion that sin did not affect man's constitutional rationality, and that God's will was not merely a mystical experience, but was encountered indirectly in structured relations in the world. Likewise, Emil

¹⁴⁹Michiel Horn, The League for Social Reconstruction: Intellectual Origins of the Democratic Left in Canada, 1930-1942 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 77.

¹⁵⁰Line, "The Theological Principles," 27.

Brunner had argued that in this indirect revelation where believers turn from direct and personal relation with God to address the structured world, the witness to the person of God must become reflective and rational.¹⁵¹ Accordingly, Brunner called for a synthesis of church doctrine and "philosophy," or critical scientific reflection, on the assumption that the righteous law of God includes reason and constancy, though he was careful to distinguish the essence of God, and of human image-bearing of God, as a freedom of the will expressed in love that extended above and beyond law. Like Brunner, Line and his colleagues assumed the continued capacity of human reason to discover, at least approximately, the order in creation through critical scientific methods.

In fact, FCSO members lacked Brunner's dialectic of present and hidden order, and his sharp distinction between natural order known by science and divine values known in faith. Instead, they emphasized Brunner's suggestion of a synthesis of religion and philosophy, for if religion concerned relations, it must also use critical social science to grasp social structures. Line's objection to Barth, for example, included the concern that Barth separated religion and rational thought, while his preference for neo-Thomism and Whitehead assumed the need to affirm and incorporate scientific reason into the ethical ends of religion. Indeed, as Whitehead had suggested, religion and science were not merely complementary, but religion embraced and fulfilled science in such a way that it was reason in its fullest sense. Similarly, Vlastos borrowed Macmurray's suggestion that one could find in the knowledge of one's relations to other persons the revelation and realization of God's moral will.

There were, however, two sides to this incorporation of scientific reason into the service of religion's pursuit of the absolute ideal. On the one hand, it affirmed the validity of empirical social science, creating a common commitment to the empirical method of social analysis that FCSO members shared with other social scientists such as the members of the LSR. On the other hand, it

¹⁵¹Schrotenboer, 106-9.

also adopted an instrumental and relativist view of science. As Vlastos suggested, reason now served as an instrument for discovering the converging interests of the community or exposing conflicts in the community.¹⁵² But gone was any pretence to a naive Baconian objectivity or absolute rationalism. Human knowledge of nature and of God's will inescapably remained provisional and relative. And science was now, as it was for both Marx and American pragmatists, the instrument by which man might freely direct nature to ethical ends and revolutionary action.

Indeed, the FCSO's attempt to be prophetic opened to an eschatological vision of the revolutionary coming of God's Kingdom. As John Line had claimed from John Baillie, religion had to do with the entry and realization of transcendent spiritual values into the world.¹⁵³ For Line, this eschatological dimension was a crucial feature of Christian socialism, since it was the tension between a transcendent God and the current order, and the active entry of God in judgement into that order, that motivated visionaries to seek the transformation of society. The eschatological hope of a heavenly Kingdom had always given to Christianity the dramatization of a social ideal or pattern, and thus a telos or purpose, that led believers to look on the present world as unsatisfactory and gave hope for another world, thereby keeping the Christian hope of a divine society alive. The eschatological hope of the Kingdom preached by Jesus therefore gave vitality to Christianity, and power to move the world. Modern Protestantism had lost that eschatological hope; what it needed, Line claimed, was a renewed but "realistic presentation of the hope of the kingdom of God on earth."¹⁵⁴

Set as it was in the context of this eschatological tension between a transcendent God and the realities of social structures, the Kingdom hope offered by the Christian socialists of the FCSO was a new social gospel quite different from the progressive optimism of the earlier twentieth-century

¹⁵²Gregory Vlastos, "What is Love?" Christendom, Vol. 1 (1935-36), 129-31.

¹⁵³Line, "Knowledge, Metaphysics, Religion," 396.

¹⁵⁴Line, "Conditions of Religious Renewal," 801.

social gospel. John Line exemplified how Christian socialists envisioned that Kingdom of God. Though its source was transcendent, the Kingdom was a moral reality to be achieved on earth by engaging particular social structures and transforming them to serve spiritual ends. The greatest challenge to the Church, Line had declared in 1931, was not merely the evangelistic extension of the gospel, but working out the gospel intensively by

the establishing in every land of the Christian society, in which justice, love and brotherhood shall reign supreme in civic, commercial, industrial and other fields of life, ending divisions of rich and poor with the snares that beset the one and the fears that oppress the other, and issuing in a world made free from frustrating and panic-producing distrusts and animosities, in which war, Christianity's last antithesis, shall as a consequence be no more.¹⁵⁵

Although they would use "realist" social analyses like those of Tawney and Marx, the foundation of the Christian socialist interpretation of the Kingdom was rooted in a "realist" idealism that identified the impulses of social life with ethical ideals, or what Line called an "awakening will," in contrast to Marxist materialism.¹⁵⁶ Rather than something "superimposed on normal human nature," religion was "the realization of possibilities proper to it, the enhancing of its authentic powers." Christianity, then, was the acceptance of the Kingdom ideal understood as "an ideal common good to be achieved and shared," and the realization of "that higher human nature which is fully active only in social living."¹⁵⁷

Line's conclusion in an idealist socialism was arrived at by Vlastos through a more existentialist interpretation of the absolute ethic of love. That ethic, Vlastos argued, was neither an emotional sentiment nor enlightened self-interest, nor was it the self-sacrificing altruism appealed to

¹⁵⁵Line, "Fundamental Unity of Spiritual and Social Religious Values, II," 274.

¹⁵⁶Line, "The Theological Principles," 27.

¹⁵⁷Line, "Conditions of Religious Renewal," 800.

by liberals like Niebuhr and Roberts who called for "self-transcendence."¹⁵⁸ Such a goal was not only psychologically impossible, since all expressions of the self were inescapably related to the self's realization and interest, but it constituted an ascetic self-indulgence that was nothing less than sin.¹⁵⁹ Instead, according to Vlastos, love was the practical identification with others in a community defined by what Wieman and Macmurray called "mutuality." This mutuality was not merely an emotion, for as an ethic it required an active will. Hence "mutuality" was the active principle of "cooperative activity" and "community of interest."¹⁶⁰ Understood in this way, rather than as Niebuhr's otherworldly perfection, love was the basis of community and the only ultimate force for cooperative service of the community. For Vlastos, self-transcendence was achieved in giving oneself to the common good of freedom, equality, and harmony.¹⁶¹ It was in this mutuality that the self, the community, and the good were realized at one and the same time.

Vlastos stressed that the ideal of mutuality was an inherently practical expression of love. Mutuality gave "functional rights" to all based on each member's contribution to the whole community. Thus there was no distinction between the absolute ethic of love and "justice," which he identified with equality; both were realized best in socialism.¹⁶² And in contrast to Niebuhr's otherworldliness, Vlastos, like Macmurray, interpreted love "realistically" as a revolutionary moral force that entered into conflict against existing unjust social relations, and offered the only ultimate force for cooperative service of the community.¹⁶³ Instead of Niebuhr's transcendent perfectionism,

¹⁵⁸Vlastos, "What is Love?" 124.

¹⁵⁹Gregory Vlastos, "Jesus' Conflict With the Pharisees," Christendom, Vol. 2 (1937), 100.

¹⁶⁰Vlastos, "What is Love?" 127.

¹⁶¹Vlastos, "Jesus' Conflict With the Pharisees," 100.

¹⁶²Vlastos, "Jesus' Conflict With the Pharisees," 100.

¹⁶³Vlastos, "What is Love?" 127.

one could instead declare that "[t]he Christian ethic is an ethic of love; love demands a maximum of mutuality; existing economic conditions disrupt mutuality; to deal with them realistically one becomes involved in conflict; therefore, conflict is a necessary part of the effort to realize love[.]"¹⁶⁴

To this socialist and functional definition of the ethic of love, R. B. Y. Scott added an interpretation of the Biblical view of community as a covenantal community which was characterized by justice, mercy or sharing in the blessings of society, peaceful harmony, and righteousness. Above all, that covenantal society was to recognize the absolute worth of each member as a child of God. Moreover, its principles of covenant were to extend to property holding. Fundamental laws like the Year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:23) were established to prevent the alienation of families from their share in the land and basic economic resources, and also to avoid the fracturing of society between dominant and oppressed classes. Covenantal society was to subordinate property to persons, and ensure an equitable distribution of the nations' resources and the material well-being needed for the spiritual development of its members. In this sense, the covenantal ideals "laid the axe unto the root of capitalism." And in fulfillment of the covenant hope, the main ideals of the Kingdom of God included the abolition of poverty, oppression, and economic injustice, "because these stand as stubborn obstacles to the free spiritual life of man in fellowship."¹⁶⁵ The ultimate object of the new order, as Scott suggested, was to achieve free spiritual life in community. In a separate article on "Individual Freedom," Scott argued that freedom could only be understood in terms of God's purpose for human life, and God's purpose was that humans, as his image-bearers, should be like God and do his will of self-sacrificing love on earth. Consequently, the human self was realized "only by affirming all life, by participation in a good which is greater than itself. This is to find the freedom for which

¹⁶⁴Vlastos, "The Impossible Possibility," 392.

¹⁶⁵R. B. Y. Scott, "The Biblical Basis," Towards the Christian Revolution, R. B. Y. Scott and Gregory Vlastos, eds. (Kingston: Ronald P. Frye & Co., 1989), 82, 89.

Christ has made us free."¹⁶⁶

If the realization of spiritual freedom was the goal of the Kingdom of God, Christian socialists argued that its main obstacle in the current age was the capitalist social structure. According to Scott, obstacles to spiritual freedom included both "inner interference" due to ignorance or perversity, and obstacles "from without" in the social order where the "will-to-power" of other selves had entrenched selfish interests in social customs and institutions of authority. Scott proceeded to identify four "tyrannies" over the human spirit that had characterized social history. The first two, tyranny of state and church, were largely overcome by British representative government and rule of law and by the Reformation. Tyranny of social convention, and especially of economic power, remained the tyrannies of the modern era. Although he argued for some liberation from the moral legalism of convention, economic tyranny occupied most of Scott's concern. There is no freedom, he argued, and certainly no democratic or representative rule of law, without economic equality. In a Marxist critique, Scott argued that the present legal and social order was controlled by those with economic resources to defend the property interests of the wealthy. Thus the "rugged individualism" of liberal-capitalism provided "freedom" only for those already economically secure. That view of individual freedom as self-aggrandizement at the expense of the community was, in fact, opposite to the Christian ideal of freedom that was related to loving one's neighbour as oneself.¹⁶⁷

The specific solutions of the FCSO to this economic tyranny reiterated the social democratic proposals of the LSR's Social Planning for Canada (1935), as well as a commitment to pacifism. The FCSO's adoption of pacifism followed J. Lavell Smith's appeal in the New Outlook, during late 1934,

¹⁶⁶R. B. Y. Scott, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, 'Individual Freedom,'" NO (22 January 1935), 86.

¹⁶⁷R. B. Y. Scott, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, 'Individual Freedom,'" NO (22 January 1935), 86.

for pledges to renounce war.¹⁶⁸ Smith's plea followed the failure of the League of Nations Disarmament Conference and Smith's suspicions that arms manufacturers were working against disarmament. According to Smith, the evils of war were so great that no international situation could be so serious as to warrant war.

Smith's suspicion reflected a "realist" class analysis of international relations that saw war as the outcome of designs by capitalist elites. In his accompanying letter of support for the pledge, Line argued that capitalism was the main threat to peace and freedom.¹⁶⁹ According to Line, only a clear pledge of pacifism by the public would make clear to national rulers that the multitudes opposed war. Here he rebutted concerns about the "Red Scare" that saw Russian Communism as the antithesis of the Christian ideal of free personality and moral transformation. Though wary of Russian Communism, he argued from Nicholas Berdyaev, the capitalist social order was the most immediate obstacle to liberty in the western world. For Line, a clear public demonstration of support for pacifism would indicate the refusal of the multitudes to be swept up in fear to support the capitalist order.

It was not surprising that the broader proposals of the FCSO were similar to the LSR, given that many who contributed to Towards the Christian Revolution were also participants in the LSR. But their vision of the new society embraced a spectrum of possibilities. Though Gordon favoured democratic socialism, he also sympathized with cooperative movements like the Antigonish Movement.¹⁷⁰ Eugene Forsey's economic analysis, however, more exclusively advocated socialism. The defining feature of the capitalist structure, Forsey argued, was profit and acquisitiveness in

¹⁶⁸J. Lavell Smith, "Let It Be 'Never Again,'" NO (21 November 1934), 1033.

¹⁶⁹John Line, "Letter to the Editor, 'Never Again,'" NO (21 November 1934), 1033.

¹⁷⁰See J. King Gordon, "Nova Scotia Sees a Great Light," CC, Vol. 53, Pt. 1 (27 May 1936), 764.

contrast to humane need.¹⁷¹ Drawing on Social Planning for Canada and the Report of the Royal Commission on Price Spreads, Forsey argued that capitalism had produced a trend to monopoly, the main problem of which was a lack of public responsibility to keep prices flexible and responsive, and thus ensure the accessibility of needed goods to consumers. In fact, there was no longer a "free market;" Canadians had to choose between capitalist planning by and for a capitalist elite with the goal of manipulated scarcity, or socialist planning by democratically responsible governments for the common good and public abundance. Cooperatives, though they had offered much, could only try to compete with an established and dominant economic order by working at the periphery of society and by charging higher prices than big business. Thus, they offered no structural change to the established system.

Forsey also employed Marx's "surplus theory" of labour to argue that the very structure of capitalism was designed to exploit workers by profiting from their labour, which was the only creative agent in the economic process, and thus the sole source of wealth.¹⁷² Borrowing from John Macmurray's ideas, Forsey argued that there was no way to reform capitalism in such a way that would make labour, "in their concrete life, free and equal." Thus the only hope for realizing the Kingdom of Heaven was through socialist revolution and public ownership of the main services and means of production. Christians would have to learn and apply the lessons of Marxism in order to enter that Kingdom. Democratic ownership and rational planning for the purposes of "real" freedom and equality were the first steps toward the Kingdom on earth.

Though not always sharing Forsey's more radical exclusivism, FCSO members generally called for revolutionary change of the social system in contrast with either ameliorative reform, or

¹⁷¹Eugene Forsey, "The Economic Problem," Towards the Christian Revolution, R. B. Y. Scott and Gregory Vlastos, eds. (Kingston: Ronald P. Frye & Co., 1989), 100.

¹⁷²Eugene Forsey, "The New Economic Order," Towards the Christian Revolution, R. B. Y. Scott and Gregory Vlastos, eds. (Kingston: Ronald P. Frye & Co., 1989), 135-7.

much less resignation to an assumed inevitability of the capitalist system. This commitment to revolution emerged especially in the May 1935 conference of the FCSO, which added a clause to the Basis of Agreement that repudiated proposals, such as those of H. H. Stevens' Reconstruction Party, which promised only to reform, and thereby to preserve capitalism through government regulation. As the new clause stated, the movement toward regulation

pretends to reform our economic system by eliminating destructive competition: in reality it is a device for perpetuating private ownership for profit. Under the guise of abolishing class conflict it seeks to protect the status of the owner and employer by giving it legal form;...We call upon our fellow Christians to recognize the fact of the class struggle, and to interpret the mind of Christ to their day and generation by identifying themselves actively with the cause of the exploited and dispossessed in the effort to attain a truly classless society.¹⁷³

This declaration for revolution coincided with the 1935 electoral campaign, and the On-to-Ottawa trek that came to a violent end in Regina on July 1 at the hands of the Regina police and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. In the wake of that event, FCSO members declared their identity with the Trekkers. Against perceptions that the Trekkers were violent revolutionaries, Scott argued that their protest against the conditions of the relief camps was innocent and understandable. The Trekkers, he argued, were victims of an economic war who were suffering for the selfishness of those who possessed wealth and power and refused to share. Bereft of all other resources, they had no alternative but that of mass protest to the government to plead their case. "They were speaking in the only language that would be heard, and demanding man's final right, the right to live, and to live not as castaways but as men."¹⁷⁴

Following up on this sympathy, John Line appealed to FCSO members and other sympathizers to assist the Citizens' Committee established to aid the defense of Trekkers who had been arrested and

¹⁷³A. L. Richards, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, 'Annual Conference,'" NO (29 May 1935), 560.

¹⁷⁴R. B. Y. Scott, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, 'The Chastisement of Our Peace,'" NO (7 August 1935), 786.

now faced prosecutors and "all the resources of the provincial and federal governments."¹⁷⁵ When one respondent complained that Line's appeal suggested a loss of respect and confidence in Canada's institutions of justice and constituted authority, Line denied any attempt to devise a challenge against constitutional authority; rather, he argued that fair economic resources were necessary to ensure a fair trial, and thus effective functioning of that authority.¹⁷⁶

The question of legitimate authority would arise again in the later 1930's. In the meantime, other members of the FCSO continued to advocate economic justice for the "working man" and his entitlement to "all that is essential for the well-being of body, mind and soul."¹⁷⁷ And in an article entitled "Resignation or Rebellion?" R. E. Gosse called the church to active engagement in the "radical change" that was taking place in both the social order and in religion. The minister could no longer "anesthetically" counsel the poor to resign themselves to God's providence and remain both content and virtuous in the assurance of a utopian destiny in the future. The religion of Jesus was a religion that rebels against the current order of selfishness and injustice.

We worship a God in whose heart is a fierce rebellion -- a consuming fire -- against sin in His world, and an eternal purpose that refuses to submit to any alien condition. Thus resignation to God's will is not calm acceptance of life's conditions; but rebellion against all that is opposed to that will.¹⁷⁸

Religion was not quiescent acceptance of the conditions of life, but a passion to change those conditions. And in this case, he warned, even "charity" may be an "insidious danger" insofar as it provided a "sop" that left people content with the present order and preserved a false sense of

¹⁷⁵John Line, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, 'A Call to Members of the Fellowship and Others,'" NO (14 September 1935), 860-61.

¹⁷⁶See letters by W. E. NacNiven, "A Reply to Dr. Line," and John Line, "Dr. Line Again," in "Our Readers' Forum," NO (30 October 1935), 1056.

¹⁷⁷A. L. Richards, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, 'The Working Man and the Churches,'" NO (10 April 1936), 382.

¹⁷⁸R. E. Gosse, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, 'Resignation or Rebellion?'" NO (18 March 1936), 270.

resignation.

For many in the FCSO, the events of 1935 portended that the revolution was upon them. As Gordon described it, the church needed to be awakened to its imminent danger, and its potential role, in the disintegration of western civilization and the emerging new order.¹⁷⁹ As John Macmurray, whom Gordon described as the "brilliant English political philosopher," stated in one of the 1934 summer schools, the revolution was not merely coming, but in fact had already arrived, especially in the new movement toward communal welfare that was evident in both Communism and Fascism. To the Saskatchewan Conference of the United Church in late 1934, he declared that "[w]e feel today that we are seeing the twilight of society."¹⁸⁰ Likewise, Gordon declared that social, economic, and political events were moving "relentlessly to Armageddon or to social catastrophe," but still the Church seemed only dimly aware of those changes.¹⁸¹ R. B. Y. Scott added that even Stanley Jones, known for his criticism of the social gospel and for his sympathy with Barth, recognized that the world was fast approaching a decisive crisis between Christianity and a materialistic, atheistic Communism, and that Christianity must offer an alternative Christian vision of community welfare.¹⁸² The age, R. Edis Fairbairn added, was comparable to that of the fall of the Roman empire, and called for hope in a revolutionary Kingdom of God.¹⁸³

Indeed, the publication of Towards the Christian Revolution in 1936 was itself an indication

¹⁷⁹J. King Gordon, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, 'Christianity and the Social Revolution,'" NO (12 June 1935), 610; and NO (19 June 1935), 632.

¹⁸⁰Quoted in H. D. Ranns, "Saskatchewan News," NO (8 January 1935), 35-37.

¹⁸¹J. King Gordon, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, 'Christianity and the Social Revolution,'" NO (12 June 1935), 610; and NO (19 June 1935), 632.

¹⁸²R. B. Y. Scott, "The Fellowship for a Christian Order, 'Stanley Jones Speaks Out,'" NO (14 August 1935), 806.

¹⁸³R. Edis Fairbairn, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, 'Being Dead, Yet Speaketh,'" NO (21 August 1935), 822-23.

of this determination to offer a "radical" interpretation of Christianity as a challenge to the limits of personal evangelism, and to the existing social order. Even so, the call to revolutionary action was understood in an eschatological framework which also relativized human effort, for ultimately the source of revolutionary action was the will of a God who was other than man, and with whom man must align himself in order to arrive at a new stage of deliverance. Hence, Scott, Line, and Gordon warned against identifying any particular order as the final Kingdom of God. There was, according to Line, a creative tension between the transcendent reality of God's Kingdom and the present incompleteness of that Kingdom. While the modern eschatology located the Kingdom of God in this world of practical structured life, it also recognized that no-one knew the final form of the kingdom. No program or temporal utopia, including socialism, was final, for the "truism" was that the kingdom of God was greater than all human "programs and isms."¹⁸⁴

Scott also argued that the Kingdom of God could not be reduced either to an economic order, an ecclesiastical establishment, or a political state. None of these "immediate object[s]" could substitute for the genuine recognition of God as Father and King that was the root of the Kingdom. According to Scott, the Kingdom came into the world, but insofar as it originated with God it also transcended the world:

For the Kingdom, to Jesus, was something which transcended the categories of space and time, and yet might be realized within them; something which had its roots in the Divine Reality, but which might grow up in the sight of men.

Rooted as it was in the reality of God, there could be no identification of a "particular social order (which is necessarily tentative and approximate) with the final reality of the Kingdom itself."¹⁸⁵

While they affirmed the approximate nature of human efforts, and thus rejected the older social gospel's optimism and its identity of the Kingdom with the immanent progress of western

¹⁸⁴Line, "Conditions of Religious Renewal," 802.

¹⁸⁵Scott, "The Biblical Basis," 93-4.

civilization, Scott and Line nevertheless maintained that the Kingdom does come down out of heaven, as Revelation 21 pictured it, and as such must take organic form in an actual system of social relations. Too many Christians mistakenly conclude, Line argued, that because such programs are not final, they are spiritually irrelevant and futile. In contrast, Line argued that

operating as we do within a temporal or historical framework, the only goods we can aim at directly are proximate; so that to exhort or give direction only in terms of generalities or ultimates is, in effect, under the necessary conditions of our activity, to give no direction. Absolute goals must always be present as criteria for testing whatever steps seem immediately practicable. But the steps themselves must relate to our life as at present conditioned and must designate things that can be done here and now.¹⁸⁶

Though it was not to be identified with human culture, the Kingdom of God was a final destiny that must be related "realistically" to present conditions and structures with at least proximate visions of that kingdom if Christians were to apply themselves effectively to "spiritual world transformation." While all human efforts were approximations, it was the tension between the absolute and the present incompleteness that stimulated revolution. Line's eschatology thus set forth a future-oriented hope in which history was open to the real impact of transformation. In the "between-the-times" of the present, no human effort or program could be absolutized; rather humans were to get in line with the revolutionary coming and future destiny of God's Kingdom.

In this case, the methods of revolution must conform to the ways of God; that is, they must be "spiritual," in the sense of respecting personality and freedom. The FCSO took this to mean that revolution must be achieved primarily through a democratic process and a strategy of education to change the mind and heart of society. Accordingly, when the 1936 FCSO conference turned its attention to "practical action," it focused primarily on educational tasks that included "Kingdom of God Evangelism" and Bible study; leadership in cooperatives, research and criticism of economic injustice, and pacifism, through Adult Education; promotion of citizen participation in politics; and

¹⁸⁶Line, "Conditions of Religious Renewal," 801-2.

"sharing the suffering of the class struggle."¹⁸⁷

As part of this strategy, they continued to urge that the church had a vital role in shaping the new order through prophetic preaching. Forming the new order required intelligent leadership from experts in economics and politics, but it also required the contribution of the church in laying the foundations of a new order in ethics. Ethical principles, according to Gordon, were the basis of civilization, and the social and economic collapse demonstrated the failure of the ethics of capitalism.¹⁸⁸ Here he cited the United Church's report on "Christianizing the Social Order," Roberts' Moderator's sermon, and the report of the "Price Spreads and Mass Buying Commission," which demonstrated that modern western capitalist society was debased by the "sickness of acquisitiveness" and the pursuit of power and privilege. Such ethical analysis, Gordon claimed, was "more profound than many a socialist diagnosis" because it was concerned with human values, and thus went beyond a merely economic diagnosis of ineffective policy or the inevitable historical process of revolution claimed by Marxists. Though Christians might incorporate both of these views, they went further to interpret the present crisis as the judgement of God on an unjust civilization.

The crucial role of the church in the crisis, as both Line and Gordon claimed, was to offer eschatological preaching that interpreted the present crisis in terms of God's judgement, at once denouncing the unethical basis of current society and proclaiming the ethical basis of society. It was essential that, lest it shrink back from the crisis and surrender its moral claims, the church understand the social and economic causes of the conflict, and take leadership in the revolution by stressing the

¹⁸⁷Rev. A. L. Richards, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, 'National Conference,'" NO (20 May 1936), 484.

¹⁸⁸J. King Gordon, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, 'Christianity and the Social Revolution,'" NO (12 June 1935), 610; and NO (19 June 1935), 632.

spiritual values in human life that the revolution must sustain.¹⁸⁹ In particular, Line urged, it must offer an "explicit conception" of social brotherhood by portraying what the world might be in contrast with what it is. In doing so the church gave to Christian hope an object and direction for advance and for self-transcendence through serving an end beyond oneself. Only by submitting wholly to God's will in the world would Christians renew religion and give direction to the new order.¹⁹⁰

R. B. Y. Scott and David A. MacLennan reiterated the call for prophetic preaching, arguing that redoubled efforts at worship could not save society from the destruction it faced for failure to embody the justice and righteousness of God. The core of the prophetic message, that the Kingdom of God was "at hand," meant that the Church was committed to proclaiming and building society on the foundations of the Gospel. This work, however, was ambiguous, for institutions tend to identify themselves with the powerful groups of its context. Every time it encountered a new culture, the church experienced "double and mutual conversion," penetrating the host culture with the spirit of Christianity, but itself vulnerable to penetration by the "spirit of the age." Living as it did in the tension between the "world" and the Kingdom of God, the western church itself was in danger of becoming identified with the western civilization which now was both contrary to God's Kingdom and in decay. It was urgent, therefore, for the church to realize that it had no vested interest in the status quo, but rather that western civilization needed a new foundation. Like the prophets, who were the minority who challenged the complacency of their day and called God's people to radical obedience, so the church must act as a "saving remnant" in summoning society to revolutionary change.¹⁹¹

The specifically Christian contribution of the church to the new order, according to Scott and

¹⁸⁹J. King Gordon, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, 'Christianity and the Social Revolution,'" NO (12 June 1935), 610; and NO (19 June 1935), 632.

¹⁹⁰Line, "Conditions of Religious Renewal," 802.

¹⁹¹R. B. Y. Scott and David A. MacLennan, "Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, 'The Christian Contribution to Rebuilding of Society,'" NO (6 March 1935), 244.

MacLennan, was first of all to offer "creative ideas" concerning the fundamentally spiritual and moral nature of the universe, the sacred value of man as God's moral agent and instrument for divine justice in the world, and the necessity of realizing man's highest service to God in serving society. This emphasis on a corporate expression of spirituality, however, did not imply an exclusive focus on evangelizing only individuals, for Christianizing an individual would be ineffective "so long as the common practices to which he must conform as a member of society are unchristian." If man was to be Christianized, then his material needs and social structures must be assured and directed to "spiritual" ends. For this, the wealth produced by the community would have to belong to the community, and property must be valued only as it contributes to the good life of the individual and the community. Consequently, Christianity must contribute to the new order through a "persistent moral criticism" of unChristian practices in contemporary society, as the report on "Christianizing the Social Order" exemplified, even though such prophetic preaching might undermine the existing order. Furthermore, the Church offered the "dynamic" needed in order to carry society to the realization of a just and meaningful order. For this, human forces were insufficient, and the Church calls people to identify with the moral purpose and creative power of God which the very nature of the universe craved and required for its fulfillment. Finally, the Church offered the discipline of group fellowship and communal experience of God's reign that provided strength, purpose, and moral influence on the social environment needed in the struggle for revolution.¹⁹²

Thus, for the leading founders of the FCSO, the eschatological tension between a transcendent God and the realities of human existence was central to their idealist Christian socialism. In contrast to the social gospel of the earlier 1900's, their new social gospel was now qualified by the awareness of the distinction between the will of God and human efforts, by the reality of human sin and divine

¹⁹²R. B. Y. Scott and David A. MacLennan, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, 'The Christian Contribution to Rebuilding of Society, Part II,'" NO (13 March 1935), 266.

judgement, and by the recognition that socialism was a relative, proximate expression of the Kingdom. Indeed, their emphasis on the otherness of God and their use of "realist" social analysis were two sides of the same trend in their departure from the neo-Kantian framework of liberal Protestantism. But at the same time, they maintained that it was only the recognition of the reality of a transcendent Wholly Other God, and the embodiment of his will in historical social relations, that could ensure that the new social order would indeed bring the realization of freedom and community, -- that the coming revolution would indeed be the Kingdom of God rather than another form of either capitalism or Marxist materialism.

V. The Dilemmas of Radical Religion

Christian socialists' attempts to both distinguish but relate a Wholly Other God and human existence, however, demanded a delicate balance which by 1937 began to disintegrate. As the social crisis persisted and the threat of war deepened, and also as the inequalities of class power and the ineffectiveness of education became manifest, some FCSO members like Vlastos began to justify the use of violence in the name of revolution, while idealists like Scott and Line held firmly to the absolute moral ethics of pacifism. Although this disintegration appeared most clearly in the issue of pacifism, underlying that issue was disagreement about the nagging question of whether the basis, or what Line called the metaphysical grounding, of Christian socialist ethics truly was related to a transcendent personal God.¹⁹³ Ultimately, it was this question that divided the FCSO between those who insisted on absolute ideals which originated from the reality of God and those who turned to a more secularized Marxist theory of revolution.

¹⁹³Roger Hutchinson puts the matter differently in suggesting that the war-time divisions in the FCSO were between "conservatives" and "radicals." See Hutchinson, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order: 1934-1945," 25-7. See also Roger C. Hutchinson, "The Fellowship For a Christian Social Order; A Social Ethical Analysis of a Christian Socialist Movement" (Toronto School of Theology: unpublished Th.D., 1975), 155-56.

This new debate about pacifism coincided with the suppression of the On-to-Ottawa trekkers in 1935 and the declaration of the FCSO to revolutionary struggle. How revolution and pacifism were related, however, remained ambiguous. The views of Scott and Line have been noted already: while they identified with the Trekkers, they did so by declaring that the Trekkers were innocent of violence, and that their support for the Trekkers did not imply a rejection of properly constituted authority. In short, their sympathy for the Trekkers was reconciled with commitment to pacifism as an absolute moral ethic. Indeed, Scott in particular would continue to hold to this position, arguing in early 1937 that there was no possibility of a just war, since war was the very negation of the methods of justice and the responsibility to love.¹⁹⁴ Scott therefore urged the pursuit of "peace-making" through the League of Nations. Though the League was under a cloud, to abandon it would be to "fall into the mouth of hell." The League was at least the start of a world society that might issue in a peaceful world community devoted to human welfare.

A quite different approach, however, was taken by those more concerned with taking radical action in the midst of impossible conditions. Gregory Vlastos raised this problem also in 1935 with his tentative comments on "Violence and the Ethic of Love" to the FCSO annual conference.¹⁹⁵ How, Vlastos wondered, could revolutionary class struggle be reconciled with commitment to non-violence? Like Niebuhr in 1933, Vlastos seemed to be moving away from absolute pacifism as a realistic possibility in a world where all relations were qualified by power. Fellow FCSO-member Rev. Harvey G. Forster, of Welland, Ontario, pressed this argument further by arguing that the "logic of events" was forcing people to recognize the reality of violence in the class struggle.¹⁹⁶ Forster's

¹⁹⁴R. B. Y. Scott, "Shall We Make Peace?" The New Outlook (6 January 1937), 8-9.

¹⁹⁵A. L. Richards, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, 'Annual Conference,'" NO (29 May 1935), 560.

¹⁹⁶Harvey G. Forster, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, 'Jesus and Violence,'" NO (2 October 1935), 952.

argument was essentially that of Reinhold Niebuhr Moral Man and Immoral Society (1932), at least on three main points. First, he claimed that violence was often represented in far too narrow terms. Violence included not only "mechanical compulsion to the human body," but also the force of economic compulsion. Secondly, as Harold Laski argued in his The State In Theory and Practice (1935), the reality of the class struggle was that the privileged class monopolized power and violence to suppress the opposing classes. And thirdly, the ruling classes would not surrender power except under threat of violence. Violence was built into the present order, and was a central ingredient in changing that order. Though it was not to be preferred, violence was inevitable.

Notably unlike Niebuhr, however, Forster did not strictly separate the power relations of social structures from the moral absolutes of Christ. To the contrary, he argued that Jesus also recognized the inevitability of violence. He was not the "romantic idealist" of modern liberalism who believed that existing powers could be persuaded to surrender their power "by the development of a sentimental love."¹⁹⁷ Instead, he expected a cataclysmic crisis which would be the judgement of God. While the Sermon on the Mount laid down the standards of individual behaviour, apocalyptic and violent revolution was an inevitable part of the conflict of classes or groups and the redemptive process of social progress. Indeed, God himself was in that process as a "consuming fire" on behalf of the lost and exploited. Hence, one could be true to the spirit of Jesus, and yet "adjust oneself" to the prospect of violent cataclysm.

After 1937, Vlastos took a position similar to Forster's. In a 1937 article on Jesus' conflict with the Pharisees, Vlastos pointed to the entrenchment of conservatism in the established social order to which the Pharisees demanded fidelity, but as part of their effort preserve the status quo. Analogously, liberal Protestant insistence on absolute personal morality failed to recognize that even individuals acting with the best of humanitarian intentions might still naively participate in and

¹⁹⁷Forster, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, 'Jesus and Violence,'" 952.

perpetuate an immoral social order. Even their morality "has often served as a moral lubricant to smooth the workings of exploitation." But meanwhile, "the word 'love' can stink in the nostrils of those who ask for plain justice." In fact, Vlastos argued, Jesus condoned those who disobeyed the law for the sake of love. His understanding was that "[w]hen you have truly loved your neighbour, you have no further need of the Torah, because you have already fulfilled it; you can dispense with social distinctions, for these are excluded by love." In a social system where law was relative to unequal social relations, love superseded law.¹⁹⁸

In part, Vlastos justified this argument on the grounds that the Kingdom of God was not a far-off "balancing of accounts," but rather was a present and revolutionary reality that abolished the current unjust order. God's judgment and Kingdom, Vlastos declared, "is not meant to police this society, but to upset it." Presumably, that judgment would be apparent in present historical developments. Since the coming of the new order would be not merely by changed hearts, but also by its achievement in actual action, Christians would have to be involved in upsetting the old order. This had been modelled by Jesus: he identified himself with the poor and took their side against the establishment in the conflict that they found themselves in, and he used violence against the Pharisees in the name of love. So also in the present order of conflicting alternatives, man is forced to choose where he stands. The choice of violent revolution was not a compromise of Jesus' "absolute imperative of love," but a result of its "incidence on a hostile world."¹⁹⁹ Inevitably, Jesus' ethic was in conflict with the world.

By 1939-40, as Roger Hutchinson has shown, the issue of pacifism seriously divided the FCSO. That division was marked especially by R. Edis Fairbairn's declaration of absolute pacifism

¹⁹⁸Gregory Vlastos, "Jesus' Conflict With the Pharisees," Christendom, Vol. 2 (1937), 90, 98.

¹⁹⁹Vlastos, "Jesus' Conflict With the Pharisees," 95, 96.

at the outbreak of war. Notably Richard Roberts would share that absolute pacifism.²⁰⁰ In contrast, Vlastos and most members of the FCSO would accept the need to resist aggression, and the view, similar to Niebuhr's, that violence was part of the inevitably tragic nature of the present social order. But Vlastos's position was more radically eschatological and existentialist than that of Niebuhr. God is radically other than man, Vlastos wrote, and could not be confused with mere human ideas of God, or with human ideals such as pacifism.²⁰¹ Yet God was in the process of the conflict, and his revolutionary judgement could be felt in the violence that was the wages of sin. In this context, one could only follow the God who was within man by throwing oneself into the revolutionary battle for the sake of love and justice.

Vlastos' view on pacifism, however, involved a second issue which cut across that of pacifism, for it raised the question whether one could speak of a distinct God at all, or whether God was merely an internal will to love. This issue, too, was rooted in the uneasy differences between the insistence of Scott and Line on the Biblical claim to personal, transcendent, and sovereign God as the basis of moral absolutes, and Vlastos' use of John Macmurray's existentialism in a way that tended to obscure the reality of a distinct God.

In a 1937 review of Macmurray's The Structure of Religious Experience (1936), Vlastos portrayed Macmurray as resolving the inadequate legacies of the Enlightenment Deist view of God and the Romantic and idealist reaction which attempted to locate the transcendent infinite within the human subject. In contrast to these, according to Vlastos, Macmurray was a realist whose ideas

²⁰⁰R. Edis Fairbairn, "Witness Against War," United Church Observer (15 October 1939), 21. See also Hutchinson, "The Fellowship For a Christian Social Order; A Social Ethical Analysis of a Christian Socialist Movement," 155-56. On Roberts' pacifism in 1940, and his critique of Niebuhr's rejection of pacifism, see Thomas P. Socknat, Witness Against War, Pacifism in Canada 1900-1945 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 222-4.

²⁰¹Gregory Vlastos, "God of Wrath, God of Hope, God the Power Within," The Canadian Student, Vol. XVI, no. 6 (March-April 1934), 147-8.

combined a Marxist reaction against Hegelian idealism and a Barthian emphasis on the objective otherness of God. Like Marx, Macmurray "detests idealism," and "finds the test of reality in action - - material, objective action." Vlastos also claimed that Macmurray successfully avoided the idealist reduction of the other, for the objectivity that he claimed for experience lay in the process by which man consciously related himself to others not himself. According to Vlastos, Macmurray understood religion to be man's relation to the Other, and so retained the "antithesis between self and not-self" which was the basis of both religion and rationality. But while Barth's conception of the Other was "romantic supernaturalism" insofar as it emphasized merely the emotional adoration of a transcendent Other, Macmurray insisted that the Other, or God, was to be experienced in rational human life, which he identified with conscious cooperation. Thus Macmurray "finds the Other in the experience of mutuality."²⁰²

Vlastos hailed Macmurray for rediscovering a mature, empirical, personal, social, and radical religion, and for releasing "the modern spirit from the bonds of supernaturalism." But his determined critical method also had reduced the possibility of speaking of a transcendent God who was distinct from man's encounter of the Other in social relations. It was in the relations of community, he argued, that "the drama of estrangement, guilt, forgiveness, reconciliation, the eternal drama of religion," were played out. Both the "material" and the "spiritual" worlds were to be found in community: the community sustained man's bodies, and was the material sign of the existence of the "Other," but it was also the "spiritual" world in which, through conscious cooperation, man transcended nature and moved toward a greater, more complex union of persons in a spiritual brotherhood. Though he dismissed as facile those who might accuse Macmurray of being a "humanist" rather than a Christian, Vlastos admittedly had no clear answer to this charge. Macmurray

²⁰²Gregory Vlastos, "The Religion of Community; review of The Structure of Religious Experience, The Terry Lectures for 1936, by John Macmurray. Yale University Press, \$1.50," Christendom, Vol. 2 (1937), 294-95.

still insisted, he claimed, that the idea of the integration of man with man could not be substituted for the "universal person" of God, but Vlastos professed not to understand Macmurray's argument here. Indeed, Macmurray's existentialism could readily be seen as moving away from the personal God that was so urgently claimed during the 1920's.²⁰³

For some, like John Line and R. B. Y. Scott, the erosion of claims about the reality of a transcendent personal God who was the basis of absolute moral norms called for a return to theology, and particularly the problem of knowledge of God. While Scott remained active in the FCSO until its demise in 1945, he increasingly gave priority to Biblical Studies, ultimately moving to Princeton in 1955, and affirming in his work that the Bible offered a unique knowledge of a distinct God.²⁰⁴ Line's break with Vlastos and the FCSO was sharper. Concerned with the problem of religious and moral certainty since the 1920's, as late as 1936 he continued to hold that Christian socialism was the answer to the search for religious certainty and a direct relation with God.²⁰⁵ In 1937, however, he participated with G. G. D. Kilpatrick in the "College in the Woods" at Camp Onawa near Huntsville, where he lectured on "Preaching Values in Present-Day Theology."²⁰⁶ Here he called for a "fundamental theology" that emphasized the Christ of the synoptic Gospels, and that would awaken man "to the needs of his own soul." Here he seemed to move, like Donald and John Baillie, to a new emphasis on the need for knowledge of God and the role of Christ as mediator.

Line's continued development of this theological focus through the late 1930's indicated growing concern and a new strategy for responding to secular western civilization. In a 1938 article,

²⁰³Vlastos, "The Religion of Community," 293, 295-296.

²⁰⁴See R. B. Y. Scott, "VI. How I Interpret the Bible," Interpretation (July 1951), 318-328; and "Priesthood, Prophecy, Wisdom, and the Knowledge of God," Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 80 (1961), 1-15.

²⁰⁵Line, "Conditions of Religious Renewal," 800-2.

²⁰⁶J. A. Felstead, "The College in the Woods, 1937," NO (1 October 1937), 885.

he argued that the main problem of the day was the wide-spread questioning of both the fact of God, and of the ability of humans to know the nature of God.²⁰⁷ The eccentric skepticism of Enlightenment philosophers, he believed, had become a popular indifference and doubt toward religion. And the main reason for this problem was the paradoxical legacy of modern science. The advance of science had expanded knowledge of virtually every aspect of the world, including even the human and historical elements of Biblical revelation, but it had also come to question, as in the case of Ernst Troeltsch's critical method, any unique revelation or belief that could not be certified on the grounds of ordinary evidence. At the same time, as a result of its naturalism, science had abandoned any possibility of knowing the metaphysical or supernatural reality of God. "Science has impaled religion on a species of cruel epistemological irony," he declared, for its expansion of knowledge about the world which might teach more about the ways of God had also undermined certainty about God itself.²⁰⁸

This situation left a predicament for those wishing to give due deference to science, but without abandoning belief in God or claims to knowledge about the nature of God. Of the two possible responses to the predicament that Line saw, he now abandoned his preference for a philosophical, idealist apologetic in favour of a Barthian emphasis on a radically unique revelation of God's Word. The philosophical theology represented by emergent evolution or Whitehead's principle of concretion, he explained, had attempted to identify God with some reality in the structure of experience in order to preserve the primary authority of science even in religion. In contrast, while the Barthian separation of science and religion recognized the claims of science in "its own domain," it denied the authority of science in the realm of faith and knowledge of God. For Barthians, the

²⁰⁷John Line, "Problems of Today. X. The Nature of our Knowledge of God," The Expository Times, Vol. 50 (1938-39), 438.

²⁰⁸Line, "Problems of Today. X. The Nature of our Knowledge of God," 438.

idealist view of God was unacceptable, for Christianity rested on a view of God not as a Process or Principle without consciousness, but as an "Eternal Personal Spirit" who was the sovereign creator and also cared and acted for people. According to Line, the Barthian view turned the tables on idealism with its doctrine of Revelation. Man could not gain knowledge of God; rather man and the world were known by God. Science was "our human knowing," but beyond human knowledge from philosophy and science was a knowledge that comes as the gift of God. As Barth wrote in his early Church Dogmatics (1936-69), "'Men can know the Word of God,...because and so far as God wills that they should know it.'"²⁰⁹

In a striking shift from his earlier preference for Whitehead over Barth, Line now professed to share Barth's view of revelation. For Line, Whitehead's organic idealism could no more assure a transcendent personal God than could vitalism. Now he rejected all attempts to construct an apologetic for religion. Revelation, he argued citing both Archbishop William Temple's Nature, Man, and God (1934) and Barth's Dogmatics (1936-69), was not an intellectual datum that could be tested scientifically, but the confrontation of "the living God Himself."²¹⁰ Revelation and rational science were now strictly separate, for revelation was an event "of its own order" that came to faith from God, and theology was distinctly the "ordered explication of the content of the Christian faith."²¹¹ By 1945, Line argued that the force of secularization had become so severe as to warrant a "suspension" from temporal and practical concerns for a new concentration on recovering Christian faith, not as a means for some moral goal, but for its own intrinsic ends.²¹² What was needed was a recovery of

²⁰⁹Line, "Problems of Today. X. The Nature of our Knowledge of God," 438-40.

²¹⁰Line, "Problems of Today. X. The Nature of our Knowledge of God," 440.

²¹¹John Line, quoted in Hutchinson, "The Fellowship For a Christian Social Order; A Social Ethical Analysis of a Christian Socialist Movement," 155.

²¹²John Line, "Truth Is In Order To Goodness," Theology Today, Vol. 2 (July 1945), 161.

the living Word of God and its explication in theology.

Line's new concerns clearly went against the grain of Vlastos' view that God was experienced only in the encounter of the Other in social relations, or J. W. A. Nicholson's declaration that all theology was reflection on the nature and meaning of social existence, and more broadly against the FCSO's agenda of realizing God's Kingdom through social revolution. Not surprisingly, he withdrew from the FCSO in 1941.²¹³ That departure marked the beginning of what would become, according to Hutchinson, a sharp division in the FCSO. On one side, those who wished to preserve a uniquely "Christian" emphasis in Christian socialism and its ties to the church feared that the FCSO, with new members and the hiring of J. Morton Freeman as General Secretary, had been infiltrated and usurped by communists. On the other side, those who identified Christianity simply as engagement in the social structure, and were therefore prepared to work with any others who shared the same social policy goals, regarded the "church group" as conservative. By 1945, the FCSO's resources were depleted and the movement was abandoned.

V. Conclusion

In fact, it was not only the FCSO's resources that were depleted by 1945, for its eschatological vision seemed also to have disintegrated. The "radical" Christian socialism of the 1930's was enervated by its attempt to affirm, and relate, a transcendent God and his will of love and justice, to a structured world understood in terms of "realist" social science. It was their consciousness of the tension between a holy God and the reality of human sin that was embodied in a whole social order, that provided the basis for their penetrating and revolutionary critique of liberal Protestantism and liberal-capitalist society.

²¹³Hutchinson, "The Fellowship For a Christian Social Order; A Social Ethical Analysis of a Christian Socialist Movement," 185. See also Hutchinson, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order: 1934-1945," 25.

Despite their small numbers, Christian socialists had exercised a considerable impact on Canadian society. Through remarkable energy, and a wide-ranging network of personal relationships to the LSR and the CCF, the United Church, universities and colleges, and a host of lectures and publications they contributed to, though manifestly without revolutionizing, the emergence of a social democratic political culture in Canada. Undoubtedly the shift of public concern from social reform to the war and resistance to fascist and communist collectivization prevented the further development of their agenda, and eventually also fragmented the movement itself.

Ultimately, however, it was the tensions at the core of the movement that divided it by the late 1930's. While attempting to challenge the neo-Kantian framework of liberal Protestantism and its entanglement in liberal-capitalist social structures by claiming both the reality of a transcendent and absolute God and the historical-structural nature of humans, they had done so starting from the human side, particularly from the premises of critical reason and human freedom. Somewhat surreptitiously, through Whitehead's principle of concretion, they reconciled these two poles from a critical perspective with a new "realist" idealism. Their combination provided a unique alternative to both the revival of neo-Kantian liberal evangelicalism and other forms of crisis or realist theology. For a time, though shorn of the optimism of an earlier progressive social gospel, their Christian socialism provided a dynamic, eschatological vision of the relation between God and humanity that sought the transformation of Canadian civilization as an approximation of the coming of God's Kingdom on earth. In the end, however, their eschatological expectations were frustrated by the intransigence of a liberal-capitalist social structure and the return of world war. Meanwhile, they could speak of God only by reducing him to the socio-historical process known by rational consciousness, or as excluded from the process and therefore known only by Barthian dogmatics. In the fragmentation of their Christian socialism, FCSO members seemed to have to choose between a relative, secular social reform movement or an abstracted Christian theology.

Chapter 8:

The Reality of Grace

A third answer to the search for a modern evangelicalism was the Protestant neo-orthodoxy developed during the 1930's by a few solitary scholars, especially the Presbyterian Walter Williamson Bryden (1883-1952), and fellow-Presbyterians James D. Smart and Arthur C. Cochrane. The roots of this neo-orthodoxy, especially for Bryden, lay in two central sources. First, Bryden shared the disillusionment with liberal western culture and the "realist" social criticism held also by members of the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order (FCSO). But unlike FCSO-members, secondly, Bryden also drew from the post-critical Biblical theology of "modern" Scottish evangelical theologians like T. M. Lindsay and James Denney. In contrast to both fundamentalism and liberal idealism, this modern Biblical theology emphasized the early church's experience of the risen, living Christ. During the 1920's, Bryden had combined these two themes to distinguish between historical-structural reality and the spiritual reality of God's transcendent grace, thereby paralleling the main concerns of Karl Barth. Indeed, after the publication of Barth's translated The Word of God and the Word of Man in 1928, Bryden, along with Smart and Cochrane, adopted Barth's declaration of the radical chasm between man and God, and his "theology of the Word," to articulate God's exclusive judgement and grace, and as the beginning of a modern recovery of the theo-centric confessions of the Reformation and the early church.

This shift to Barth's theology of the Word provided an understanding of the tension between God's Kingdom and the world that challenged both the revitalized liberal-evangelicalism of Roberts and the Christian socialism of the FCSO. Although Bryden's criticism of liberal-capitalism was no less radical than that of Christian socialists, he directed his criticism even moreso to the liberal Protestant tradition, particularly its anthropocentric confidence in human nature and its expectation that the agencies for building the Kingdom of God were present within the world. To Bryden, liberal

Protestantism and the social gospel movement had naively surrendered the gospel to a modern "naturalism" that was epitomized by rationalist pessimism, capitalist greed, and the totalitarian pursuit of power, and that threatened the very existence of a faithful church in the modern world. Like Barth, Bryden believed that natural humanity must be thoroughly disillusioned in order to become open to the exclusive revelation of God's judging and saving Word which came eschatologically into the midst of human existence. Furthermore, in accepting the historicist pessimism that science could find no bridge to God in the historical-structural order of human existence, Bryden embraced Barth's interpretation of a radical chasm between "natural" humanity and a wholly other transcendent God.

Bryden's neo-orthodoxy, then, had two sides: it offered a radical critique of modern culture and a renewed emphasis on human sin, and it reclaimed Reformed doctrines about a transcendent sovereign God and the reality of grace that came from God alone. As John Vissers has shown, however, Bryden's was a distinctly "post-Enlightenment" and "neo-Reformed" theology insofar as he assumed the primacy of experiential faith and the validity of critical science for understanding "natural," "temporal" human life.¹ Furthermore, in asserting a radical distinction between a transcendent God and nature, Bryden suggested that nature was inherently secular. Consequently, his interpretation of the tension between God's Kingdom and the world postulated an antithesis between God's transcendent grace that entered apocalyptically into experience, and sinful nature.

The implications of this neo-orthodox reconstruction would reverberate through Bryden's work in several persistent issues. In the first place, Bryden continued to struggle with the problem of revelation and the epistemological crisis of certainty. While insisting that God was transcendent, Bryden retained the modern premise that knowledge of God must be experiential. The central problematic of his attempt to move beyond liberal-Protestantism to classic Reformed doctrine,

¹John Anthony Vissers, "The Conception of Revelation in the Theology of Walter W. Bryden" (University of Toronto: unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1988), 26-7.

therefore, concerned the paradox of how humanity might know and speak of a God who was radically other. His answer to this paradox emphasized the eschatological entry of the Word of God into experience solely in Christ and the Holy Spirit, which in turn could only be confessed as it was experienced in the faith of the Church. Hence, as James Smart later commented, Bryden was first of all an evangelist and church theologian rather than either a critical scholar or social reformer.²

Following from this problematic, secondly, Bryden's emphasis on the chasm between God and the world, and on the eschatological Word, left ambiguous the relationship between redemption and the historical-structural world. Strikingly absent from his recovery of the Reformed tradition, at least until 1940, was a clear doctrine of creation. Unhinged from a view of redemption as the restoration of creation order, Bryden interpreted the transforming Kingdom of God exclusively in terms of an existential encounter of God's eschatological Word in the midst of the world. Since that encounter was located uniquely in the faith of the Church, he also distinguished the Church from all "natural" institutions, and defined its task in terms of proclaiming God's judging-saving Word -- a task that inescapably set it against the modern, secular world embodied in the State.

Though developed in relative obscurity during the 1930's, this neo-orthodox theology, especially by Bryden, would be crucial for twentieth-century Canadian Protestantism. For a new generation of continuing Presbyterians, according to Joseph McClelland, Bryden's "neo-Calvinism" provided a pathway through fundamentalism and liberal modernism to a modern interpretation and affirmation of the classic confessions of the Reformation and of a Biblical theology.³ Similarly, as we have already seen in the case of John Line, Bryden offered a modern and rigorously critical

²James D. Smart, "The Evangelist as Theologian," Separated Unto the Gospel, Donald V. Wade, ed. (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1956), vii.

³Joseph C. McLelland, "Walter Bryden; 'By Circumstance and God,'" in Called to Witness; Profiles of Canadian Presbyterians, A Supplement to Enduring Witness, Vol. 2, ed. W. Stanford Reid (Hamilton: Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1980), 120.

alternative for those disillusioned of the hope of a Christian revolution. More broadly, Bryden's neo-orthodoxy suggested a way in which the modern Church might disentangle itself from its compromises with a secularizing culture, so that it might reclaim its identity with the historic Christian church and the unique Word of God, and also reclaim a transforming gospel of judgement and grace. In this sense, Bryden's neo-orthodoxy may be seen as an attempt at a strategic retreat of the Church from a world in crisis, in order to recover its hope in God's grace and its prophetic role in the world.

I. From Mystical Realism to Barth's Dialectic

Bryden began teaching at Knox College in 1925 as a part-time instructor in Church History while he continued to serve as pastor at Knox Presbyterian Church in his hometown of Galt, until his full-time appointment in 1927 as professor of Church History and Philosophy of Religion. In the wake of church union, neither the identity of Knox and the continuing Presbyterian Church, nor Bryden's fit with those institutions, were resolved. After most of its faculty joined the United Church in 1925, Knox College would go through a long process of reconstruction that would not be resolved until Bryden's appointment as principal in 1945.⁴ Though staffed largely by conservative Presbyterians, Knox College was torn during the late 1920's and 1930's by personal conflicts between principal T. Eakin and E. Lloyd Morrow, Professor of Systematic Theology and a strident defender of traditional Presbyterian doctrine and polity against church union.⁵ Along with Morrow in Systematic Theology were F. Scott Mackenzie, who would become principal of Presbyterian College in Montreal in the later 1930's, and Stuart Parker, a recent arrival from Scotland and a vocal proponent of the idea that the

⁴McLelland, "Walter Bryden; 'By Circumstance and By God'," 119-120.

⁵See John S. Moir, Enduring Witness, 2nd Ed. (Hamilton: Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1987) 241. See also E. Lloyd Morrow, Church Union in Canada; Its History, Motives, Doctrine and Government (Toronto: Thomas Allen, 1923).

Presbyterian Church was bound to maintain the ties and traditions of its Scottish heritage.⁶

Knox College reflected in microcosm the concerns of many who remained with the continuing Presbyterian Church. According to N. Keith Clifford, the vast majority of continuing Presbyterians were those who were conservative in their social and ecclesiastical views. Many of these were committed either to fundamentalism or, as in the case of Frank Baird, to the Princetonian orthodox Presbyterianism of J. Grescham Machen.⁷ Also, as in the case of Parker and Morrow, they were devoted to the Westminster Confession of Faith as the standard of faith and church polity, and to the Scottish ethnic heritage and identity of the Presbyterian community.

Though most progressive Presbyterians had joined the United Church, some notable exceptions remained and would preserve a progressive-evangelical influence in the continuing Presbyterian Church. The Reid brothers from Montreal, W. D., Allan, and Andrew, all had some initial sympathy with the principle of church union, though ultimately only Andrew joined the United Church.⁸ Others like Walter G. Brown, minister of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Saskatoon, and Rev. A. P. Dunn, first secretary of the "Church Life and Work" subcommittee established by the Committee of Evangelism in 1933, would urge the Presbyterian Church to more direct "social action" during the Depression.⁹ Though he would not endorse "godless" communism, Brown, like John Line and John King Gordon, became an advocate for those suffering the worst effects of the Depression by condemning the evils of capitalism, helping to organize local cooperatives, and running for Parliament

⁶See Moir, Enduring Witness, 221.

⁷N. Keith Clifford, The Resistance to Church Union in Canada, 1904-1939 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985), 2-4. See also Everett H. Bean, "Frank Baird," in Called to Witness: Profiles of Canadian Presbyterians, Vol. 2, W. Stanford Reid, ed. (Hamilton: Presbyterian Church of Canada Church Historical Society, 1980), 107-18.

⁸W. Stanford Reid, "The Quebec Trio," in Called to Witness: Profiles of Canadian Presbyterians, Vol. 2, W. Stanford Reid, ed. (Hamilton: Presbyterian Church Committee on Church History, 1980), 93-106.

⁹Moir, Enduring Witness, 238; Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC), Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly, 1933, "Report of the Committee on Evangelism," 106.

in 1939 as a United Reform Movement candidate.¹⁰ In addition to this progressive social action, some Presbyterians continued to draw from the moderate idealist theological tradition. Recommended reading lists offered by the Committee of Evangelism, for example, though they included Bryden's The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul (1925), James Denney's Jesus and the Gospels (1906), and also J. Grescham Machen's What is Faith (1925), were weighted heavily toward commentaries by moderate British personal idealists, including J. E. McFadyen, A. E. Garvie, Robertson Smith, Samuel Driver, Marcus Dods, as well as prominent Canadian personal idealists like William Jordan and E. F. Scott.¹¹

By the time that he began to teach at Knox, Walter Bryden had moved beyond both conservatism and liberal-evangelicalism to what he called in his The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul (1925) a "mystical" realism.¹² Like his Scottish teachers, T. M. Lindsay and especially James Denney, Bryden also attempted to move through modern criticism to a recovery of classic Augustinian and Reformed themes concerning God's transcendent sovereignty, human sin, and God's grace in Christ.¹³ Especially like Denney, Bryden rejected liberal Protestant attempts to claim an immanent God and a progressive human-centered Kingdom of God, which to Bryden seemed to make God meet the requirements of human reason and moral aspirations.¹⁴ Instead of liberal idealism, Bryden emphasized the reality of the risen Christ who was distinctly divine and transcended nature, but nevertheless was experienced immediately and in the midst of existence as a spiritual reality in the soul. His early pastoral work in Lethbridge, Alberta, Melfort, Saskatchewan, and Woodville, Ontario,

¹⁰J. M. Pitsula, "W. G. Brown, 'Righteousness Exalteth a Nation,'" Saskatchewan History, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Winter 1980), 56-70.

¹¹PCC, Acts and Proceedings, 1928, "Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion," 115-17.

¹²W. W. Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul (London: James Clarke & Co, 1925), 200.

¹³Vissers, "The Conception of Revelation," 51-3.

¹⁴W. W. Bryden, The Significance of the Westminster Confession of Faith (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1943), 27.

provided the opportunity to develop his mystical realism further. Especially in his contact with coal-miners in Lethbridge, he had grown sympathetic to the radical labour movement and had learned the reality of the modern church's entanglement in capitalist social structures from its Marxist and labour union critics.¹⁵ While discovering this realist social criticism, Bryden claimed that his "retreat" in the rural pastorate also gave time to focus on the exclusively "spiritual" and inward working of the living Christ.¹⁶

Though Bryden sought to move beyond liberal Protestantism, his mystical realism of the mid-1920's nevertheless was a "post-critical" return to Reformed doctrine that displayed the legacy of progressive evangelicalism in several ways. His emphasis on a "psychological" gospel, for example, reflected the extent to which Bryden shared the experientialism and critical perspective of modern evangelicalism.¹⁷ Also, in keeping with the neo-Kantian tradition, Bryden held a dualist ontology that identified the reality of God with spirit and inner psychic experience, in contrast with the historical-structural order of nature. Bryden's mystical realism had two sides. On one side, he proceeded from a critical understanding of the human situation and the structured world. He professed the "highest respect" for modern science and its discovery of the exacting and dynamic laws of the material world, and it had gained considerable understanding of the moral and spiritual history of humanity. But critical science could neither "explain" that universe nor offer a solution to its "abject severity." That solution came only from beyond in the revelation of a transcendent Christ whose Incarnation, death, and resurrection presented "a violation of all the laws of natural development, and

¹⁵Visser, "The Conception of Revelation," 61-62, 98 [fn 73].

¹⁶W. W. Bryden, "The Triumph of Reality: An address delivered at the Spring Convocation of Montreal College, 1929," in Separated Unto the Gospel, Donald V. Wade, ed. (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1956), 131.

¹⁷Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 173, 179.

a contradiction to all ordinary sense."¹⁸ The human dilemma was overcome only by the experience of the mystical presence of God's own spirit in the soul and of freedom from sin and "the necessity and severe bondage of either traditional or external guidance."¹⁹ The Spirit of God, therefore, was the most important factor in a "realistic world."

Bryden's attempt to replace traditional idealist monism with the dual realities of nature and spirit had laid the foundation for his assertion of a distinction between spiritual and historical-structural realities, and of freedom of the spirit from law, that he would state even more sharply after encountering Barth.²⁰ His "spiritual realism" culminated in an interpretation of the Kingdom of God as a spiritual reality that was radically other than human efforts and historical-structural forms. On this point he rejected liberal Protestant progressivism, especially in its assumption of inherent human divinity and its efforts to build the Kingdom of God by human effort and programs.²¹ In contrast to such external "busy-ness," Bryden identified the Kingdom with an existential spiritual experience that came to humanity in the eschatological spirit of Christ. Like Augustine's description of the City of God, he claimed, the Kingdom was a matter of the inner moral self responding in love to God.²² The Christian experience of God's spirit, then, was a paradoxical transforming process in which, as Wilhelm Herrmann's Communion With God described it, God "slays us, yet makes us alive," making man into a new creature and citizen of heaven.²³ From this emphasis on a revolutionary spiritual Kingdom, Bryden challenged the liberal Protestant identity of the church with the middle class and

¹⁸Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 241-2.

¹⁹Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 184.

²⁰Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 123-5, 171.

²¹Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 248-50.

²²Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 109-115.

²³Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 170.

with the institutional machinery of natural society, arguing that the real identity of the church lay with the mass of ordinary believers, and particularly among the old, the young, and the "outcast portion of humanity" -- those whose circumstances of life were uncertain, and who were most in need of and most open to the comfort and hope of grace.²⁴ And in the midst of the tragedy of modern life, he had argued, the vital task of the church was not merely social amelioration, but to communicate "living knowledge of God -- the very spirit and nature of God -- to other human souls[.]"²⁵ Above all, this task called for a renewal of preaching, and particularly preaching which was not reduced to refined historical scholarship, but dealt simply and directly with the realities of sin and redemption and the experience of personal consecration that traditionally was centered on "Christ crucified."²⁶ But genuine vital preaching was the paradoxical end-point between God's spirit and human response, for the preaching ministry of the church was "not the creation of men nor even of the Church, but ...the creation of Jesus Christ."²⁷ Such preaching could only be undertaken, he argued, in a realistic awareness of one's own inadequacy, in self-abandonment to God's spirit, and in the recognition that the inner conviction to faith "is God's and not ours."²⁸

From the perspective of his "mystical realism," Bryden viewed the challenges of the 1920's as cause, not for alarm, but rather for renewed optimism. The new self-criticism that was sweeping the church was not a pessimistic loss of faith, for God could not be "lost." Instead, it was a much-needed disillusionment with the false hopes of an anthropocentric liberalism. That new humility

²⁴Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 54-6, 251-2.

²⁵Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 66.

²⁶Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 55-6, 70-2.

²⁷W. W. Bryden, "The Christian Ministry (1927)," in Separated Unto the Gospel, Donald V. Wade, ed., 120. See also PCC, AP, 1928, "Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion," 113.

²⁸Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 83.

coincided with the search for authentic knowledge of God, and promised the recovery of a "more purely spiritual and truly ethical Christianity."²⁹ Nor should the church be disillusioned at its lack of popularity, he argued, for the business of the Church was to call people to a Cross of humility and responsibility that was an offence to ordinary life, and its faithful effort to do so, despite apparent defeat in modern culture, would demonstrate the power of God's Spirit.³⁰ For Bryden, disentangling Christianity from secular culture, and the spirit of Christ from nature, was no mere retreat, but rather the rediscovery of a transcendent spirit of judgement and grace by which human existence might be transformed.

Despite this optimism, Bryden would continue to struggle with two central difficulties. As he conceded, the question of how vital, believing knowledge of God was gained remained the most difficult problem of Christian experience.³¹ If knowledge was a matter of experience and consciousness, how could one distinguish from these a distinctly other and transcendent reality? Given his critical view of the human consciousness as strictly natural and historical, speaking of the objective reality of a transcendent God, according to Bryden, was the impenetrable, mysterious work of the Spirit. Bryden would welcome Barth's radical affirmation of this paradox, and he would continue to wrestle with the problem of revelation and the knowledge of God. In taking up Barth's views, however, Bryden would confront the second problematic of his mystical realism. Although his interpretation of the Kingdom of God envisioned a spiritual transformation that would permeate all of life, his use of Barth's views on the chasm between God and sinful humanity would magnify Bryden's distinction between transcendent spirit and natural existence, and between grace and law, leaving open the question of how grace was at all related to historical-structural life.

²⁹Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 49, 60.

³⁰Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 51.

³¹Bryden, The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul, 158.

When Bryden discovered Karl Barth's ideas in the late 1920's, he found confirmation of the themes of his own mystical realism, but also a more radical declaration of the otherness of God. Bryden first indicated his discovery of Barth in a 1929 Convocation address entitled "The Triumph of Reality," shortly after the publication of Barth's The Word of God and the Word of Man (1928) in English translation. The time was coming, he warned the candidates for church ministry, that people would "listen only to reality and truth" and demand only "the authentic note of that something 'Other' in the soul of the man," namely God's own revelation of himself.³² The answer to the modern crisis of authentic reality, he claimed, could be found in Barth's proclamation of the wholly "other" and sovereign God. Thus Barth seemed to confirm and radicalize Bryden's confidence in the reality of a transcendent God -- a confidence that also assumed a modern disillusionment with all temporal authorities. While deprecating its pretentiousness, Bryden's theme of the "The Triumph of Reality" captured his claim, now bolstered by Barth, that God was the ultimate reality beyond and superior to the merely temporal realities of human experience.³³

It was also through Barth that Bryden claimed to find a further path for returning to the Reformation tradition. Barth's description of God's wholly otherness and sovereign will, Bryden declared, was "the heart and soul of Calvinism."³⁴ Like Barth, Bryden's return to Calvinism was through the legacy of modernism, particularly the ideas of Friedrich Schleiermacher, whose "creaturely feeling for the Infinite," according to Bryden, had the same roots as Calvin's "feeling of insignificance before the glory and sovereignty of God." Though he would be more critical of the anthropocentrism in Schleiermacher's legacy during the 1930's, Bryden's attempt to link Schleiermacher with Calvin indicated that his recovery of the Reformation tradition would combine Calvinist themes concerning

³²Bryden, "The Triumph of Reality," 145.

³³Bryden, "The Triumph of Reality," 132.

³⁴Bryden, "The Triumph of Reality," 135.

human sin and the sovereignty of God with the modern critical assumption of the primacy of experience.

Bryden's emphasis on experience continued, therefore, to characterize his interpretation of the gospel and the preacher's ministry. His own pastoral ministry in a quiet rural parish, he observed to a 1929 class of graduating ordinands, had given him the opportunity to get to know the "real life" of ordinary people, while allowing his own life to be "tested by the inwardness of things rather than by the outwardness of conventions."³⁵ Indeed, he urged, the preacher's own experience of the spirit, rather than mere repetition of accepted doctrine and legalisms, was essential to transmitting the authentic gospel. In the modern "enlightened" world where people accepted no external authority, the church would not be able to "impose" its belief or authority, but rather would be "obliged to learn to command men's souls by her own inherent and self-evidencing power of character and by her obvious witness to the truth."³⁶ While the preacher must have a gospel concerning a wholly "other" God, it must also be his "own" gospel, rooted in a free and decisive spiritual relationship with Christ. As Bryden put it, therefore, true preaching of the gospel involved "the unveiling of one's soul as that soul in the course of life is being touched by God."³⁷

Barth's influence also radicalized Bryden's interpretation of the dialectical and existential nature of this experience. With Barth, Bryden came to insist on a chasm and a fierce conflict between God's spirit and natural humanity. "One must give himself up," he quoted Barth, "in order to give himself over to God, that God's will may be done. To do His will ... means to begin with Him anew. His will is not a corrected continuation of our own. It approaches ours as a wholly other."³⁸ The

³⁵Bryden, "The Triumph of Reality," 131-32.

³⁶Bryden, "The Triumph of Reality," 143-4.

³⁷Bryden, "The Triumph of Reality," 133.

³⁸Bryden, "The Triumph of Reality," 135.

first step of that spiritual encounter, Bryden suggested recalling Rudolf Otto's Idea of the Holy, was the sense of "awe" that followed from recognizing that there is something in Jesus Christ which eludes and haunts man as the "ultimately real." To reconcile his radical dualism with the primacy of experience, Bryden began to portray the conflict between the "wholly other" divine spirit and natural humanity in existential and eschatological terms. Spiritual experience, he claimed, was not an abstraction from life, but rather was a reality that broke in upon humanity "along the road of life." "True beliefs," therefore, were "the issues of one's whole being as wrought upon by circumstance and God." "Circumstances" and "God" were the two realities of life, and the gospel involved the eschatological penetration of circumstantial temporal life with the transcendent reality of God's spirit.³⁹

It was the combination of these two themes, namely the primacy of existential experience and the chasm between natural humanity and a transcendent God, that provided the central problematic of Bryden's mature work. During the 1930's Bryden, like Barth, would emphasize the paradoxical tension in which the Word of a transcendent God was disclosed in human experience, but only as that which was other than and could not be contained in human words, ideas, and culture, but rather could only be articulated in the testimony and preaching of believers, or what Barth called "church dogmatics." Bryden's turn to this Barthian problematic produced a response to the crises of the late 1920's and early 1930's that was strikingly different from those of liberal-evangelicals like Roberts and Dow, and of Christian socialists like Line and Gordon.

II. The Word and the World

Bryden's answer to the crises of modern thought and society during the late 1920's and 1930's reflected his further development of a Barthian emphasis on the reality of a transcendent God and his

³⁹Bryden, "The Triumph of Reality," 135.

judgement upon "natural" humanity. Others like James Smart and Arthur C. Cochrane also joined him in advocating a Barthian theology, though Bryden would remain the leading advocate of Barth's ideas. Especially in works like Why I Am a Presbyterian (1934), based on lectures given over several years explaining Bryden's position on church union to Knox College students, and a 1935 essay on "The Presbyterian Conception of the Word of God," Bryden alternated between criticizing current movements in modern Protestantism and a positive Barthian theology of the Word.⁴⁰

Though the "triumph" of God's spirit and transcendent grace was the leit motif of Bryden's response to the crisis of reality, the dominant theme of his work during the 1930's emphasized the utter sinfulness of natural humanity and God's judgement upon all prematurely optimistic and "naturalist" claims to locate God and his Kingdom in human nature and history. In contrast to Roberts' liberal-evangelical revival of moral idealism and the social revolution called for by Christian socialists, Bryden interpreted the crisis of modern thought as the disclosure of humanity's utter helplessness before the judging and redeeming Word of God. Although this understanding of the crisis included a radical criticism of liberal-capitalist society and the complicity of modern Christianity in its decadence, Bryden, like Barth, pressed further than either liberal-evangelicals or Christian socialists in calling for a revolutionary turn of the tables on the anthropocentric perspective of modern thought. In doing so, he attempted to move beyond his roots and earlier sympathy for Schleiermacher and the progressive evangelical tradition to a radical emphasis on the antithesis between natural humanity and the eschatological Word of God.

Bryden thus agreed with Barth that the crisis of the late 1920's and early 1930's called first for an uncompromising declaration of God's judging "No!" against natural humanity, and for a recovery of a theocentric and evangelical confession, in keeping with Reformed doctrine, of

⁴⁰W. W. Bryden, Why I Am A Presbyterian (Toronto: Presbyterian Publishing, 1934).

humanity's crisis before the judging and saving Word of God.⁴¹ Only by dis-illusioning natural humanity, he would claim, could modern humanity become open to the authentic experience of God's spirit, and so realize their reliance on God's own initiative and grace.

Bryden's turn to Barth coincided with the revitalization of liberal-evangelicalism and the development of Christian socialism, and thus with what seemed to Bryden a premature resurgence of optimistic liberal progressivism. In some ways, that optimism seemed also to re-emerge in the Presbyterian Church during the 1930's. In 1933, the Presbyterian Church joined the Anglican, Baptist, and United churches in the Joint Committee on the Evangelization of Canadian Life that was organized initially as the Kingdom of God movement, and that began its joint evangelism campaign in 1933 under the banner "Advance for Christ."⁴² With John McNab as its secretary, the Presbyterian Committee on Evangelism declared its support for the goals of the Joint Committee's campaign. Those goals included a renewed emphasis on "first things first" and on a deepening sense of the living Christ and his Spirit, the responsibility of man for stewardship in the whole of life, and renewed evangelism to "bring home to each individual heart and life the Gospel of the Kingdom," and to bring about the consecration of individuals and the community in "every phase and department of human life and activity."⁴³ Translated into Presbyterian terms under the theme of "Covenant Renewal," the Presbyterian arm of the 1933 Joint Campaign called its members to repentance and spiritual renewal that would forswear "all forms of selfishness and injustice" in individual life and social conduct, and that would support the unemployed and the "sacred rights of personality" in the service of God's

⁴¹Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 45-48. See also Karl Barth, The Word of God and the Word of Man, Douglas Horton, trans. (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1928), 218-72.

⁴²PCC, AP, 1933, "Report of the Committee on Evangelism," 105-6.

⁴³PCC, AP, 1933, "Report of the Committee on Evangelism," 105-6.

Kingdom on earth.⁴⁴ The work of the Joint Evangelism campaign peaked in early 1935 with mass meetings in the Montreal Forum and at Maple Leaf Gardens, with attendance in Toronto over 18,000, and with similar meetings held in major cities across Canada.⁴⁵ With renewed hope, the Presbyterian Committee on Evangelism saw the campaign as a "spiritual forward movement" that would make "our Dominion His Dominion."⁴⁶

Coinciding with the campaign, the General Assembly also expanded the task of the Committee on Evangelism in 1933 to include "Church Life and Work."⁴⁷ Under this heading, its mandate included the promotion of matters like evangelism, "family religion," "christian stewardship," sabbath observance, and moral and social questions. By 1935 the Committee on Evangelism recommended that, in the light of the success of its renewal services, a committee of clergy and lay experts be appointed to study social and moral questions so as to pronounce the guidance of the church and give direction to statesmen.⁴⁸ Accordingly, in 1935 the Presbyterian Church, along with the United Church, joined the Social Service Council of Canada, which at the time was concerned with issues like moving pictures, temperance, housing, and "decency."⁴⁹

Though Bryden gave little indication of opposition to the goal of renewing a sense of the primacy of the spiritual in life, the trend of his work was opposed especially to the joint renewal of liberal-evangelicalism and what he regarded as the premature optimism of the campaign's efforts. He set out this opposition especially in Why I Am a Presbyterian (1934), where his apologia for his

⁴⁴PCC, AP, 1933, "Report of the Committee on Evangelism," 105-6.

⁴⁵PCC, AP, 1935, "Report of the Committee on Evangelism and Church Life and Work," 122.

⁴⁶PCC, AP, 1933, "Report of the Committee on Evangelism," 105-6.

⁴⁷PCC, AP, 1933, "Report of the Committee on Evangelism," 106.

⁴⁸PCC, AP, 1935, "Report of the Committee on Evangelism and Church Life and Work," 124.

⁴⁹PCC, AP, 1935, "Report of the Committee on Evangelism and Church Life and Work," 124.

Presbyterian affiliation became the occasion for criticizing the main currents of modern Protestantism, and for offering an alternative, Barthian interpretation of the Word and the church.

The crux of Bryden's reason for remaining with the Presbyterian Church rather than joining the United Church was that arguments for church union offered no compelling "Christian" grounds for union.⁵⁰ In fact, he claimed, he had experienced no urgent demand for union while serving as a minister, even in Alberta. The reasons given for church union had emphasized efficiency and moral influence, reflecting the assumption that the church was a purveyor of moral ideals and elaborate programs to build the Kingdom of God by human effort. Unionists had misrepresented Jesus' concern for the unity of the church as a call to ecclesiastical, institutional unity rather than spiritual unity. And their ultimate appeal to the state for legislation to confirm union finally subjected the church to Caesar. The implementation of union was a "tragedy," according to Bryden, and the ensuing division of the Presbyterian Church was a sign that the reasons for union had failed to penetrate to the spiritual depths of religious life.⁵¹

Bryden took particular issue with the writings of John T. McNeill, formerly of Knox College and by the 1930's at the University of Chicago. In works like The Presbyterian Church in Canada (1925) and Unitive Protestantism (1929), McNeill had argued that church union was the natural culmination of earlier Presbyterian unions in Canada; that consolidation of Protestant unity was a central concern of Calvin; and that the national trend toward church union in Canada was a unique and exemplary accomplishment that demonstrated the rise of a liberal and progressive Protestant community. To Bryden, however, McNeill's appeals to "natural" forces constituted a damning self-indictment of the church union movement. Earlier unions such as those within the Presbyterian Church, Bryden argued, were based on a common commitment to the doctrine of the Westminster

⁵⁰Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 9-15.

⁵¹Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 58-61.

Confession, and Calvin's pursuit of church unity during the Reformation was always conditional upon the preaching of true doctrine. The union of 1925, by contrast, was a radical departure from such commitments to vital theology.⁵²

Rather than McNeill, Bryden claimed that it was Barth who, in calling the church to its primary task of theological confession, had grasped the heart of the Reformation movement.⁵³ Bryden thus identified Barth's theology of the Word with the revival of classic Reformed doctrine, and also distanced himself further from both fundamentalist and Princetonian orthodoxy, and from the anthropocentric strains of Schleiermacher.⁵⁴ The defining concern of Calvin and the Reformation, he claimed in 1935, had been with the direct experience of the "fresh and living apprehension of the Word of God" in Christ.⁵⁵ According to Bryden, this experience of the Word was the root of the Reformed understanding of the priesthood of all believers and the meaning of Calvin's insistence on the sovereignty of God; both emphasized that nothing "dare ever come between the soul of man and the living Word of God." It was the recovery of that living Word of God that had created Calvin and the Reformed faith, and that modern Protestantism again needed.

Bryden's emphasis on the experience of the Word lead him to a view of the gospel and the role of the Church that differed sharply with both liberal-evangelicals and Christian socialists. In his conclusion to Why I Am a Presbyterian, he offered three main standards for the Presbyterian Church. First, in order to be the true Church, it must be conscious of possessing "the Gospel," and thus of

⁵²Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 58-61.

⁵³Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 45-50, 93. See also Karl Barth, The Word of God and the Word of Man, 218-72.

⁵⁴See especially Bryden's lectures on "The Presbyterian Conception of the Word of God," (1935), and "The Holy Spirit and the Church," (n.d.), both in W. W. Bryden, Separated Unto the Gospel, Donald V. Wade, ed. (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1956).

⁵⁵Bryden, "The Presbyterian Conception of the Word of God, (1935)," 178.

witnessing to the Word of God. Secondly, the Church must be driven by a radically "missionary" spirit so that its very existence was to challenge the world solely with the Gospel rather than by other institutional or national concerns. Thirdly, such a Church must be "catholic" in the sense that it understood its mission as a universal claim under the compelling authority of God's Word.⁵⁶ What Bryden meant by these became clear as he criticized the contemporary currents of Protestantism.

The requirement that the Church possess the true gospel, according to Bryden, was cause for Protestants first to examine themselves. Assuming that classic Protestantism and the early church identified the gospel with the revelation of God's Word alone, modern Christianity faced the "serious and embarrassing question" whether it truly offered a distinctive revelation of the Word of God at all.⁵⁷ From this suspicion, Bryden developed his interpretation of the gospel primarily by criticizing what he regarded as the rationalistic and naturalistic trends in modern Protestantism.

Though most of his criticism was directed against various forms of "modernism," he began his Why I Am a Presbyterian by repudiating, like his Scottish teachers James Denney and T. M. Lindsay, the fundamentalism and Princetonian scholastic orthodoxy of J. Grescham Machen that had dominated the Presbyterian Church in the years immediately following 1925. According to Bryden, these views were essentially legalist and offered a mechanical view of the relationship between God and the world.⁵⁸ Their devotion to "rationalistic orthodoxy" and to denominational traditionalism mistakenly identified Presbyterian forms with Christianity itself, and exploited the United Church's doctrinal ambiguity as an occasion for factionalism and bigotry. Traditionalist opponents of church union, Bryden claimed, were little more justified and little more committed to Christian truth than

⁵⁶W. W. Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 162-70.

⁵⁷Knox College, Caven Library, Walter W. Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," unpublished typescript, n.d., 34.

⁵⁸Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 45-6.

unionists.⁵⁹

Through his criticism of fundamentalism, Bryden suggested that the traditions, institutional organization, and doctrine of the church, while important, were relative to the central religious life and function of the church, namely its experience and witness to Christ.⁶⁰ Even theological confessions and intellectual assent to doctrine could not be confused with faith in Christ and the authority of God's Word in Scripture, nor could the Word of God be reduced to rationalized doctrine or selective and literalist Biblicism, for the Word itself was the very source of faith, doctrine, and the church.⁶¹ Presbyterianism was not meant to be merely rational, nor provincial, nor separatist; rather, it sought to profess the truth, and on that grounds sought to be truly "Catholic" and open to revision under the guidance of the Word.⁶²

Bryden devoted most of his criticism, however, to what he identified as liberal-modernist Protestantism. One main feature of that liberal-modernism that he now began to critique more fully was its use of historical criticism in Biblical interpretation. Though sympathetic to the critical method and the recovery of the historic "facts" of Christianity, he argued that the liberal use of historical criticism gave an interpretation of the Bible that was "determined from the side of man" and that was "governed in the main by the rational, rather than by the revelatory principle."⁶³ Liberal-modernists like Schleiermacher and Ritschl had interpreted the Bible as a record of the discovery and growth of moral ideals, and assumed that the significance of Jesus was merely that of a historical person whose life was to be emulated. Their method, according to Bryden, reduced Christianity to a matter of

⁵⁹Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 18-20.

⁶⁰Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 22-4, 34-6.

⁶¹Bryden, "The Presbyterian Conception of the Word of God, (1935)," 189-9.

⁶²Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 45-6.

⁶³Bryden, "The Presbyterian Conception of the Word of God, (1935)," 199-200.

subjective or psychic ideals that vaguely affirmed humanity, rather than acknowledging Christ as the Word of God which put all human effort in crisis.⁶⁴ Liberals no less than fundamentalists, therefore, had rationalized the Word of God.⁶⁵

Bryden also now linked the results of liberal-modernism to liberal efforts to establish the Kingdom of God on earth using "naturalistic" methods that relied on human effort rather than the spiritual reality of God's grace.⁶⁶ Commenting during the Joint Evangelism campaign, Bryden objected especially to the focus of liberal Protestants on the psychological "techniques" and ecclesiastical bureaucracy of modern evangelism, and on social gospel programs designed to bring in the Kingdom of God by human effort. These, he claimed, viewed the work of the church as though it were self-sufficient, and reflected a naturalistic rather than evangelical view of religion. Among the "naturalistic" programs that Bryden specifically objected to were the ecclesiastical bureaucracy of the Joint Evangelism campaign; the Kingdom of God movement, which reduced the core of the church to a universal moral ethic of love; and the "Oxford Group Movement," which also claimed a new life-changing method devoted especially to reaching the "higher-ups" in society for Christianity.⁶⁷ Most dangerous of all, he warned, was the Christian socialist movement. Christian socialism offered the most plausible solution to the crisis of social organization and an appealing alternative to "American New Humanism" or "Soviet communistic atheism," but the strength of its appeal on behalf of a human solution to the social crisis threatened to seduce Christians to a man-made Kingdom.⁶⁸

Bryden's rejection even of Christian socialism, such as that of the FCSO, was apparently a

⁶⁴Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 62-5, 116-7.

⁶⁵Bryden, "The Presbyterian Conception of the Word of God, (1935),"180.

⁶⁶Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 61.

⁶⁷Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 162.

⁶⁸Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 164.

difficult, but revealing choice. As John Vissers notes, Bryden had become sympathetic to the most radical wing of the labour movement, especially during his ministry in Lethbridge. Bryden was a neighbour of Line in Toronto, and in many respects he was deeply sympathetic to the cause of Christian socialism. From 1935 on, he voted for the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation on most occasions, and at least once voted for a Communist candidate.⁶⁹ As he made clear already in the 1920's, Bryden condemned modern capitalist society and the middle class identity of the mainline Protestant churches. During the 1930's he shared the social "realism" of Christian socialists, arguing that the church had become dependent on the middle class which gained its wealth from the capitalist system, and that its organization and financial support had linked the church structurally to capitalism while its preoccupation with external concerns like institutional organization, humanitarian works, and finances further corrupted its spiritual identity.⁷⁰ Like J. H. Riddell, he argued that its middle class identity cost the church credibility and support among the working class. Rightly so, the church now shared the burden of criticism against capitalist society.

In contrast to Christian socialists' understanding of the intrinsically social nature of the gospel, Bryden's social criticism assumed the exclusively spiritual identity of the gospel and the church's role. According to Bryden, the fact of its entanglement in the capitalist social structure indicated, not that the church needed more social reform activism, but that it was not sufficiently spiritual. Having shifted its focus to humanitarian concerns and natural methods, Protestantism had lost its spiritual vitality and had become entrenched in worldly concerns and approaches to life.⁷¹ While Christian socialists believed that sin lay in unjust social structures, and that God's eschatological revolution was upon them in the rebellion of the working classes, Bryden interpreted sin as rooted in human nature

⁶⁹Vissers, "The Conception of Revelation," 61-62, 98, [fn 73].

⁷⁰Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 113-14.

⁷¹Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 112-14.

itself and in humanity's rebellion against the spiritual reality of God's Word. The solution to the social crisis and the church's entanglement in that crisis was not more social reform programs, but a more vital emphasis on the radically other spiritual reality of God's own judgement and grace, and a recovery of the spiritual identity of the church and its task of preaching the gospel.

In the context of the collapse of industrial capitalism and the threat of totalitarianism during the early 1930's, the differences between Christian socialism and Barthian neo-orthodoxy were magnified despite their points of agreement. As we have seen in Chapter 7, Christian socialists like John Line and Gregory Vlastos regarded Barth's emphasis on the exclusive reality and grace of a transcendent God as "otherworldly" and speculative, and as an escape from the urgency of the social revolution under way. In 1933-34, Reinhold Niebuhr went so far as to accuse Barth's theology of failing to uphold absolute moral principles, and of advocating "an orthodoxy that breeds indifference."⁷² This criticism came, however, at the very time that Hitler's National Socialist government was attempting to "nationalize" Germany's Protestant churches by co-opting them as cultural institutions subordinate to the state. For Barthians, this threat of a secularized totalitarianism dwarfed all others and epitomized the danger that naturalistic ideologies presented to the church and the gospel. Although Bryden did not respond directly to the charges of Line, Vlastos, and Niebuhr, but instead simply adopted Barth's position, younger Canadian scholars like James Smart and Arthur C. Cochrane, who recently had returned to Canada from study in Scotland and Germany, came to Barth's defense.

James D. Smart (1906-1982), who studied in Marburg from 1929 to 1930, was one of few Canadians who still did his graduate studies in Germany.⁷³ He would be a prominent minister in the

⁷²Reinhold Niebuhr, "Barthianism and Political Reaction," Christian Century, Vol. 51, Pt. 1 (6 June 1934), 757-9.

⁷³John S. Moir, A History of Biblical Studies in Canada: A Sense of Proportion (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1982), 71.

Presbyterian Church in Canada, serving during the 1930's first in Ailsa Craig, Ontario and then in Walter Bryden's home church of Knox Presbyterian in Galt, Ontario. Smart was an early member of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies founded in 1933. During the 1940's and 1950's, he would make major contributions to both the Presbyterian Church of Canada's Articles of Faith and revisions to the educational curriculum of the Presbyterian Church in the USA. He also would teach for a brief tenure at Union Theological Seminary during the 1950's and 1960's, and publish such major works as What a Man Can Believe (1944), The Teaching Ministry of the Church (1954), and The Divided Mind of Modern Theology; Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann (1967).⁷⁴

As a young minister in 1933, Smart defended Barth against claims that his theology was otherworldly.⁷⁵ According to Smart, Barth "is constantly bringing the whole of religion to bear upon the decision which faces each man in the present moment." Already in The Word of God and the Word of Man (1928), he reminded readers, Barth had warned against evading the ethical questions of present life by transferring the focus of religion to a future or inner life.⁷⁶ Barth's eschatological hope, according to Smart, was

not a distant Golden Age which may come some day, but is God's world, God's eternity, which can break through and does break through now into time. His emphasis is upon 'the Holy Spirit which in the very middle of the unrighteousness of this world builds up the righteousness of heaven...a new world.'⁷⁷

The Barthian understanding of the Kingdom of God was an existential reality that began wherever there was faith, right in the midst of the "old world" of war, money, and death. Barth, according to

⁷⁴William Klempa, "Protestant theology: Canada," The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought, Alister E. McGrath, ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Basil Blackwell, 1993), 488.

⁷⁵James D. Smart, "Karl Barth and Other-Worldliness," The Expository Times, Vol. 45 (1933-34), 525-26.

⁷⁶Barth, The Word of God and the Word of Man, 142.

⁷⁷Smart, "Karl Barth and Other-Worldliness," 525-26. See also Karl Barth, The Word of God and the Word of Man, 32.

Smart, held to the Reformed tradition that "always applied the gospel more directly to the actual life of man in society and in the state than has the Lutheran."⁷⁸

In fact, Smart argued further, Barth's concern for the Church could hardly be construed as passive disregard for politics, much less as support of an authoritarian state. At a time when Hitler's government was attempting to impose unity on the Protestant churches in Germany and incorporate them into a national German ideology, Barth was urging the church to have the courage to speak its convictions based on the Word of God. Though he did not see himself "called to lead a futile political revolution against Hitler," Barth did insist that Christians face the decision of what they would do in political and social life. But even more fundamental for Barth was the urgency of recovering and preserving the Church's freedom and courage to speak God's Word -- to let the church be the church - - against Fascist Nationalism and all merely secular cultural ideologies that threatened to smother the Word which alone could be absolute for the church.⁷⁹

Arthur C. Cochrane's Barthian sympathies were similarly inspired by the heroic resistance of Barth and the "Confessing Church" against National Socialism and the "German Christian" party. Born in Belleville, Ontario, Cochrane had graduated from University of Toronto and Knox College before proceeding to the University of Edinburgh. There, he studied under John Macconachie, then one of the leading English-speaking advocates of Barth's ideas. During the 1930's and 1940's, Cochrane served several Ontario congregations in the Presbyterian Church before becoming Professor of Systematic Theology at the Presbyterian Theological Seminary of Dubuque University, Iowa in 1948.⁸⁰

Cochrane's The Church's Confession Under Hitler (1962), though published much later, was

⁷⁸Smart, "Karl Barth and Other-Worldliness," 526.

⁷⁹Smart, "Karl Barth and Other-Worldliness," 526.

⁸⁰Arthur C. Cochrane, The Church's Confession Under Hitler (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 1-13.

based on his dissertation during the 1930's on Barth's relationship to the historic creeds of the church, focusing especially on the Barmen Declaration issued by the Confessing Church, or the Confessional Synod of the German Evangelical Church, in 1934. Dedicating his work to Barth and to Martin and Wilhelm Neimoller, Cochrane argued that the Confessing Church and its Barmen Declaration marked a decisive break not only between the church and German nationalism, but also within the church between liberal Protestantism and the true church.⁸¹ In the German Christian party, modernist Protestantism had revealed its willingness to submit the church to the control of the state and the secular "political religion" of National Socialism, and to what Hitler called the "ethical conscience of the Germanic race," thereby becoming merely a culture religion.⁸² By contrast, the Confessing Church not only claimed religious liberty, but insisted on remaining faithful to the Reformed confessions, and ultimately to the confession of Christ and the submission of the church to God. And while both the nationalized German Evangelical Church and the western world naively sought to appease Hitler during the late 1930's, it was the Confessing Church, along with the Catholic Church, which alone stood against Hitler from within Germany, paying for that resistance with school closures, censorship, arrests, and later in cases like that of Dietrich Bonhoffer, with their lives at the hands of Nazi executioners.⁸³

Especially in the light of developments in Germany, Barthians like Cochrane, Smart, and Bryden saw the very existence of the church and its faithfulness to the gospel threatened by modern secular ideologies and social structures. In a later description of Bryden that also seemed to refer to himself, Smart claimed that Bryden was concerned that the church risked "losing its very soul through

⁸¹Cochrane, The Church's Confession Under Hitler, 9-16.

⁸²Cochrane, The Church's Confession Under Hitler, 21, 34-8.

⁸³Cochrane, The Church's Confession Under Hitler, 38-44.

the substitution of a thinly-coated humanistic religiousness for the historic faith of the Church."⁸⁴ However virtuous, Bryden argued, idealist and social reform movements like the Kingdom of God movement and the FCSO did not go far enough in recognizing humanity's sin and dependence on God's exclusive grace. Hence their attempts to achieve the Kingdom of God implemented merely human values by human efforts.⁸⁵ Such efforts reduced Christianity to mere "naturalism" and erased the radical difference between a holy God and sinful humanity, and consequently lost the essential spirituality of the gospel.⁸⁶ The essence of the controversy of such efforts was that they usurped God's sovereign grace with human techniques for achieving humanity's own salvation, and in doing so presumed "to measure both God and man's need by man's purely humanitarian, and often times sentimental, needs as conditioned by a transient world, and as emphasized at the expense of his one supreme eternal need."⁸⁷ Liberal Protestantism thus substituted an external and humanitarian kingdom for the radically redemptive gospel and a "true soul culture and discipline." Its impact was to "innoculate" modern man against the gospel -- or as Barth put it, it eradicated the "offence" of the gospel.⁸⁸

Assuming that the world was in crisis, and that the nature of that crisis was a secularist rebellion against the gospel that threatened to engulf the church itself, Bryden considered matters like social reform to be secondary to the more fundamental priority of recovering the very roots of Christianity in the sovereign Word of God, and ensuring the freedom and task of the church to witness to this grace. In his critique of church union, Bryden had appealed to Karl Barth's warning against

⁸⁴Smart, "The Evangelist as Theologian," ix.

⁸⁵Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 164.

⁸⁶Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 65-66.

⁸⁷Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 62-5, 164.

⁸⁸Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 66; 116-17.

state-sponsored unification of the Protestant churches in Germany, that only the apprehension of the Word of God and the Gospel truth of justification by faith, rather than any natural or national rationale, could provide a substantial basis for fruitful Christian unity.⁸⁹ What the world most needed was to hear and experience God's Word, which at once judged and saved humanity.

To this end Bryden urged the church to recover its theological rather than sociological task, particularly by reviving what he claimed was the heart of Reformed doctrine in the confession of the exclusive work and direct experience of God in the Word.⁹⁰ Against liberalism and fundamentalism, Bryden's interpretation of the gospel and the Reformation was emphatically exclusive. Both Calvin and the early Church, he claimed, insisted that the Word of God could not be objectified in human thought or doctrine, nor could it be perceived by human reason. The revelation of the Word was the Presence of God himself that could only come at God's initiative, and could only be "spiritually discerned" in faith.⁹¹ Revelation was God speaking to man directly, and thus was itself the very source of faith, Scripture, and the Church, and so was prior to all human expressions of the Word.⁹² Consequently, one could not readily define the Word. True belief was not a human act, but a direct experience of God and his grace, as Barth claimed, "in which man is apprehended by God through God's ever-living Word."⁹³

Behind this description of the immediate revelation of the Word, however, Bryden struggled to clarify the relation of the Word to objective historical reality so as to avoid a subjective fideism or gnostic emphasis on illumination. Though the experience of the Word in faith was self-

⁸⁹Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 61.

⁹⁰Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 45-50, 93.

⁹¹Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 110-111.

⁹²Bryden, "The Presbyterian Conception of the Word of God, (1935)," 182-3, 210.

⁹³Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 50.

authenticating and prior to reason, he claimed, it was not merely subjective. Faith was indeed first a "solitary" relationship between the soul and God, but the Word of God was an objective reality which stood over against man, and which spoke "once and for all, in the Event of history, and now speaks directly to the souls of men in witness of that fact..."⁹⁴ Revelation was therefore not merely a human thought or ideal, but rather "a fact or happening, or the one supernatural Event in which God achieved that for man of which he himself was absolutely incapable."⁹⁵

While claiming its objective reality, Bryden's interpretation of the Word continued to reflect his earlier mystical emphasis on the Spirit. To be sure, he conceded, the Word of God could only be centered in Christ and his redemptive work.⁹⁶ As Calvin had argued, the Holy Spirit was not a self-sufficient or impersonal internal illumination, but rather witnessed to the once and for all event of the Incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ that was found in the Bible alone. The "total manifestation of God" in Christ was the "Evangel" and the "true Gospel" for Calvin. Yet Bryden quickly followed this acknowledgement with the reminder that "knowing ... Christ in His saving efficacy ... comes alone by the revealing of the Spirit." Hence, when discussing the nature of the Word, Bryden emphasized the need to recover the role of the Holy Spirit, along with Christ, as the central elements in "the economy of God's Revelation."⁹⁷ In this sense, concerned as he was with the crisis of knowledge and an immediate existential experience of the reality of God, Bryden's conception of the Word confirmed his shift from the traditional liberal Protestant emphasis on the historical Jesus especially to the role of the Spirit as the immediate witness of the living Christ and

⁹⁴Bryden, "The Presbyterian Conception of the Word of God, (1935)," 185.

⁹⁵Bryden, "The Presbyterian Conception of the Word of God, (1935)," 197. See also Vissers, "The Conception of Revelation," 3.

⁹⁶Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 111.

⁹⁷Bryden, "The Presbyterian Conception of the Word of God, (1935)," 183-5.

the existential experience of saving grace.

This shift was also evident in Bryden's and Smart's call for the renewal of a "theological" interpretation of the Bible. According to Bryden, the Reformers regarded the Bible as the "cradle of Christ," but as such it was a transcendent revelation of God's Word that called for "theological," or theocentric, rather than merely an historical-critical studies focused on the historic personality of Jesus.⁹⁸ This was not to suggest, however, a fundamentalist literalism or orthodox doctrinalism. Biblical interpretation, according to Bryden, did not require blind acceptance of an "esoteric" doctrinal tradition, nor indeed was doctrine, which was merely human expression, to be sheltered from scientific scrutiny.⁹⁹ For grasping the "event" of Christ, Bryden was sympathetic to historical criticism which, he claimed, had brought fruitful results in Biblical studies and had "saved Protestantism from Bibliolatry."¹⁰⁰ As it was no more than a method, he added, historical criticism need not necessarily be identified with modernism.

Nevertheless, he argued, the way that modernists had used historical criticism had been "subversive to the true interpretation of the Word of God."¹⁰¹ In their search for the historical Jesus, modernist historical critics had focused on the human Jesus while eliminating, a priori, the transcendent and eschatological elements of revelation. Modernism thus inverted the meaning of the Bible by making man the judge of Jesus' model personality. In fact, Bryden argued, the continuous critical "peeling of the onion" of historical events in search of essential divine ideals in the historical Jesus had divorced historical method from theology and faith, and finally left uncertainty about the

⁹⁸W. W. Bryden, "On Knowing Our Bible," (n. d.) Separated Unto the Gospel, Donald V. Wade, ed. (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1956), 3.

⁹⁹Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 165.

¹⁰⁰Bryden, "The Presbyterian Conception of the Word of God, (1935)," 202.

¹⁰¹Bryden, "The Presbyterian Conception of the Word of God, (1935)," 207.

significance of Jesus.¹⁰² The work of the Formgeschichte school exemplified in Rudolf Bultmann's Jesus (1934), which seemed to abandon all hope that certain knowledge of Jesus' historic life was possible and offered instead only a collection of the "faith-forms" and mythology of the New Testament, demonstrated the exhaustion of liberal methods of interpretation.¹⁰³

Bryden's departure from the liberal-modernist use of historical criticism involved two related themes. First, he argued that the meaning of the Bible lay not in moral ideals or historical personalities that humans should emulate. In an undated essay on "Knowing Our Bible," he argued that the Bible "refuses to become a blueprint to mark our course to heaven."¹⁰⁴ Rather than a record of human development of moral ideals, the Bible was "from heaven"; insofar as it was attested by the Spirit, it was where one was confronted by the "proclamation of God's grace to sinful man." Secondly, this revelation of God's grace in Christ could not be apprehended merely by the scientific discovery of the historical person of Jesus. "The real Word of God, as it is in the New Testament," he claimed, "is not accessible to scientific research at all. That is to say, the 'Christ of faith' can never be discovered by the mere discovery of the 'Jesus of History.' The conviction that it should be so, has constituted the grand fallacy of modern Christianity."¹⁰⁵ Jesus Christ and his Cross had always been an enigma that could not be comprehended by reason. The meaning of God's Word was "hidden" in the text of Scripture, for saving knowledge of Christ's significance was ultimately revealed by the "living personal witness of Christ Himself to the soul of man."¹⁰⁶ Though Jesus incarnated the transcendent spiritual reality of God, that spiritual reality could only be apprehended from the

¹⁰²Bryden, "The Presbyterian Conception of the Word of God, (1935)," 203-4, 207-8.

¹⁰³Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 165.

¹⁰⁴Bryden, "On Knowing Our Bible," 3.

¹⁰⁵Bryden, "The Presbyterian Conception of the Word of God, (1935)," 205.

¹⁰⁶Bryden, "The Presbyterian Conception of the Word of God, (1935)," 186, 207.

immediate revelation of God himself in the faith of the believer.¹⁰⁷

Like Augustine's credo ut intelligam and his sacred interpretation of history, therefore, Bryden's alternative to modernist criticism called for a "Christian" or evangelical critical method that presupposed the necessity of faith, given by God himself, for apprehending the "theological" and "spiritual" meaning of the Bible. Accordingly, he described his method in a theocentric syllogism: "God is unknown to man, except through the revelation of Jesus Christ; and Jesus as Christ is unknown except through the witness of the Spirit, and the Spirit is unknown except through Jesus Christ" as witnessed in the Bible.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, though he affirmed what he called the Reformation's "Scripture-principle," he argued that the Word of God could not be identified simply with the words of Scripture, nor could its meaning be proven by rational scholastic demonstration. It was when one heard out of the Bible the "living Voice" of God's speaking directly to man by the testimony of the Spirit that the Scripture-principle functioned to reveal the Word of God.¹⁰⁹

Though Bryden did not explicitly follow Barth's lead in distinguishing the historical Jesus and a "Geschichte" or superhistorical Jesus, his "evangelical" method did suggest that revelation was an eschatological in-breaking or tangent into history. "The supreme obligation of this age," he declared, "is not to rediscover Jesus historically; rather it is to rediscover Him spiritually."¹¹⁰ Man did not need merely to discover the Jesus of history in order to follow him as a moral model; rather they needed to experience Jesus and the revolutionary change that such an experience would mean. As Bryden put it in one cryptic comment, the Reformers' view of the Bible as the transcendent revelation

¹⁰⁷Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 158.

¹⁰⁸Bryden, Why I Remained a Presbyterian, 165.

¹⁰⁹"The Presbyterian Conception of the Word of God, (1935)," 233.

¹¹⁰"The Presbyterian Conception of the Word of God, (1935)," 206.

of God's Word meant that it was arrayed against the world.¹¹¹ Thus, Bryden tended to shift the locus of revelation from the "natural" events recorded in Scripture to the eschatological and immediate in-breaking of the witness of the Spirit.

Beginning in the mid-1930's, and throughout his career as a Presbyterian clergyman and Biblical theologian, James D. Smart advocated a similar "evangelical" critical method. He began that work by urging the Biblical Theology movement to a more theological and prophetic interpretation of the Bible, and at the same time pleaded for a return of Theology from the academy to the Church. Though he considered the era of historical criticism to have benefitted the church with "frank and intelligent" investigation of the Bible, it had renounced all theological interest to become a purely academic "scientific examination of the literature, the history, and the religion of the Hebrew people."¹¹² As an example, Smart referred to the typically technical and academic studies found in the Journal of Biblical Literature. He may also have had in mind the technical historical scholarship that characterized the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies (CSBS), established in 1933. Smart was a member of the CSBS, and many of its founding members were also members of the American-based Society of Biblical Literature. Also, as John Moir notes, one of the key sources of CSBS members was the program of scientific study of Oriental Literature developed out of the more traditional study of Old Testament Literature by James F. McCurdy at the University of Toronto during the early 1900's.¹¹³ Such examples of technical Biblical scholarship, according to Smart, paralleled the modern development of Philosophy of Religion from Schleiermacher to John Baillie and its effort to justify religion by the rational demonstration of human religious experience and values. Since they

¹¹¹Bryden, "On Knowing Our Bible," 3.

¹¹²James D. Smart, "The Return of Theology to the Church," The Expository Times, Vol. 49 (1937-38), 220.

¹¹³See John S. Moir, A History of Biblical Studies in Canada; A Sense of Proportion (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1982), 14-38, 67-71.

focused on the human and historical, Smart complained, neither the scientific study of Biblical Literature nor the Philosophy of Religion helped the preacher to discern the real message of Scripture -- God's voice concerning sin and redemption -- so as to speak the living Word of God for people today.¹¹⁴

In his search for the theological meaning of Scripture, Smart turned especially to the "prophetic" themes of the Bible. His comments on the book of Isaiah and on the parables of Jesus illustrate his attempt to move beyond technical historical-critical debates and moral idealism to find the spiritual Word in the Bible. The preoccupation of critical scholars with dating Isaiah's comments on the status of the Jerusalem temple and relating them to other minor prophets like Haggai, Smart claimed, missed the point of Isaiah's prophetic condemnation of Israel's sin and ritualism, and his call to spiritual religion of the heart and life.¹¹⁵ Isaiah's prophetic message, he claimed, was rooted in the eschatological vision of a sovereign God who did not reside in the temple and needed no earthly dwelling, but rather came to the temple and the nation with judgement and justification. Similarly, in an article offering "A Redefinition of Jesus' Use of the Parables," Smart argued that Jesus' parables and their connection to Old Testament prophecy had been neglected by liberal scholars. Liberals had assumed that the parable was "an earthly story with a heavenly meaning," and thus they reduced parables to "platitudinous" stories to illustrate moral truths. Citing A. T. Cadoux's The Parables of Jesus, Smart argued that parables were not merely "pictorial renderings of accepted truths" but instead were creative moments in Jesus' warfare against sin.¹¹⁶ The parable brought home a "resented, distasteful, or at least difficult truth" for natural man, and it was only when natural man saw himself in the parable that its meaning was disclosed. Like the Old Testament prophecies, Jesus' parables

¹¹⁴Smart, "The Return of Theology to the Church," 220.

¹¹⁵James D. Smart, "A New Interpretation of Isaiah Lxvi: 1-6," Expository Times, Vol. 46 (1934-35), 420-4.

¹¹⁶James D. Smart, "A Redefinition of Jesus' Use of the Parables," Expository Times, Vol. 47 (1935-36), 551.

were eschatological and existential; rather than illustrating universal truths that could be converted into moral and rational ideals, they were the breaking in of divine truth upon the human soul.¹¹⁷

As he developed this prophetic and "theological" interpretation of the Bible, Smart credited Barth's revolutionary challenge to anthropocentric liberalism as the origin of the return to theology. In his The Interpretation of Scripture (1961) he described the "startling novelty" of Barth's claim that it was not sufficient to treat Scripture merely as a record of ancient religious phenomena from which ethical values could be gleaned, but rather it must be seen as a strange revelation of God "whom man did not already know." Barth had challenged theologians not to be "embarrassed by the factor of revelation," and to seek in the Scriptures not merely the record of ancient religions, but the "unique and final revelation of God that they claimed," and that required the theologian to interpret their "theological content."¹¹⁸ Though less concerned by 1961 than Bryden had been to distinguish the historical knowledge of Jesus and the experience of his spirit, Smart echoed his plea to move beyond a merely academic and naturalist Biblical criticism to rediscover a prophetic and transcendent Word of God for humanity. Indeed, Smart claimed in 1937, this theocentric emphasis was the primary concern and function of Barth. Barth had called the Church back to theology, and reclaimed theology from the academy to the Church.¹¹⁹

The central concern of this plea for a "theological" orientation, for both Bryden and Smart, was their disillusionment with the impasse of a strictly technical, academic, and naturalist critical method that seemed only to offer dubious historical knowledge, and their insistence on recovering a transcendent spiritual reality in revelation. To be sure, there could be no retreat from valuable critical inquiry, but this critical scholarship was only preliminary. In contrast to what he saw as the liberal

¹¹⁷Smart, "A Redefinition of Jesus' Use of the Parables," 555.

¹¹⁸James D. Smart, The Interpretation of Scripture (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), 19-20.

¹¹⁹Smart, "The Return of Theology to the Church," 218, 222.

and fundamentalist emphases on the human side of revelation, Bryden claimed that the "fundamental basis of the New Testament outlook is eschatological."¹²⁰ The revelation of the Word could only be an encounter with God himself, and so must be a more radically eschatological experience having more existential and immediate meaning for man's relation to the eternal than was suggested in liberal notions of the coming of God's Kingdom in a new social order.

Implicit in this "theocentric" reorientation, and especially in Bryden's emphasis on the immediate Spirit rather than the historical Jesus, was a distinction between historical-structural "nature" and the unique "event" of the eschatological in-breaking and of the spiritual Word. The experience of the revelation of God's Word was itself the eschatological moment that brought natural man into crisis in the midst of his experience, confronting him with his responsibilities and sin before God and calling him to repentance and belief.¹²¹ Thus the Word "creates a moment in which man must come to a decision, a decision which concerns his life as such."¹²² Authentic spiritual life was the life of freedom and gratitude that followed from this judging-saving experience of the Word. As Emil Brunner had put it, according to Bryden, when God speaks personally to man and calls for decision, "man for the first time becomes a person....That is, he is enabled to accept himself as he really is in the sight of God; and bravely faces the world in his new-born utter humility, but also in his newly acquired personal worth."¹²³ Through the Word, in Bryden's treatment, the Spirit translated the redemptive events of the Bible into an immediate existential reality.

Bryden's and Smart's emphasis on the experience of an eschatological Word, though sharing some features with John Line's and R. B. Y. Scott's vision of an eschatological Kingdom of God

¹²⁰Bryden, "The Presbyterian Conception of the Word of God, (1935)," 200.

¹²¹Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 50, 111-2, 117.

¹²²Bryden, "The Presbyterian Conception of the Word of God, (1935)," 212.

¹²³Bryden, "The Presbyterian Conception of the Word of God, (1935)," 212-3.

coming in the structures and processes of history, was in other ways sharply different from the new Christian socialism. While Line had argued that spiritual and material realities were interwoven, Bryden and Smart assumed a more radical chasm between all of historical-structural reality and the transcendent spiritual reality of God. For Bryden, the gospel was initiated entirely by God, and came as a "strange" and discomfoting eschatological revelation before which humans could only bow in acceptance. There could be no bridge to God in mysticism or some immanent spiritual principle in human nature, or in rational doctrine, nor was it sufficient to interpret the gospel as a "blueprint" for the progress of God's Kingdom on earth. The original constitution of the church and the source of true religion, he claimed, "is fundamentally 'spiritual', and not 'institutional'."¹²⁴ Rather than a program or a law, Bryden maintained that the heart of the gospel was God's apprehension of humanity through the Word that was radically other than humanity and mysteriously more than history.

This exclusively theocentric focus also permeated Bryden's treatment of the task and identity of the church. According to Bryden, it was the Word of God which alone created the faith and spiritual unity of the church. The true Church was

a 'fellowship' in which men discover themselves, rather than one which they themselves achieve. Its membership consists of those who have heard the Word of God in the solitary privacy of their own souls; and because of that fact, find themselves in a peculiar unity with others similarly apprehended. It is a unity not of man, but of God.¹²⁵

For Bryden, Church History was essentially the history of the Word as it made itself known to humanity, for as Barth had claimed, it was through the medium of the Church and its preaching, as well as through the Bible, that God's Word came to humanity.¹²⁶

In contrast to what he saw as the aims of church unionists and social reformers, Bryden

¹²⁴Bryden, "The Presbyterian Conception of the Word of God, (1935)," 176-7.

¹²⁵Bryden, "The Presbyterian Conception of the Word of God, (1935)," 176-7.

¹²⁶Vissers, "The Conception of Revelation," 73-7; Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 50.

insisted that the central mission of the Presbyterian Church was to witness to the historic faith of the Church through its preaching and theological doctrine. That witness could only be "dogmatics," by which he meant that the church was not merely stating human truths, but rather it witnessed under the grip and compulsion of the exclusive and sovereign Word of God. Such dogmatic theology, furthermore, could only be church theology, insofar as it arose from and confessed the historic church's faith experience of the Word. The true historic church, Bryden declared (citing the German Barthian Karl Heim), never sought to be "broad-minded" or "tolerant" of other truths or religions.¹²⁷ Convinced that it possessed the sole revelation in the Word of God, it could not be other than dogmatic and aggressive in declaring the challenge of the Gospel to the world. Indeed, it was only as it declared its experience of God in its preaching and creeds that the Church truly functioned as the Church of God.¹²⁸

But this task of preaching and doctrinal confession, according to Bryden, was paradoxical. Although believers were constrained to declare God's Word, it was impossible for man to capture that Word in human words. "No man," Bryden declared quoting Barth, "can preach the Word of God, but God makes His Word known to man through preaching when that preaching is conditioned by the fact that he who preaches has realized the utter impossibility of speaking God's Word and yet is under absolute constraint to do so."¹²⁹ The paradox of preaching, as Bryden often repeated, was "foolishness" to the world but compelled by God's own Word.

The paradoxical distinction between human words and God's own Word, Bryden warned, also meant the need to distinguish between the human words of doctrinal confession and the reality of God which they confessed. Bryden's "dogmatic" theology was intended to be different from what he saw

¹²⁷Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 163.

¹²⁸Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 76.

¹²⁹Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 165-6.

as the external legalism in the Princetonian view of Scripture and the Westminster Confession that was assumed by many in the continuing Presbyterian Church after 1925.¹³⁰ As he would make even more clear in his speech to the 1943 General Assembly on The Significance of the Westminster Confession, Bryden believed that no particular creed could be taken as final, nor could its truth be measured by rationality or logic. The Reformers, he claimed, never presumed "to encompass, to absolutely measure and rigidly define, God and His ways with men. They were too sensitive to the inscrutable and incomprehensible nature of God, to the infinite mystery of His revelation and relations to man through Christ" to think that their statements could adequately capture God's ways.¹³¹ Like Barth, and in contrast to scholastic orthodoxy, Bryden insisted that true spiritual dogmatics lay not in the external form of human words, but rather in the church's witness to its experience of the crisis of humanity before the living Word of God.¹³² As Barth had described it in The Word of God and the Word of Man (1928), the paradox of the church's confession was that doctrine always remained the word of man, and therefore remained relative, and yet doctrine also marked, though in human words, the advance of the Word of God in experience.¹³³ The church's creeds must be the expression of belief which followed from the experience of Christ and a "vision of God," as something above humanity that laid its claim upon them and compelled them to declare their faith.¹³⁴ Authentic creeds were not shackles, but rather were the "sign-posts" of the church's faith and of "the thought of God concerning man."¹³⁵

¹³⁰Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 51.

¹³¹Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 52.

¹³²Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 45-48, 51. See also Barth, The Word of God and the Word of Man, 218-72.

¹³³Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 49.

¹³⁴Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 51, 74-5.

¹³⁵Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 52, 92-3.

Although doctrines must not become shackles on the church, Bryden considered them to be necessary to "evangelical" Christian faith. The church's doctrines confessed its experience of the Word, and thus, like windows in a dark room, they provided a way to see the "liberating spaces that lie beyond." It was as "sign-posts" of the experience of the living Christ that the classic Reformed confessions were truly "evangelical."¹³⁶ Furthermore, authentic doctrinal confession demonstrated that the church was genuinely concerned with a right understanding of faith that was based on "a unique revelation of God in Jesus Christ," and that its faith had learned to trust "not in man's views," but in the experience of Christ's redeeming work.¹³⁷ Without "positive doctrinal foundations," he warned, "there can be no true basis for authority in religion, and, without authority, essential Christian belief gives place to all those sentimentalisms and 'relativisms' which have so largely dominated the moral and religious life of modern times, with obviously baneful effects."¹³⁸ Faith that was authentically rooted in the experience of God's transcendent Word required careful thought, a well-defined doctrinal witness, and a personal response to the "soul-shaking challenge which is in Jesus Christ."¹³⁹

To avoid the "baneful effects" of relativism, therefore, Bryden urged the Presbyterian Church in Canada to recover the doctrine of the Reformed tradition. Despite the popular liberal definition of Christianity in terms of moral virtue, and a view of doctrine as irrelevant to "being" a Christian, Bryden insisted that remaining true to its heritage of doctrinal confession was the need of the day and the "supreme spiritual mission" for the Presbyterian Church.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 92-93.

¹³⁷Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 98.

¹³⁸Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 95.

¹³⁹Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 100.

¹⁴⁰Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 95.

In fact, Bryden's interpretation of the Church's "catholic" identity meant that the church was inescapably set against the world. The church's "catholic" identity was that of a mystical world body which, under the compulsion of the Word, was united in the conviction of faith and the fellowship of the Spirit of Christ.¹⁴¹ This "eschatological" constitution not only united the church universal, but did so under the common acknowledgement that the Gospel was "the final power on earth, and must be supreme over every other claim in the Christian conscience."¹⁴² The claims of the Word of God cut across and superseded all natural loyalties and "more artificial" boundaries of intellect, politics, nation, and even ecclesiastical denomination, distinguishing the church from all other human society.¹⁴³

This "catholic" identity also meant that the distinctive feature of the church was its radical mission to make the world "apprehensive," or as Emil Brunner put it, of "spreading out the fire which Christ has thrown on the earth."¹⁴⁴ To be "ecclesia" meant to be "called out," or "separated unto the gospel," since preaching of the Word without distraction by other concerns was essential to the very existence and meaning of the church. By its very constitution, according to Bryden, the church must challenge the world with the Gospel:

[t]hat Church which can contemplate with complacency conditions, in which subtle and selfish intrigue, pure ecclesiastical politics and secular ambitions, can comfortably prevail, not to say, triumph; in which the conventional moralisms and platitudinisms of a sophisticated intelligentsia, supported by the possession of wealth or so-called social prestige, are respected, is in a very serious position. It is to have substituted the vaneer of Christianity for the insight and knowledge of faith.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 131-32.

¹⁴²Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 169-70.

¹⁴³Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 109.

¹⁴⁴Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 165, 167, 169.

¹⁴⁵Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 165-66.

Thus the Church's identity and mission of witnessing to the Word gave it a distinct constitution that set it apart from, and against, the world.

Like the paradoxical task of preaching, Bryden held that the Church's spiritual catholicity relativized ecclesiastical institutions, including the Presbyterian Church. The characteristic features of Presbyterianism, he claimed in 1935, were not first of all a peculiar Presbyterian order of ministry nor even the classic Presbyterian and Reformed doctrines of the sovereignty and grace of God, for the central element of faith for Calvin and the Reformers concerned first of all the direct experience of the "fresh and living apprehension of the Word of God" in Christ.¹⁴⁶ Though he agreed that the Presbyterian doctrine and church order were closest to that of the Apostolic church, he argued that ecclesiastical forms and orders were secondary to the "original and constitutive principle" of the church which was only to be found "in that experienced spiritual union or fellowship which exists between Christ and His people as a whole, and in which the Grace of God is evidently manifested."¹⁴⁷ Presbyterianism was not identical to eternal revelation, but was the "historical and temporal expression of Christianity, as Christianity, in the course of its history, was compelled to find expression and take intellectual or ecclesiastical form in consonance with the human conditions of this life."¹⁴⁸ Thus Bryden regarded ecclesiastical forms as necessary, but temporal provisions.

While recognizing the relativity of ecclesiastical institutions, Bryden nevertheless rejected merely national and practical considerations for church unity such as seemed to drive the United Church and in the call of the Jerusalem Council for indigenous national churches in foreign mission fields. The very notion of an indigenous national church, according to Bryden, was contrary to the

¹⁴⁶Bryden, "The Presbyterian Conception of the Word of God, (1935)," 178.

¹⁴⁷Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 38-9.

¹⁴⁸Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 28-9.

constitution of the church and its unity by God.¹⁴⁹ While the church reflected and must address local conditions, it could not become indigenous to a particular land while remaining the church. To the contrary, it could only remain a church of God and faithful to its witness so long as it was not indigenous or determined by the habits, thoughts, and customs of any people.¹⁵⁰ "The true Church," he declared, "belongs to no age and no country, is conditioned by no climate, and, in the hearts of believing men, is supreme over all patriotisms or loyalties of any kind which receive the attention of men."¹⁵¹ The church's "catholic" unity could not be merely a human or cultural construction for practical, natural ends. Bryden therefore professed to be more sympathetic to the Catholic Church than to the United Church because of the Catholic insistence, in the face of modernity, on the absolute uniqueness of the Church and its Revelation.¹⁵²

With his emphasis on the church's strictly eschatological and spiritual identity and mission, Bryden offered little definition of the social meaning of the gospel or the church's role in relation to other social institutions. In contrast to the premature "natural" remedies to modern social problems offered by Christian socialists and liberal evangelicals, Bryden argued that humanity's greatest need was for divine grace; hence the church's communication of that grace was ameliorative par excellence. And despite the church's temporary entanglement with a capitalist social structure, he argued that the hidden spiritual reality of the church was that of "a great host of humble people who are endeavoring,....,to trust and serve God."¹⁵³ The spirit, Bryden suggested, moved more authentically in the hearts of such common folk who "by circumstances have literally been compelled

¹⁴⁹Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 131-3.

¹⁵⁰Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 74-5.

¹⁵¹Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 75.

¹⁵²Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 158.

¹⁵³Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 114.

to put their trust in God," and therefore were forced to "wait and pray." Their experience of the tragedy of life gave rise to a sincere spiritual life that did not appear in "worldly, prayerless men."¹⁵⁴ Were the church to identify more clearly with divine grace rather than human moral striving, it would find among such humble believers an openness and effectiveness to its message of grace, and it would acknowledge that its fellowship consisted more properly of this humble host.¹⁵⁵ And were it truly spiritual, the church's gospel would produce a social ethic that was at once more genuinely personal, but also more radical and challenging than any based on conventional, naturalistic, or idealistic theories. Rooted in the reality of God's love alone, the experience of the gospel would produce a more radical commitment to sacrificial love towards one's fellows and community.¹⁵⁶ In short, Bryden expected that authentic adherence to the spiritual reality of God's Word would revolutionize the church to the realization that its identity and ethic properly lay with "the outcast of humanity" and the labouring classes.¹⁵⁷

Beyond this existential spiritual transformation, however, Bryden offered no social or ethical theory, and avoided any attempts to define what the impact of a transformed ethic of sacrificial love might be on the structures of the community. As his understanding of the gospel emphasized the radical discontinuity between natural humanity and the exclusive reality of divine spirituality, so he identified the church with an eschatological spiritual reality set over against the world and all natural human effort. To be sure, this antithesis meant that the Church was to be the instrument of Word that challenged the "worldliness" of the world. As he wrote in his anniversary sermon in 1950:

church people who would limit the purpose and function of our Christian life to

¹⁵⁴Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 146.

¹⁵⁵Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 146.

¹⁵⁶Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 112.

¹⁵⁷Bryden, Why I Am a Presbyterian, 113-14.

something like 'seeking peace and pursuing it', seem to have forgotten that it is also of the very essence of our faith to disturb people, to disturb the world: as Kierkegaard said one hundred years ago, 'Woe unto the Church which does not embarrass the world'. The Gospel was sheer foolishness to the Greek and a stumbling block to the Jew. It was like fire kindled on earth. Indeed, the greatest Disturber this world has ever known was just Jesus Christ our Lord. In his own words, He 'came not to bring peace but a sword'. He was a Disturber not only of the political, social and moral customs of His day, but especially a Disturber of those who considered themselves the 'people of God', the 'Church' of olden times. 'Woe unto you scribes and pharisees!' He cried.¹⁵⁸

But though the revelation of the Word disturbed and revolutionized the whole of life, Bryden's treatment of this transformation was limited by at least two factors. First, he was above all concerned for the church itself, and especially that it be recentered in the authentic Word of God rather than in anthropocentric and naturalistic remedies for the world that ultimately were inadequate. Secondly, as he emphasized later in his anniversary sermon, the radical newness that the world required could not be constructed by humans out of the old; rather, it was God's work alone, and like all work of the spirit it was "veiled" or hidden in the hearts of believers.¹⁵⁹ The church could only profess such an Evangel, by becoming an instrument of the Word through its dogmatics and preaching. The Kingdom of God would be established despite humanity by the eschatological evangel -- the invasion of the spirit of Christ living in the faithful community of the church.

Implicit in these concerns, and in Bryden's development from James Denney's modern evangelical emphasis on the living Christ to Barth's radically exclusive theology of the Word, was an interpretation of the battle for God's Kingdom in terms of the conflict between nature and grace. Noticeably absent from Bryden's theology of the Word and his recovery of Reformed theology was any reference either to Calvin's doctrine of creation or to the Biblical notions of Christ as the Word of creation or the historical progress of the Old Testament covenant. In sharply distinguishing the

¹⁵⁸W. W. Bryden, "The Church, Today and One Hundred Years Ago, An Anniversary Sermon (1950)," W. W. Bryden, Separated Unto the Gospel, Donald V. Wade, ed. (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1956), 15.

¹⁵⁹Bryden, "The Church, Today and One Hundred Years Ago, (1950)," 15.

Word and creation, Bryden eschewed Brunner's allusions to the continuity of creation, as well as John Line's use of A. N. Whitehead's "organic idealism" to reconcile the natural order with the eschatological coming of the Kingdom of God.

Beginning as he did with the radical existential crisis of sin and the reality of a sovereign, holy God, the holiness of God, Bryden's "Reformed" theology, like Barth's, seems at this point especially close to that of Luther. Bryden's conclusion to "The Presbyterian Conception of the Word of God" offered a revealing comparison of Thomas Aquinas and Martin Luther. Aquinas, according to Bryden, was intellectually brilliant, deeply pious, and dedicated to the church, and he had properly distinguished between the realms of nature and reason on one side, and the supernatural and the revelation that had been entrusted to the church. His work gave "the respective interests of life their just and rightful place in a system of thought which should be all-comprehensive, and in which life should be informed and governed in all its parts by the Revelation which God, in the beginning, had given to the Church."¹⁶⁰ Though sympathetic to the Thomist ontology which distinguished nature and grace, however, Bryden objected that Aquinas' work was a rational apologetic for Christianity, but gave no sign of being "under some irresistible constraint to speak the Word of God." Implicitly denouncing his own earlier mysticism, Bryden claimed that in the Catholic tradition, and in its appropriation of Aristotle, mysticism and rationalism had replaced God's own revelation. Contemporary modernism was simply a new version of that rationalism.

Here, in contrast to Line's Neo-Thomist sympathies, Bryden insisted on the need for a radically other revelation of a divine Word, and in doing so he stretched the polarity between nature and grace. The fundamental difference between Luther and Aquinas, according to Bryden, was in Luther's insistence on the exclusiveness of God's grace following his discovery that all the methods prescribed by the church for seeking forgiveness failed to satisfy his sense of God's judgement.

¹⁶⁰Bryden, "The Presbyterian Conception of the Word of God, (1935)," 215.

Finally, when that judgement had burned its way through all pretensions, the revelation of God's sole grace in Jesus Christ was made and the Gospel and Evangelicalism was "freed." Early Protestantism alone resisted the rationalization of God's Word, for Luther was not "merely thinking about the truths of God" but rather was "a man confronted by God Himself and compelled to speak the Truth."¹⁶¹ The early Reformers, Bryden claimed, were concerned with more than merely offering a theocentric alternative to anthropocentrism, for "not even in man's best and highest thought can he in any sense, possess God." For the Reformers, the paradoxical miracle was that God was remote, and yet in grace came near to the soul of man. But Bryden went on to claim that this entry of "the great Transcendent" into the world was "not to challenge it here and there, but to challenge it as such," and "to judge the soul itself as sin's very citadel."¹⁶²

By insisting that God judged the world and humanity "as such," Bryden suggested an antithesis between God and the whole of human existence that was reminiscent of Augustine's "confusion," according to Jeffrey Burton Russell, of the moral depravity of humanity with the ontological category of nature.¹⁶³ As we have seen, this disjuncture of grace and nature cut across Bryden's entire theology. In his insistent declaration of God's "No!" on all human effort, Bryden identified nature with sin, while grace was the work of a sovereign and holy God who was radically other and transcendent, and whose Word approached nature only as an eschatological tangent. Herein lay the root of the tension in Bryden's theology between the transcendent spiritual Word and the historical Jesus of the Bible, and between the eschatological, spiritual identity of the church and its life in the structured world.

¹⁶¹Bryden, "The Presbyterian Conception of the Word of God, (1935)," 216.

¹⁶²Bryden, "The Presbyterian Conception of the Word of God, (1935)," 218.

¹⁶³Jeffrey Burton Russell, A History of Medieval Christianity; Prophecy and Order (Arlington Heights: Harlan Davidson, 1968), 54.

III. The Judging-Saving Word

From the perspective of Barthians like Bryden, Smart, and Cochrane, the rise of totalitarianism and the growing threat of war in the mid-1930's confirmed the deepening crisis of modern civilization. Against signs of a resurgent liberal-evangelicalism such as was emerging in the United Church by the mid-1930's, they insisted that God's judgement was upon humanity. Bryden's most mature work, particularly his The Christian's Knowledge of God (1940) coincided with the crises of the late 1930's. In this context, Bryden insistently reiterated God's judging "No!" against western culture, and attempted to complete his departure from the liberal, Kantian tradition by starting from the radical ontological distinction between God and the world, and the recovery of both classical Trinitarian confessions and what he called a "new Protestant" recovery of Reformation doctrines in contrast to modern liberal Protestantism. Though designed to answer the problem of human knowledge of God, Bryden's recovery of this Trinitarian orthodoxy led him to begin to consider, though still ambiguously in 1940, the positive claims of God's Kingdom on the world.

The cleavage that had emerged by World War II between Barthian neo-orthodoxy and a revived liberal-evangelicalism became evident especially in Arthur C. Cochrane's indictment, in 1940, of different responses to the war in the United Church. When the sub-executive of the United Church's General Council declared its loyalty to Canada and King, and in response some seventy-five of its ministers, led by Richard Roberts, dissented by publishing a statement in support of pacifism, Arthur Cochrane issued his condemnation of both sides in The Church and the War (1940). According to Cochrane, both sides were preoccupied with merely moral interpretations of Christianity, and thus failed to speak as "servants of the Word" of Christ. The church was called "to bear witness to GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS over and above the national, territorial, moral and so-called religious rights of men." Instead of preaching its own relative values and shifting moralisms, the fundamental

need of the church was "to hear and proclaim 'a voice coming from something not ourselves.'"¹⁶⁴

While Cochrane challenged the revival of liberal-evangelical moralism, James Smart, in January 1940, challenged the tradition of natural theology and apologetics in his criticism of the famous Gifford Lectures. Notably, the Gifford Lecturer for 1939 had been none other than Reinhold Niebuhr.¹⁶⁵ According to Smart, however, the principle of using natural theology to defend Christianity was developed during the reign of rationalism in which science was taken as the only means of valid knowledge.¹⁶⁶ Contrary to the Biblical, evangelical principle that knowledge of God came by revelation, natural theology was an apologetic that subjected revelation to human reason. Ironically, in the modern understanding of the relativity of knowledge, such apologetics were no longer secure, since present trends in psychology recognized the limits and contextuality of reason, and hence its inability to prove the transcendent grounds Christian faith.

Against fears that the loss of a rational path to God would result in the decline of respect for theology, Smart argued that a rationalist apologetic was far from essential for Christianity, for God could not be grasped by man. This was not to suggest that faith was irrational; to the contrary, reason was subordinate to faith's knowledge of God, for faith was "the response of a man's entire being, heart, mind, and will, to God."¹⁶⁷ The modern tradition of justifying belief in God to an unbelieving age by appealing through rationalism and mysticism supposed that one could claim assurance of God for oneself while bypassing the problem of sin and the prior need of the "humiliation of repentance" and redemption. In short, natural theology attempted to see God without

¹⁶⁴Arthur C. Cochrane, The Church and the War (Toronto: Thomas Nelson, 1940), xii, xx.

¹⁶⁵Niebuhr's lectures formed the basis of his two-volume The Nature and Destiny of Man (1941, 1943).

¹⁶⁶James D. Smart, "The Irrelevance of Natural Theology to the Christian Religion," Hibbert Journal, Vol. 38, no. 2 (January 1940), 231-2.

¹⁶⁷Smart, "The Irrelevance of Natural Theology to the Christian Religion," 237.

the "spectacles" of God's own Word in Christ; its resulting "sin" was that it "habilitates within the Church the good, pious, cultured man" who may nevertheless have "no part in the Kingdom of God." Thus, according to Smart, the urgent fundamental problem for humanity, even prior to intellectual problems, concerned the reality of sin and how man might be reconciled to God.¹⁶⁸

This insistent rejection of all premature human efforts which circumvented the depths of sin and humanity's need of grace was developed most extensively by Bryden. As he put it in his retrospective on the church in 1950,

there is no security at all for man except he find that security in God. Every Christian ought to know that no human scheme will prosper and prevail for long unless its foundation rest upon an acknowledgement of God and a true belief in Him. And as John Calvin once so strongly affirmed: 'We never truly believe in God until we have come to that place where we cannot believe in anything or anybody but God.'¹⁶⁹

Bryden thus shared Augustine's confession that man has no rest until he find it in God. Cast into modern neo-orthodox terms, however, Bryden emphasized that such rest could come only in the recognition of man's existential crisis. As the crisis in western society deepened during the late 1930's, therefore, he continued to emphasize God's "No!" upon all human efforts in the belief that man must be disillusioned of all naturalistic false hopes in order to become open to the grace of God's radically other Word.

Bryden developed these themes of judgement and grace most fully during the late 1930's in his lectures on the Philosophy of Religion and in his most comprehensive work, The Christian's Knowledge of God (1940), written during 1938-1939. In these works he interpreted the dialectic of judgement and grace in distinctly modern terms. On the one hand, he shared the "agnostic" conclusions of modern critical social scientists and secularized humanists that nature failed to confirm

¹⁶⁸Smart, "The Irrelevance of Natural Theology to the Christian Religion," 238-9.

¹⁶⁹Walter W. Bryden, "The Church, Today And One Hundred Years Ago; An anniversary sermon (1950)," in W. W. Bryden, Separated Unto the Gospel, Donald V. Wade, ed. (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1956), 15.

the reality of God or that humans might build God's Kingdom on earth. Bryden insisted that there was no bridge from the historical-structural nexus of human existence to the transcendent reality of God. On the other hand, he portrayed the eschatological Word of God known only in faith as the answer to human existence.

Bryden's arguments of the late 1930's began from what was now an explicit disillusionment with liberal-modernism and its Enlightenment, and especially Kantian assumption that God and faith must meet the demands of human reason. Among his now familiar criticisms of liberal-modernism in The Christian's Knowledge of God, Bryden argued that liberal-modern apologetics were no longer credible. Modern awareness of the high ethical ideals of non-Christian religions indicated that liberal defenses of Christianity on the grounds of its high view of human values provided no grounds for Christianity's claim to a unique revelation and faith.¹⁷⁰ In fact, Bryden argued, ethical norms were now known to be expressions of a variety of historical, social, and economic, as well as religious interests. Even modern Christian society had identified Christianity with the norms of liberal-capitalist society, and so subordinated God's Righteousness to human interests and well-being. And though in prosperous times Christians in privileged western nations could think that their way of life had the "approbation of God," those claims were now being shaken. A Christianity which "has counted its superiority in terms of its distinctive and abiding moral credentials and religious achievements alone," he warned, "is being prepared for a rude awakening."¹⁷¹ At a time when western moral traditions were crumbling under the stress of the Depression and intractable international conflict, modern liberal Christianity was vulnerable to the challenge from perceptive and "brazenly irreligious" critics like Nietzsche who asked "Where is thy God?"¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰W. W. Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1940), viii-ix, 139-42.

¹⁷¹Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 243.

¹⁷²Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 243.

Bryden examined the challenge of this modern disillusionment more extensively in his Philosophy of Religion lectures on the theme of "the Problem of God" during the 1930's. Under the title, "The Reign of Naturalisms," he surveyed the religious implications of the modern physical and social sciences and the new secular humanism. Borrowing from Paul Tillich's description of modern thought as the "'reign of self-sufficient finitude,'" Bryden identified modern thought with the naturalistic belief that "Nature, in its own highest product Man, is self-sufficient and self-explanatory."¹⁷³ Rooted in the Renaissance ideas of Descartes, Spinoza, and Bacon, modern thought assumed that man was the "'measure of all things'", and that God was merely an object, and therefore subject to, human reason.¹⁷⁴ The results of this revolution were modern schools of thought that offered "mere judgments of the natural man upon himself," and that could end only in disillusioned pessimism.¹⁷⁵

Though he would criticize the naturalism of modern thought, Bryden, like Smart, opposed any apologetic response to naturalism. Borrowing from Ludwig Feuerbach's criticism, Bryden argued that attempts to meet modern naturalism with rationalist and idealist apologetics for religion had themselves fallen into the trap of naturalism by assuming that God must be proved to the human mind.¹⁷⁶ Their versions of the transcendent absolute, as Feuerbach had complained, were only expressions of the "higher aspects of man's life transcendentalized." In fact all apologetics, in Bryden's treatment, were inescapably naturalist, since all apologetics assumed that "God is the object

¹⁷³Knox College, Caven Library, Walter W. Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," unpublished typescript, n.d., 1. Though difficult to date precisely, this work must be dated some time after 1935, since it refers to Nicholas Berdyaev's Freedom and the Spirit (1935). See p. 1.

¹⁷⁴Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 1-2. See also Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 32-35.

¹⁷⁵Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 1.

¹⁷⁶Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 2.

of man's thought."¹⁷⁷

In contrast to "naturalistic" apologetics for God, Bryden was more sympathetic, paradoxically, with the tragic pessimism of modern skeptics and secular humanists like Joseph Krutch. While critical of their naturalism, Bryden agreed with their conclusions that human thought could not confirm the reality of God. In the belief that nature and reason could not disclose the reality of God, he portrayed the emergence of skepticism as the logical conclusion of modern thought, for apart from the revelation of God's love in Christ, Bryden claimed, "if we take life seriously, we cannot arrive at any other position than that of Joseph Krutch."¹⁷⁸

Bryden's assessment of modern skepticism served paradoxically as a negative apologetic for the reality of a radically other God. His purpose in affirming modern pessimism, he claimed, was to disillusion modern man of all "self-conceit and self-delusion." For example, he concurred in the new conclusions of former theistic physicists like Sir Arthur Eddington and Sir James Jeans that science could not confirm the validity of religion. In fact, the "baffling immensity of the universe" and the apparently accidental origin of human life, and the inability of scientists even to identify what life is, made any claims to demonstrate the reality of God from science impossible. Though man might reasonably postulate an anthropomorphic designer-creator, science could not verify such a creator.¹⁷⁹

Paradoxically, while wary of its naturalism, Bryden was sympathetic to the modern critical sciences in several ways. First, in his own way he attempted to find in their new views of an indeterminate world some space beyond the limits of human rationality for the reality of a God known only by faith. In modern physics, for example, what once was thought to be the absolute "law of causal determination" had been neutralized, Bryden claimed, by the discovery of the "principle of

¹⁷⁷Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 1-2.

¹⁷⁸Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 34.

¹⁷⁹Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 2.

indeterminacy," so that life was no longer bound or entirely explained by rational causation.¹⁸⁰ But as Alfred North Whitehead had suggested, since the natural cosmos displayed pure mathematical design, it could be seen as the "materialization" of thought that corresponded to both the human mind and a potential great Architect, rather than being merely matter or mechanics. Yet since modern science indicated that time and space originated coincidentally, the creator must somehow stand outside of creation and "in a category with which our scientific reason is not capacitated to deal....And therefore the scientific reasons cannot draw conclusions absolutely authoritative for a true evaluation of God, or even of this life."¹⁸¹

Bryden's assertion of the limits of science, secondly, indicated his preference for "agnostic reverence" such as that of Herbert Spencer over illusory attempts to justify God by scientific reasoning.¹⁸² Agnosticism, according to Bryden, did not mean the denial of God; to the contrary, he described agnosticism as "the index of all men's search for knowledge of every kind. It is the true characteristic of the human-finite in the presence of the infinite Mystery."¹⁸³ Bryden's objection to Spencer was not to his agnosticism, but his failure to be agnostic and reverent enough. Despite professing agnosticism, Spencer claimed that what could be known about nature and man constituted the whole of reality, and he proceeded to explain the universe in self-sufficient terms that glorified race, progress, and survival of the fittest, thereby vitiating the necessity of God and redemption and laying the foundations by which Hitler and Mussolini would come to be accepted as the culmination of the inherent process of progress.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 3.

¹⁸¹Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 4.

¹⁸²Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 5.

¹⁸³Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 6.

¹⁸⁴Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 5-6.

Bryden's affirmation of the conclusions of modern science, yet his attempt to limit their reach, was also apparent in his survey of the social sciences. While assuming their validity for understanding natural human existence, he argued that religious experience concerned a mysterious object which was beyond rational comprehension. On the one hand, the behaviourist psychology of John B. Watson and the "projection" theories of religion in Freud, Jung, and Durkheim all reduced religion to a reflex of man's own constitution, and portrayed gods as inherently made in man's own image.¹⁸⁵ Though they did not deny "the numinous experience" of something which believers took to be "other" than the self, they denied that there was any "objective existence corresponding to the religious experience" or that there was any supernatural source of that experience.¹⁸⁶ Such interpretations, according to Bryden, over-reached the bounds of science by denying the object of religious experience, and thus ran up against the reality that science could neither deny or affirm the existence of God.

While wary of their naturalistic reductionism, and insistent on a mysterious divine reality beyond nature, Bryden thirdly assumed the validity of modern critical sciences, including its historical and cultural relativism, for understanding the "natural" world. Accordingly, he welcomed the social sciences, especially the work of Emile Durkheim, for their "concrete" and "scientific" sociological interpretation of the significance of religion and religious change in society. Durkheim's theory of the origin and role of new gods in the development of civilizations rightly suggested that the classic pagan gods were "apotheoses, largely of their own tribal or national interests," and likewise that the "gods" of modern civilizations such as the nation were expressions of modern man's fundamental interests.¹⁸⁷ Durkheim also had demonstrated, according to Bryden, that even morality was

¹⁸⁵Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 7.

¹⁸⁶Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 9-11.

¹⁸⁷Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 13.

developed historically in relation to social conditions, so that human concepts of morality could not be identified with the Righteousness of God, nor could man's responsibility to God could not be "discharged" simply by an aggregate of social morality, or by "doing" certain things.¹⁸⁸

As he had in the physical sciences, then, Bryden found in the modern critical social sciences something of a "negative apologetic" for the radical otherness of God. Along with demonstrating that humans were psychic rather than merely physiological organisms, the social sciences showed the importance of the sub-conscious and religion in both individual and mass life, and the intimate relation of religion to daily life.¹⁸⁹ In fact, it was because of this close proximity to life, according to Bryden, that religion easily became warped into immoral forms. Hence, the social sciences also showed the possibility that people might be worshipping themselves or their own self-projections, and thus idols, rather than God.¹⁹⁰ In the end, however, as "religious idealists" correctly feared, the modern social sciences demolished all apologetics that attempted to prove the existence of God and the reasonableness of religion from the human psyche and society.¹⁹¹

Thus modern science demonstrated the impossibility of justifying religious claims by reason. "For, if God is something different altogether from His universe," Bryden claimed, "if His life and thinking is a different thing from our life and our thinking, then how make a rational defence of those higher things in terms of the things of the universe, or even of man and his thinking?"¹⁹² Though science left room for a creator who was radically other than the cosmos, by this same reality science offered no demonstration of the nature of personal God.

¹⁸⁸Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 14.

¹⁸⁹Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 14.

¹⁹⁰Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 19.

¹⁹¹Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 19-20.

¹⁹²Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 4.

From his "agnostic reverence," Bryden regarded the emergence of secularized and pessimistic humanism as the logical result of modern naturalistic thought, but also in some sense the tragically-right recognition of the limits of human knowledge. Renaissance humanism had attempted to place man at the center of the world, and in pragmatism and positivism had attempted to supplant the reality of a transcendent God with a religion of humanity.¹⁹³ The desperate culmination of these efforts could be seen, Bryden argued, in the attempts of modern secular humanists like Lippmann and Krutch to develop new moral systems based on secular humanism.¹⁹⁴ Lippmann's proposal in his Preface to Morals (1928) of a new morality based on "matured personality" and on common agreement, practical usefulness, and "victorious vitality," according to Bryden, simply substituted personality for God, and moved from pragmatism to idealism in trying to base morality on an ideal personality. But Lippmann's humanism lacked the norms by which to judge good personality and good ends for personality, apart from an obscure "feeling" for life.¹⁹⁵ In his The Modern Temper (1929), by contrast, Krutch had finally given up trying to rationalize and justify life in the world, and also had accepted that nature was against him and that there was no help for man from beyond the world. Krutch's attempt to move from a decadent self-consciousness to a new "adolescent" age of joyful and naive belief in man presented a tragic paradox, according to Bryden, for the modern view of man's vaunted "highest development" in rationality was now seen in Krutch's treatment to distort and sap man's natural animal life with self-conscious awareness. The tragic reality that Krutch had disclosed, according to Bryden, was that nature failed to serve human values and aspirations.¹⁹⁶

Significantly, Bryden did not directly challenge Krutch's pessimism. On the contrary, he

¹⁹³Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 21-2.

¹⁹⁴Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 25-6.

¹⁹⁵Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 26-28.

¹⁹⁶Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 32.

quoted Nicholas Berdyaev to affirm the tragedy of humanism: "[m]an had to discover all the possibilities of this earthly life in order to know and to impeach everything by personal experience. Humanism contains within itself a fatal dialectic which must bring it to its final doom."¹⁹⁷ Krutch's despair was the conclusion of a "[h]umanism which has thought itself through to the end," having come to the realization that man cannot find the answer to human life and the soul's desire by his own effort.¹⁹⁸ By himself, man is lost, disillusioned, and "weary of his own self-autonomy." According to Bryden, there was something about Krutch "in his annihilating negatives concerning life, and his despair of human values however high, which has a strange affinity to the New Testament, especially to the Apostle Paul." Paul also had come to realize his own inability to do the good and the inability of the world's wisdom to come to know God. Such disillusionment of human self-centeredness, and the realization of the utter chasm between humanity and God, was the necessary first step to recognizing God's grace. Unlike Krutch and Lippmann, Bryden went on, the New Testament conclusion was not tragic, for it revealed the answer to human despair in the reality of Christ. For Paul, the annihilation of human values, more complete even than Krutch's, came not simply from rational awareness, but from God's revelation concerning sinful humanity. The despair which comes to man in this revelation was not cynicism, but first of all humbled man and "makes him to know that he is in the hands of God."¹⁹⁹

Bryden's assessment of modern thought in the late 1930's suggested that the Kantian tradition of apologetics, with its attempt to move from human reason and values to the reality of God, had reached a dead-end. The "stupendous blunder" of liberal-modernists, Bryden wrote in The Christian's Knowledge of God (1940), was their attempt to resolve the tension between God and humanity by

¹⁹⁷Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 32.

¹⁹⁸Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 34.

¹⁹⁹"The Reign of Naturalisms," 32-4.

constructing a way from humanity to God, and thereby failing to challenge the foundation of modern humanism. From Kant through Hegel, Schleiermacher, and Ritschl, liberal-modernists had tried to construct a rational synthesis of humanity and God by identifying Christianity with an inherent "God-consciousness" that was realized through historical progress.²⁰⁰ According to Bryden, the idea of progressive, immanent revelation contradicted the Biblical view of revelation as apocalyptic and eschatological, and substituted an anthropocentric for a theocentric understanding of God. Even Nicholas Berdyaev's existentialist mysticism, which claimed a unique supra-rational subjective experience of God, displayed the determination of humanity to presumptuously claim an identity of man with God, albeit above human reason and morality.²⁰¹

The results of the Kantian apologetic tradition, according to Bryden, had been disastrous for Christianity. Identifying "religion" with a universal consciousness had compromised the uniqueness of the gospel and incarnation event and made Christianity an indistinguishable "religion among other religions."²⁰² And the reduction of Christianity to simply "a mode of conduct to be achieved" meant that Christ was merely the fulfillment of a process of moral development. Liberal-modernism inoculated modern humanity against the unique judging-saving Word of God and its challenge concerning humanity's alienation from God, and also rendered unmerited grace meaningless. It also left the church reduced to an instrument for secular educational and social improvements.²⁰³ Most disturbing of all, the liberal conception of God and the idealist "Absolute" had not only left modern society disillusioned, but also had opened the door for the fabrication of new ideologies and "pseudo-

²⁰⁰Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 32-40.

²⁰¹Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 233.

²⁰²Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 38, 42, 70.

²⁰³Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, ix, 62, 72-3.

absolutes" of "race, blood and soil" and of "political, economic and national ultimates."²⁰⁴ Modern totalitarian ideologies and systems were therefore the "presumptions and perversions" that followed from liberal-modernist Christianity and the modern failure to hear the voice of God Himself.

In place of Kant's "Copernican revolution" which gave primacy to epistemological requirements and the active human mind, Bryden insisted on the need first to acknowledge the radical chasm between humanity and God, and thus seemed to reassert the primacy of an ontological distinction between God and nature. No revival of idealist immanentism or humanist moralism, he claimed, could answer to Krutch's tragic pessimism. Only a criticism that "radically denies the human claim" of impulse and reason "in their entirety" could hope to challenge the new humanism.²⁰⁵ Bryden rejected any efforts to locate a bridge between humanity and God or to overcome the disjuncture from the side of humanity by rationalist or idealist apologetics. Rather, in what he regarded as classic Calvinist and Pauline fashion, Bryden's emphasis on the disillusionment of natural humanity before a transcendent God affirmed a fundamental ontological distinction between God and humanity as creature. He made this point rhetorically in his criticism of Spencer's notion of an immanent will to progress: "[i]s the essence of God and His creation one and in continuity? Or, does this life-principle, this whole existence itself, somehow need to be reversed?"²⁰⁶ His question implied that God was radically distinct from creation, while humanity was bound up within the structures and processes of the creation. And because of this ontic distinction, the relationship between God and humanity could only be understood in terms of dualism or dialectic rather than idealist monism.

Notably, Bryden had arrived at this ontological position not by returning to a naive

²⁰⁴Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 74.

²⁰⁵Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 34.

²⁰⁶Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 5.

Baconianism, but by working through the epistemological problem of the knowledge of God. Hence his treatment of the ontological duality was in terms of a post-critical existentialism that retained a critical, historically self-conscious perspective, but culminated in an ontological question concerning the relation of human existence to the Being of God. While it could not find the answer, he claimed, the human search for reality and meaning through "philosophy" pointed to an incompleteness or a vacuum in human existence that was filled only by the mystery of God's own revelation. Likewise, the universal incidence of religion and desire for fellowship with some supernatural reality suggested, though it could not prove, the existence of some object which corresponded to the desire.²⁰⁷ Pushed to its depths, the modern crisis of religious knowledge and its preoccupation with the process of becoming begged the prior question of what the meaning of existence or being was in the first place. In fact, Bryden argued, the human sense of guilt indicated a consciousness of the incompleteness of human existence and of an "absolute responsibility" beyond all the relative responsibilities of life. In humanity's sense of "the burden of some higher claim" on human existence,

man is forever facing the eternal 'why' of his existence, and this forces him into an existential attitude of some sort. Religion, therefore, is chiefly concerned with the prior question -- to put it in a word, of the 'why' of biological existence itself.²⁰⁸

The fact of human guilt pointed to an Existence and Righteousness "which brings our existence and our righteousness under some kind of absolute question-mark." It was this absolute meaning of life that modern naturalism failed to disclose.

Having made this ontological distinction, Bryden proceeded to suggest that this dialectic also cut through human existence. The fact that human life was under an "absolute question-mark," he argued, meant that humanity lived in "two orders of existence, ... i.e. the 'temporal' and the 'eternal'," both of which had claims upon man. On the one hand, man was subject to the laws which govern

²⁰⁷Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 16.

²⁰⁸Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 17.

temporal life. But temporal life, on the other hand, was conscious of a higher claim, a power which "disillusions us of our estimate of our natural 'selves.'" It was through this claim of being itself, and not merely the claims and burdens of temporal life, that man could know God and hope for the redemption of temporal life.²⁰⁹

Complementing this ontological duality, Bryden sharply distinguished between reason and faith. Reason provided humanity the faculty by which to understand and use the temporal order to preserve temporal life. But reason was merely an instrument for understanding the natural world. On this point, he quoted Nicholas Berdyaev's Freedom and the Spirit (1935):

'Reason is nothing but the faculty by which man adapts himself to the world-process. Divinity cannot be rationally determined and remains outside the scope of logical concepts ... There is only a refraction of the divine within the finite.... Our human reason is not adapted to a form of reality in which contraries are compatible with one another.'²¹⁰

Though scientific knowledge could discover the temporal and structural realities of natural life, it was always "relative" to humanity's environment, and therefore inescapably creaturely. Apart from nature and scientific reason, however, the transcendent claim by which to judge what was normal or right was not to be found in "this world" by human reason, but rather came as a mysterious reality that haunted human existence. Ultimately, that mystery originated from God himself, for it was "God calling man from the 'mystery of darkness' to the 'mystery of light'."²¹¹ In a brief reference to I Corinthians 2, Bryden declared: "[t]here is a natural man and a spiritual man, and the things of the spirit can only be spiritually discerned."²¹² While reason could discern temporal laws, or the "'apparent' in life," it was "not adequate to these things which are not seen, but in last analysis are

²⁰⁹Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 17.

²¹⁰Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 1.

²¹¹Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 6.

²¹²Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 34.

the things which are real, at least for man."²¹³

Though in modern existentialist form, Bryden's interpretation of the distinction between sin and grace was similar to that of Augustine's. Like Augustine's City of God, written in the crisis following the sack of Rome, Bryden's radical criticism issued from disillusionment with modern western culture, and from faith in a radically other transcendent and sovereign God. And like Augustine's Platonic tendency, Bryden interpreted the antithesis of sin and grace in ontological terms that identified sin with nature while treating the transcendent spiritual reality of God as the "real" reality.

Having interpreted this antithesis from a modern, post-Enlightenment perspective, however, meant that revelation and knowledge of God would remain the central problematic of Bryden's work. Bryden's existentialist anthropology located natural humanity firmly in the historical and structural nexus of natural life, and at the same time he attempted to claim the experiential presence of the transcendent and other God within the world. But given the limits of critical science to temporal reality, and the utter failure of human efforts to grasp the absolute reality of God by their own efforts due to the chasm of sin between humanity and God, the question of how it was possible to know and speak of God continued to arise for Bryden. How could one reconcile the primacy of experience which was inescapably one's own, as Line and Vlastos had claimed in response to Barth, with the radical distinction between nature and a transcendent God, so as to claim the experience of God without falling into a new naturalistic apologetic?

Bryden's The Christian's Knowledge of God (1940) was devoted primarily to this paradox of how man might speak of God at all. According to Bryden, the emergence of false ideologies and another cataclysmic world war once more exposed with new urgency the "problem" of God's existence for modern man. "The one great question before the Church of this time," he declared,

²¹³Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 17.

is that of how men are to affirm, in terms which do not evade, confuse or camouflage the real issue, the absolute nature of God and of His Christ. For we suggest that without some such understanding of them Christianity, as it has traditionally been known, must sooner or later cease to exist. Apart from the assumption of the true absoluteness of Christ and the revelation made in Him, Christianity cannot signify anything of greater importance than that of representing one contributing factor among others in the total civilization of the human race.²¹⁴

In the midst of the world's crisis, he argued, the most difficult and urgent question for Christians was how it was possible for man, a finite and sinful creature, to know a God who was radically "other" than man.

Once again, Bryden's answer to this question, and to the human quest for existential meaning, was to emphasize with insistent exclusivism that the saving experience of God came not by self-sufficient human effort, but by God's initiative in the revelation of his Word which came as a judgement upon "natural" humanity. In his Philosophy of Religion lectures, he had concluded that the answer to humanity's quest for meaning could begin only in the recognition that man could not know God by his own effort, but only by God's apprehension of man and his self-revelation in the Word. It was this event of revelation and faith, according to Bryden, that Christians referred to in the claim that "Sinful man is justified by faith alone."²¹⁵ Apart from that Word of God which was Christ, Christianity was merely another natural religion, and so was destined for the same disillusionment as that of Joseph Krutch.

He developed this answer most fully, however, in his The Christian's Knowledge of God. Here he stressed that God was known only by the miraculous and eschatological entry into concrete human existence in his Word. Contrary to liberal-modernism, Biblical scholarship in the works of Albert Schweitzer and the Forms-Geschichte school of Rudolf Bultmann now showed that the main concern of the New Testament was not the historical Jesus and an "evolutionary-historical" outlook,

²¹⁴Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 75.

²¹⁵Bryden, "The Reign of Naturalisms," 17.

but rather the Messianic, eschatological, and Christological meaning of Jesus and his "apocalyptic-eschatological" outlook.²¹⁶ The witness of the New Testament and the early church was that God's living Word, "the one and only Mediator between God and man," had become manifest in the flesh to provide the one revelation "by which the Holy God became savingly known to sinful men."²¹⁷

Bryden now identified this exclusively Christocentric emphasis with a "revived Protestantism" that protested liberal-modernist attempts to rationalize God to satisfy humanity, and that insisted on the absolute sovereignty and sole revelation of God as recorded in Scripture.²¹⁸ The "alleged Protestant Church" of the nineteenth century, according to Bryden, had become conditioned by "human philosophizings" and had "presumptuously usurped the prerogatives of God Himself" in its attempts to reduce Christ to a "religious genius," to make God in its own best image, and to claim to advance what it thought was the Kingdom of God.²¹⁹ In contrast, the revived, modern "Protest" movement proclaimed

One Who is Absolute, Other: Who, if He is to be known, must make Himself known. Could we get to the bottom of this whole modern protest, we would perceive that above all else it is endeavouring to say that God is that One Who in His ways with men so transcends man's thought and ways, even the thoughts and ways of the contemporary Church, that He can never be made captive to the various forms of institutionalizing or rationalizing to which moderns have been tempted to subject Him. It is a protest, in other words, on behalf of God Who is Lord, Creator and sole Redeemer, against all the gods which have come into existence in modern life.²²⁰

Bryden's promotion of the new Protestant movement confidently affirmed Barth's declaration of the absolute chasm between God and humanity, and his insistence that reconciliation could come only

²¹⁶Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 8, 17-23.

²¹⁷Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 4.

²¹⁸Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 70.

²¹⁹Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 72-3.

²²⁰Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 75.

from the side of God whose coming disturbed humanity's conventions and judged all his securities, and whose gracious death to redeem humanity scandalized all respectable thought and high moral achievement.²²¹

While the new Protestantism proclaimed God as the Absolute, Bryden conceded, it did not pretend to solve the problem of how sinful humanity might apprehend and speak of the reality that God was absolute. From the side of human reason, in fact, there could be no resolution of that problem, for the reality of the absolute God could not be apprehended or "created" by man, but could only be confessed. Like faith, love, and hope, true confession was "of God," requiring that man "wait upon God," a fact that the modern church had lost sight of in its anxious efforts to buttress its religiosity.²²² At the heart of Bryden's answer to the problem of knowledge of God, then, was the claim that revelation came as the entry of God's Word in unique, eschatological intervention into the "'fallen' world" of human existence to establish an immediate personal relationship with humanity in faith.²²³ Such an experience could only be confessed and witnessed to.

More than any of his previous works, Bryden's The Christian's Knowledge of God finally began to address explicitly the relationship of this revelation to history. The Incarnation, he claimed, was a real historical event, but it also was a singular, miraculous "act" of God's coming to man that distinguished the Christian revelation and the New Testament confession from all other religions.²²⁴ The Biblical view of revelation, therefore, was that Christ entered fully into "the historic plane" of concrete human existence in a "peculiar and necessary coalescence with history."²²⁵

²²¹Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 73.

²²²Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 75-6.

²²³Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 121.

²²⁴Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 201.

²²⁵Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 24, 121.

While insisting that the Incarnation was an event, however, Bryden continued to emphasize that it was apprehended only through the immediate experience of the Holy Spirit. As Rudolf Bultmann had argued in his work Jesus, there was little to be known of Jesus' personal and historical life, nor did the New Testament indicate that revelation in Christ came by way of knowledge of the historic work and appearance of Jesus alone.²²⁶ As a unique activity of God, the Incarnation could not be merely the symbol of a universal idea, nor could its unique originality be grasped by an historical science that, as in Ernst Troeltsch's critical method, worked from analogy to human experience and thought. Indeed, the Incarnation was a paradoxical reality that scandalized human reason, for it meant that God himself had become flesh in Christ in order to overcome the chasm between humans and God.²²⁷ Because of its uniqueness, the Incarnation could only be grasped by the witness of the Holy Spirit. The miracle of revelation took place, then, not only in the historic events of Christ, but also in the human soul in the Spirit's revelation of God as Saviour.²²⁸

Like Smart's plea for a "theological" interpretation of the Bible in the early 1930's, Bryden argued for a "theological" rather than philosophical interpretation of the Incarnation. In contrast to philosophic reasoning, which he assumed sought a reconciliation of God and humanity through human reason, Bryden claimed that theology was confessional in the sense that it derived not from human discovery but rather from the constraint of God's Word. Theology, according to Bryden, was a unique kind of thinking that arose out of self-negating repentance and the compulsion to confess the truth of man's experience of God's Word.²²⁹

With this distinction, and perhaps from his experience in teaching Church History, Bryden

²²⁶Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 85.

²²⁷Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 8, 13.

²²⁸Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 121.

²²⁹Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 30-1.

now identified Christian knowledge of God with the historic theological confessions of the church, and juxtaposed its confession of the Word with rationalistic heresies influenced by philosophy. In its orthodox Trinitarian creeds, including the Apostles', Nicene, and Chalcedon creeds, the early church had rejected Hellenistic heresies that tried to reconcile the paradoxical distinction between God and humanity by translating revelation into Greek thought.²³⁰ According to Bryden, this early conflict was part of a perennial temptation for man to deny the unique, eschatological elements of revelation and to try to transcend the paradox of revelation with his own reconciliation of humanity and God in terms of his own reason. That pattern could also be seen in the attempts of apologists since Kant to resolve the particular facts of Christ's Incarnation, death, and resurrection into universal ethical ideas that humans must meet.²³¹

In the tradition of Tertullian and Athanasius, Bryden's interpretation suggested a fundamental conflict between Christianity and classical culture that was evident in the conflict between theology and philosophy. In contrast to Adolf von Harnack's The History of Dogma (1886-9), which portrayed the early creeds as philosophical rationalizations of the moral kernel of Christianity, Bryden followed Brunner's argument in The Mediator (1927) that the creeds reflected the a "grim struggle" in which the Church had refused, in rejecting heresy, to allow the eschatological revelation of God's Word to be "diluted" with philosophy.²³² The early Church's Trinitarian statements thus displayed the model of genuine confessional knowledge of God: on the basis of faith and true revelation, rather than rational logic, the Church had simply recounted the concrete, historical, but miraculous events of God's self-revelation in the Incarnation and the Holy Spirit. Though reasoned, their statements were

²³⁰Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 114, 190-5.

²³¹Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 24, 116-7.

²³²Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 204-5.

not synthesized into a rationalized system.²³³ Claiming that the Reformers had rejected the modernist rationalism of the Renaissance, Bryden declared that the "true Reformed Churchman," he emphasized, "finds that he must never transcend the incarnation-miracle from the human rational side."²³⁴

According to Bryden, then, the early orthodox confessions of the Trinitarian being of God were the church's ultimate answer to the "problem" of revelation and human existence, for they described the fullest expression of God's self-revelation. God the creator, who had brought "existence out of non-existence," was absolutely transcendent and sovereign, and defied any analogies to humanity or human experience, and was known only as he revealed himself.²³⁵ Christ, in turn, was the unique action of God coming into the world as his judging-saving Word. "Christ is thus the wisdom, the righteousness and the power of God 'in action' -- the one Mediator between Holy God and sinful men."²³⁶ The significance of Jesus, therefore, was not the "ethical interests or social conditions and relations" of the historic plane, but rather was the medium for man's personal encounter of God's Righteous Will.²³⁷ And the Spirit revealed Christ to man, doing so as the eschatological breaking-in of God's personal coming to the human soul and thereby applying judging-saving grace to the individual soul in another "once-for-all" event as mysterious as the Incarnation.²³⁸ As Bryden summarized it, the New Testament affirmed "the supreme fact that man cannot 'know' Eternal God except through the Son -- the Word made flesh -- and that he cannot

²³³Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 195-9, 205.

²³⁴Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 116.

²³⁵Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 235-6.

²³⁶Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 123.

²³⁷Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 81-3.

²³⁸Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 128-9, 213-5.

'know' the Son except through the work of the Holy Spirit in his soul."²³⁹

Significantly, Bryden's treatment of the Trinity was to answer the human problem of knowledge, and as such retained the problematic of his coterminous commitments to a modern critical perspective, and to the radical otherness of God. The key evangelical meaning of the Trinitarian formula, he claimed, was its confession that God mediated knowledge of himself through the actual personal experience of his coming to humanity in Christ and the Spirit.²⁴⁰ In fact, Bryden was so insistent upon this direct personal relationship that he refused any claims to present a "Christian theology," much less an interpretation of theology, for the need of the day was more directly with the "living Word of God" that could not be justified in mere interpretation.²⁴¹ Instead, the Trinitarian formula confessed the real experience of the Word itself, and thus, Bryden declared, "is the cornerstone of all Christian theology."²⁴²

Bryden's insistence on the radical disjunction between God and nature and the exclusively eschatological character of revelation, however, left him with an enigmatic view of the broader question of the relationship between God's redemptive Word and creation, or between grace and nature. A glimpse of his response to this question was evident in his Christian existentialist treatment of the relationship between divine election and human freedom. Bryden denied that his emphasis on the disjunction between God and humans, and on God's exclusive initiative in salvation, emptied human life of freedom or responsibility.²⁴³ In part, he argued that, contrary to the old "Faculty psychology," the modern social sciences showed the reality of determinism in natural human life;

²³⁹Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 146.

²⁴⁰Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 14.

²⁴¹Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, vii.

²⁴²Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 212.

²⁴³Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 147-53.

there was no such thing as an autonomous "free will" that was not subject to external influences. At the same time, he argued that there was no way to rationally reconcile God's saving grace with some inherent "preparation" for grace or immanent divinity in a free human will. Liberal efforts to reconcile election and freedom, he claimed, were based on a mistaken view of God's election and human freedom as abstract, universal principles. On the contrary, he argued, God's election was not an abstract universal law, but rather an event that occurred "in the very revealing of Himself."²⁴⁴ On God's side, as Barth argued, election was not an arbitrary imposition upon humanity, but rather was God's free action "for man," to save humanity by bearing the cost of sin himself. To view this action, on the human side, as a denial of freedom was to misunderstand the real meaning of Christian freedom. Christian freedom, Bryden claimed, was

only known in election-experience. Which is just to say we find freedom only as God has apprehended us. Apart from God's apprehension in Christ, we are slaves to ourselves, to our pride, our opinions, prejudices, our passions and our senses. The coming of God alone disillusion us, breaks down our egotism, therefore destroys the fetters that bind us, thus makes us free for the first time.²⁴⁵

It was only in the Word that man was freed from his sinful and unreal self, and was freed from the petty fears of life. "Christian freedom," then, was not a universal principle of autonomy; rather it was man's restoration to his true humanity and free obedience through the personal relation of "Christ-bondage."

Bryden's treatment of election as an "event" experienced in the midst of man's natural existence illustrates his interpretation of the relationship between God and creation in terms of the personal experience of God's eschatological Word in the midst of the natural, and sinful world. In his discussion of the Trinity, he recognized the classic claim that Christ was both the Word "in the beginning" by which creation was ordered, as well as the redemptive Incarnation of God. The Word,

²⁴⁴Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 157-8.

²⁴⁵Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 159.

therefore, represented God's activity in both his creative and redemptive acts.²⁴⁶ Though he conceded an original goodness to creation because of its origin in God's Word, however, Bryden retained his sharp distinction between grace and nature. In part, he was wary of any ontic identification between God and creation. Contrary to both idealism and the neo-Thomism of Etienne Gilson, he argued, there could be no essential continuity of substance between God's "Being" and "being" in creation.²⁴⁷ Natural forces and human ideas were "what is man's" and belonged to "the space-time framework" while "what is God's" is eternal. The Being of God and the being of creation could not be rationally synthesized; instead, creaturely being, or nature, was ontically relative and subject to the Being of God.²⁴⁸

In addition to this ontological distinction, however, Bryden seemed to regard the original goodness as overcome by sin. The existential reality of a "fallen world" he argued, called for a sharp distinction between creation and redemption. Despite its original value as the creation of God's Word, creation and God now existed in paradoxical tension. In its present state, nature did not "speak to man savingly" to reveal God; rather, all of humanity and natural life lay under the judgement of God.²⁴⁹ Like Augustine, Bryden thus translated the moral antithesis of sin and grace into an ontological antithesis of nature and grace that identified nature and temporality entirely with sin and mortality. God's redemptive work in Christ, in turn, was an eschatological intervention in human affairs that negated "temporalities" and condemned the whole man rather than merely particular failures or sins.²⁵⁰ Before that revelation, all human things were mortal. "'All flesh is as grass and

²⁴⁶Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 15-16.

²⁴⁷Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 164-6.

²⁴⁸Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 126, 168.

²⁴⁹Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 121, 174-6.

²⁵⁰Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 49, 89, 128, 147.

all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away," Bryden claimed, was "the characteristic refrain of the Bible throughout."²⁵¹ Thus Bryden affirmed Barth's view of the radical antithesis between God and natural humanity, and of the new order of existence for man initiated by Christ.

In the present age, then, one could not escape the paradox that the Word of God was both world-negating and world-affirming.²⁵² God's Word both negated natural man and the world in its sinful state, but also manifested God's love for humanity and his affirmation of creation, and his purpose to bring it to fulfillment in a new Heaven and Earth. It was with his insistence on this existential paradox that Bryden claimed to break from Augustine's identity of the world with the "City of Cain" and his ultimate escapism. "Even this present world-order with its present earthly and temporal forms, it would appear," he conceded, "according to the New Testament, reflects in some true way what was in the mind of God, in regard to these, in His creative act, and what will be in the consummatio mundi."²⁵³

While recognizing God's redemptive affirmation of the world, Bryden's main concern was clearly that world-affirmation must not prematurely circumvent the tragic reality of sin, the paradoxical chasm between God and humanity, and the world's need of reconciliation to God through the miracle of God's Word.²⁵⁴ The value of creation lay in no inherent or autonomous meaning, but in the fact that God claims it in salvation. That value could be known, however, only in the revelation of God's Word, and thus after the fact of acknowledging humanity's sin and God's judgement.²⁵⁵ Bryden's

²⁵¹Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 128.

²⁵²Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 132-5, 170-2.

²⁵³Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 172.

²⁵⁴Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 176, 234.

²⁵⁵Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 170.

point of departure therefore, was that the world was utterly corrupted by sin, and so needed the scandalous eschatological revelation of God's Word.

From his insistence on the radical corruption of the world and on the creaturely bounds of human existence, and his eschatological view of redemption, Bryden identified the Kingdom of God, in his few references to it, with the immediate, existential experience of God's eschatological Word. Like revelation and faith, the Kingdom of God was the gift of God himself, and it lay first of all in the personal reconciliation between God and humanity.²⁵⁶ The Kingdom of God could not be identified merely with a social ideal or a social order, for the Word was a radical challenge against all orders of creation. Neither could it be understood as an escape from the world and sin to an otherworldly destiny.²⁵⁷ Instead, it was the immediate experience of the Word which called man to recognize his responsibility, to trust in God, and so begin a new life in Christ in the midst of creaturely life.

Bryden located this new life particularly in the Church, and concluded his The Christian's Knowledge of God with a vision of the church radically opposed to the world, which he identified particularly with the state. Again, his model was the early church's refusal to reduce Christianity and the Word to an ethical system, or an institution of the state, or an aspect of the contemporary culture. Despite its seeming impracticality and scandal to secular conventions, the Church was compelled to challenge all false absolutes and securities, and thus "all things mundane."²⁵⁸ Bryden's reference to the early church suggested that he viewed contemporary Christianity as similarly living in an essentially secular, pagan civilization. And as was the case in Roman times, Bryden associated the mundane secular order with the State. Possessed by the absolute claims of God, the Church was

²⁵⁶Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 93-6.

²⁵⁷Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 113, 175.

²⁵⁸Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 178-84.

therefore in constant tension with the state, "with its high culture" and its "entrenched material interests."²⁵⁹ Of course, the inevitable result for the Church in Roman times was persecution; indeed, Bryden claimed, "it is of the very nature of the Church of Christ to be persecuted" because of its challenge to existing orders.²⁶⁰

Convinced that a Church whose loyalty was exclusively to the disturbing Word of God could not possibly be at home in the world, Bryden was deeply critical of the modern church's naive entanglement in the contemporary State and social order.²⁶¹ Too often, he claimed, the church merely reflected the accepted conventions of secular society, substituting patriotism and humanitarianism for the challenge of the Christian faith. He was especially critical of the Church's compromise with capitalism. The greatest tragedy for the Church in the modern world, he claimed, was that its membership had been "brought into ... captivity to Mammon" in its domination by the capitalist elite and its tendency to view the church "as an agency among others with a purpose to train and discipline people in the things which belong to the 'respectabilities', and to insure for those who observe these 'amenities' a favourable balance for the life to come."²⁶²

It was, according to Bryden, especially ironic and tragically hypocritical that the capitalist elite, shaken by the threat of revolution and totalitarianism, was so concerned with "Christian liberty" and "Christian civilization."²⁶³ In fact, he argued, the revolt of the working classes was against the very system controlled by those elite. In that system, workers were reduced to impersonal economic means and forced into a subsistence which was at the mercy of "economic lords" who manipulated

²⁵⁹Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 186.

²⁶⁰Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 183.

²⁶¹Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 187-9.

²⁶²Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 248-9.

²⁶³Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 245-7.

the abstracted market system for their own personal profits. And this "fundamental maladjustment" of modern social life was itself "the profoundest cause" of the present wars. According to his former teacher T. M. Lindsay, the recurring phenomena of international wars was rooted in economic causes and the practical problem of human subsistence. When economic systems refused, at the behest of the "special interests of powerful classes," to be transformed to meet the needs of humanity, then the whole world suffered from violence. It was, therefore, a strangely perverted ethic that called for peace and order, when economic and social injustice remained in western capitalist societies. Nazi Germany was not alone in creating the causes of war, nor was it the only country guilty of creating incidences to justify invading smaller countries, as the British had demonstrated in the case of the Boer War.

While deeply critical of western society and its capitalist structure, Bryden refused to absolutize any ethical order. Like Arthur C. Cochrane, he opposed war-time calls for loyal patriotism, as well as the insistence of liberal-evangelicals like Roberts that Christians must be pacifist.²⁶⁴ The naive moralism of liberals, Bryden warned, was readily exploited by the forces of capitalism and totalitarianism that sought to subordinate the world to the pursuit of material and political power. And when the Church became the ward of the State and the contemporary order, it was doomed, as in the case of the church in Russia, to fall with that order.

Despite refusing to absolutize any ethic as an abstract universal principle, Bryden nevertheless argued that the logic of the Church's challenge to all merely moral absolutes meant that in the present situation the Christian's responsibility could only be to oppose totalitarianism, for totalitarianism, according to Bryden, was surely the epitome of attempts to make absolute, worldly claims on human life and the human soul. With its claim to control the bodies, minds, and souls of men, totalitarianism was "indeed anti-God in the profoundest meaning of the word."²⁶⁵ In opposing totalitarianism,

²⁶⁴Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 251.

²⁶⁵Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 250.

however, the Christian must not in turn subject himself to some absolute moral ideal, but rather act under the compulsion of Christ.

Bryden's approach to social issues thus suggested a relative or situational ethic. He refused to put forth any ethical system or social order as having the sanction of God for fear that to do so might mistake the word of man for the Word of God and bypass the need of radical judgement and grace. According to Bryden, this did not mean, however, that the Church opposed efforts to remedy the social order or to resolve the causes of world conflict:

[s]urely the Church of God has something to do with such things; surely, too, at such times it is not a sin against God or man for right-thinking people to believe that there may be better economic systems, more suitable to alleviate the growing chronic distresses of men, than the one which happens to exist.²⁶⁶

Nevertheless, the church must avoid identifying religion with a particular economic system and busying itself in political and social programs that were subject to the passage of time, for its task lay with proclaiming the judgement of God.

In treating social issues as relative, Bryden nevertheless rejected the idea that Church and State were absolutely separate, if allied orders. The state churches that were the legacy of the Reformation, he argued, emerged from the mistaken understanding that the church was a "saving" institution, while the state had merely a "protective" function that included, in some cases, enforcing faith. Such an arrangement meant that the state had no responsibility before God. By contrast, Bryden argued that while the state not have the means of redemption, it was called to responsibility and was in need of redemption. "The State," he argued, "can do nothing in the eradicating of the essential evil inherent in life, but it can do much in eradicating temporary evils; only, however, we believe in any satisfactory way, as it itself is vitalized and is ever brought into judgment of itself by the preaching

²⁶⁶Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 258.

of the true and living Word of God."²⁶⁷ Since the State itself was in need of redemption, it was indeed crucial that it ensure the conditions for free proclamation of the Word without attempting, as seemed to be the threat of modern totalitarianism, to determine the Word.

In turn, it was only as the Church remained loyal exclusively to Christ and faithfully proclaimed God's Word of judgement against the world, including the State, that it was eminently practical and serviceable to the State. Since the ultimate contradiction of life was the tragic reality of sin, the Church's proclamation of God's judgement penetrated to the roots of the world's crisis and brought its salvation. In a sinful world and a secularized society, it was the judging-saving transcendent Word of God that "makes for tolerable conditions within this earthly existence," and directed the world to its ultimate hope.²⁶⁸ Consequently, the church must not be allowed to preserve any shibboleth of the Christian's own contemporary culture, nor be identified with new and hopeful panaceas on behalf of the unprivileged classes, for the Kingdom of God could not be domesticated. Rather than claiming to build the Kingdom for itself, or being distracted by secular loyalties, the Church's first loyalty was to God's Word and its compulsion to declare God's judgement above all things and the world's sole hope in Christ. Only in that confession could the Church humbly, yet confidently, proclaim a gospel for the whole world.²⁶⁹

In the present age, therefore, the Church's identity was with a transcendent, eternal Kingdom of God that came to the world eschatologically in God's judging-saving Word. Indeed, the catastrophic events of the 1930's were signs of God's judgement, raised up to shake people from their human righteousness and gods that modern social science showed to be made in man's own interests

²⁶⁷Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 259-60.

²⁶⁸Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 261.

²⁶⁹Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 251-2.

and images.²⁷⁰ In this context, neither the Kingdom nor the Church and its faith could be "domesticated," but rather must inescapably be a disturbing "leaven" in the world:

[t]he Christian faith and revelation will always prove a separating, divisive power in a world like this, will always be setting people against each other, even when it is also recognized that it ever proves the most effective, unifying power known among men. Although the Christian faith will ever help to ameliorate the conditions of men, must ever be the leaven which works to break down injustices in this world by exposing the underlying hypocrisies, it will never acquire for this world any sort of completed satisfactory conditions. The Christian faith is most alive when it brings recurring crises, because essentially it judges this world and is therefore an offense to it.²⁷¹

Nothing, Bryden claimed, could be more pitiful than a "domesticated" and "secularized" Church of God. And nothing was more urgently needed in modern Protestantism than the rediscovery of the divine significance of the Church whose very life was its realization of "the awful and radical significance" of the Word of God.²⁷²

IV. Conclusion

During the 1930's, neo-orthodox clergymen-scholars like Bryden, Smart, and Cochrane were a small minority working in relatively isolated obscurity. While Bryden in particular quietly built a following among his students at Knox College, and personal contacts such as he had with John Line, the controversies of Knox College's difficult reorganization and the broader efforts of the Joint Evangelism campaign's response to the crises of Canadian society overshadowed his work until World War II. Finally, in 1943, Bryden was thrust into the center of the Presbyterian Church with his opening address to the General Assembly commemorating the tercentenary of the Westminster Confession of Faith. Bryden's careful criticism of the confession's rationalist features, but his

²⁷⁰Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 253-6.

²⁷¹Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 257.

²⁷²Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 254-5.

passionate affirmation of both the Reformation principles of the confession and the need of Christian confessions to lead believers "back to the fountain-head" of Biblical faith, spell-bound the Assembly for an hour and twenty-five minutes.²⁷³ As James Smart reported, Bryden's call for a vital appreciation of the church confessions provided a focal point of agreement for an Assembly that was deeply divided on most other points.²⁷⁴ Two years later, Bryden would be appointed principal of Knox College. And in the immediate post-war years he would dominate the Presbyterian Church's restatement of its "Articles of Faith" and its understanding of the church's relationship to modern western culture.

It was fitting, of course, that his rise to prominence should have occurred during the crisis of war, for his was essentially a theology of crisis. The appeal of his theology to the divided twentieth-century Presbyterian Church was complex. His affirmation of the Reformation tradition, the witness of the historic church, and the theological meaning and authority of the Bible, no doubt met some of the concerns of orthodox Princetonians and fundamentalists. Yet, his affirmation of these included the assumptions of modern critical thought, and were intended as a path through and beyond the seeming impasse of modern critical thought and the church's entanglement in the structures of modern society to a positive restatement of the gospel. Indeed, his emphasis on the transcendent reality and exclusive work of God's eschatological Word was in response to his distinctly modern awareness of the historicist crisis of critical thought and the structures by which even Christians had come to be entangled in a capitalist social system. His reassertion of God's sovereignty and judgement against the reality of human sin offered a penetrating explanation of the intractable existential crisis of modern humanity, while his appeal to the eschatological Word offered an answer in which the transcendent reality of God's grace paradoxically entered into human experience.

²⁷³Bryden, The Significance of the Westminster Confession of Faith, "Preface."

²⁷⁴James D. Smart, "The Evangelist as Theologian," xi.

No less fitting was Bryden's 1945 inaugural address, as Principal of Knox College, on the theme of "The Church of God and the World." Once again he declared the Church's identity with the Word and its antithesis to "this world."²⁷⁵ In a world threatened with secularization and totalitarianism, Bryden insisted, like Augustine's City of God, that modern society's root problem lay in its sin against God and the necessity of God's judgement and redemptive grace. While pressing this claim, he also set out a new vision of the Church's identity and role with respect to modern society. Having disentangled the eschatological Word from the limits of history, he interpreted the church as a prophetic remnant, and urged that it first of all required an authentic spiritual gospel and the freedom and courage to declare that gospel.

Bryden's interpretation of the tension between God's eschatological Word and the world would be central to the Presbyterian identity after World War II. Even so, the meaning of that tension had become ambiguous for Bryden. Having insisted on the radical disjunction between nature and grace during the crises of the inter-war years, Bryden's vision of the Word in the world had emphasized a judging eschatological Word and a radically prophetic role for the Church in the world. But having also reclaimed classic orthodox Trinitarian and Reformation doctrines, Bryden had begun to allude in new ways to the sovereignty of God's Word and the lordship of Christ in creation. It remained for Presbyterians in the post-war era of reconstruction to find some reconciliation between a natural order judged to be strictly secular and the prospect for a transformed culture in the world.

²⁷⁵W. W. Bryden, "The Church of God and the World," in W. W. Bryden, Separated Unto the Gospel, Donald V. Wade, ed. (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1956), 49.

PART III:

TOWARDS A CULTURE OF FREEDOM AND GRACE

Chapter 9:

Nature and Grace: Prospects for a Christian Culture

By the 1940's, mainline Protestant scholar-clergymen had converged on a "theological," or a theocentric, interpretation of Christianity. At the same time, however, especially in expectation of the need for a new world order after World War II, they also began to emphasize with new vigour the transforming meaning of God's judgment and grace for human culture.

These twin themes of theology and cultural transformation were intimately related. Faced with the tragedy of another world war, and the modern grasp for power that was dangerously manifest in totalitarianism, Protestant scholars like Roberts, Dow, Bryden, and Line urged the need of a transcendent gospel that would challenge modern man's attempt to impose his own secularized order on the world. Under the pressures of war and the need for a new world order, they completed their turn to the classic theology of the early church, Augustine, and the Reformers. From these, modern Protestants reclaimed the historic Christian emphasis on the transcendent sovereignty of God, the reality of human sin, and the redemptive action of God in the world through the Incarnation and the Holy Spirit. Articulated in new confessional statements such as the United Church's "Statement of Faith" (1940) and the Presbyterian Church's "Statement of Faith" (1945), mainline Protestants in the 1940's claimed finally to have answered the search for a modern evangelicalism that had begun already prior to World War I.

This theological recovery was at the same time the culmination of mainline Protestant efforts to define a new modus vivendi between Christianity and western civilization. Their appeal to Augustine and his themes of God's sovereignty and the moral tension of sin that divided history revealed a profound shift in mainline Protestant thought from the Constantinian synthesis of Christianity and the Classical tradition to Augustine's vision of the tension between the eternal City

of God and the temporal structures of the City of Man. From their modern historical consciousness, this appeal to Augustine's theocentric interpretation of history was not escapist; rather, it provided the transcendent standpoint from which to critique modern secular culture. Rejecting Augustine's "otherworldliness," they focused on defining the nature of the tension between grace and sin as it cut through history, and anticipated its resolution not in an otherworldly destiny, but in a teleological process involving the transformation of history.

In developing these themes, however, mainline Protestant scholars developed two very different interpretations of the nature of grace and its relation to history and culture. Those differences were especially evident in the contrast between Charles Norris Cochrane and Walter Bryden. In his classic study Christianity and Classical Culture (1940), Cochrane proposed a modern, progressive interpretation of Augustine's "Christian realism" which identified God's sovereign grace with the creative and free moral imagination over against human attempts to construct their own world order through imperial power and technological science. Cochrane's progressive Augustinianism issued in a new Christian humanism in which, like Medieval Thomism, grace was the fulfillment of nature, since it meant the subordination of social and technical structures to the emerging free life of the spirit. In contrast to Cochrane's Augustinian Christian humanism, Bryden retained his emphasis on the chasm between God and humanity, and on the radically eschatological nature of grace. Thus Bryden offered a modern chiliastic view of the relation of grace and culture in which the in-breaking of God's Word of grace negated all human structures and brought a new, free life of the spirit in the midst of existence. These two conceptions of the relation between grace and nature would provide the foundations for mainline Protestant proposals for reconstruction after World War II.

I. The Return to Theology

As we have seen in previous chapters, through the late 1930's and early 1940's, mainline Canadian

Protestants had turned particularly to a theological, and thereby theocentric, interpretation of Christianity. Such was the case in the work of continuing liberal-evangelicals like Richard Roberts and John Dow who identified Christianity with the unique experience of God's moral spirit, in Walter Bryden's "dogmatic" confession of a radically other God, and even in John Line's turn to Barthian dogmatics out of disillusionment with Christian revolution.

This turn to theology was brought to the fore in the rise to seniority of the new generation of scholar-clergymen. The transition from an earlier era of personal idealism and evangelism was marked especially in 1937 with the retirement of D. N. McLachlan and Ernest Thomas from the United Church's Board of Evangelism and Social Service (BESS), and their replacement by Ralph Mutchmore and C. E. Silcox, while Richard Roberts and William Creighton followed in retirement during the 1940's. Leadership thus passed to a new generation of senior scholars like John Dow, John M. Shaw, R. B. Y. Scott, and John Line. Meanwhile, a new generation of rising scholars began to appear in the appointment of A. E. Kerr as principal and professor of Systematic Theology and Philosophy of Religion at Pine Hill Divinity College; Gerald R. Cragg, as professor of Systematic Theology at United Theological College in Montreal; and William C. Graham as principal of United Theological College, Winnipeg. Shortly thereafter, in 1944, Randolph C. Chalmers succeeded John Coburn as Assistant Secretary of the BESS.¹

Though slightly later, a similar transition occurred in the Presbyterian Church colleges during the early 1940's. In 1942, the Presbyterian Church appointed a "Committee on Conditions in the Colleges" to examine the problems of tension within Knox College, low enrollment, and fiscal problems in the two Presbyterian seminaries of Knox College and Presbyterian College, Montreal. One result of this investigation would be the retirements, in 1943, of Thomas Eakin as principal of

¹United Church of Canada (UCC), Record of Proceedings (RP), 1936, "Evangelism and Social Service," 79; UCC, Yearbook, 1939, "The Board of Christian Education," 36; UCC, RP, 1946, "Commission on the Christian Faith," 103.

Knox College and of F. Scott Mackenzie as principal of Presbyterian College, Montreal. In 1944, Bryden was appointed as principal at Knox, while Knox's faculty now included J. Stanley Glen in New Testament Exegesis, Keith Matthews in Old Testament, and David Hay in Systematic Theology. In 1947, Donald V. Wade was added to Knox's faculty to take over Bryden's duties in Philosophy of Religion and Christian Ethics. Notably, other nominees for the position included James Smart, then pastor at Rosedale Presbyterian Church in Toronto, and Arthur C. Cochrane, who would move to the Presbyterian seminary at Dubuque, Iowa, in 1948.²

In both United and Presbyterian churches, then, leadership passed to a generation of scholar-clergymen like Dow, Line, and Bryden, whose early formative years coincided with the crisis of liberal Protestantism during and after World War I, and whose training was rooted largely in a British tradition which mediated personal idealism and a modern Christocentric evangelicalism. During the inter-war years, all had wrestled extensively with the crises of culture and certainty and the search for a modern, "realistic" "enlightened evangelicalism." And they had done so in a new theological landscape marked by the works of Karl Barth, Reinhold Niebuhr, and the British mediating theology of John Baillie. By the 1940's, they had developed mature, systematic responses to those crises, and their ideas would dominate the identities of mainline Protestantism in the immediate post-World War II years.

By the outbreak of World War II, their recovery of variations on an Augustinian, theocentric view of the relations between God and the world lead them to a far more reserved interpretation of the war effort than mainline Protestants had demonstrated in their apocalyptic enthusiasm for World War I. To be sure, the question of war and the relations between church and state produced

²Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC), Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly (AP), 1943, "Committee to Investigate Conditions in the Colleges," 37-41; PCC, AP, 1944, "Report of Nominations," 76, 82. PCC, AP, 1947, "Nominations," 68. Bryden's appointment as principal in 1944 was initially pro tem; his permanent appointment was made in 1945.

significant differences among them. On the one hand, the churches generally supported the war effort, though they did so, as John S. Moir notes, with "sorrow and resignation" for a battle which must be fought against the evil of Hitlerism.³ Meanwhile, when the United Church's General Council passed a moderate resolution in support of the war effort against totalitarianism, Richard Roberts led some forty-five United Church ministers in declaring their pacifism.⁴ This pacifism was in sharp contrast to the position of Reinhold Niebuhr, who had abandoned the pacifist principles of the Fellowship of Reconciliation already in 1933-34, and criticized pacifism again during the winter of 1940 as unrealistic in a world of power relations. In an open letter to Niebuhr published in Christianity and Society, Roberts pleaded that Niebuhr's position surrendered transcendent ideals that, though difficult, were essential to Christian faith, and that Christians must believe were meant to be active in the world.⁵

The involvement of R. Edis Fairbairn in this resurgent pacifism also was one sign of the growing division within the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order. In contrast to Fairbairn, Vlastos and most members of the FCSO would accept the need to resist aggression, and the view, similar to Niebuhr's, that violence was part of the inevitably tragic nature of the present social order. But unlike Niebuhr, Vlastos's position was more radically eschatological and existentialist. God is radically other than man, he had written already in 1934, and could not be confused with mere human ideas of God, or with human ideals such as pacifism.⁶ Yet God was in the process of the conflict, and his

³Rev. A. P. Dunn, "Presbyterianism in the Twentieth Century," Presbyterian Record (January-April, 1936), quoted in John S. Moir, Enduring Witness (Hamilton: Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1987), 241.

⁴R. Edis Fairbairn, "Witness Against War," United Church Observer (15 October 1939), 21. See also Roger C. Hutchinson, "The Fellowship For a Christian Social Order; A Social Ethical Analysis of a Christian Socialist Movement" (Toronto School of Theology: unpublished Th.D., 1975), 155-56.

⁵Cited in Thomas P. Socknat, Witness Against War, Pacifism in Canada 1900-1945 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 222-4.

⁶Gregory Vlastos, "God of Wrath, God of Hope, God the Power Within," The Canadian Student, Vol. XVI, no. 6 (March-April 1934), 147-8.

revolutionary judgement could be felt in the violence that was the wages of sin.

Though they rejected Vlastos's implication that the revolutionary battle for the divine order was at stake in the war effort, Barthians like Walter Bryden and Arthur C. Cochrane agreed with Vlastos on the tragic necessity of the war effort. They did so, like Vlastos, from a criticism of all claims to absolutize any particular moral interpretation of Christianity. According to Cochrane's The Church and the War (1940), both proponents and opponents of the war effort were preoccupied with merely moral interpretations of Christianity, and thus failed to speak as "servants of the Word" of Christ. The church, Cochrane urged, was called "to bear witness to GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS over and above the national, territorial, moral and so-called religious rights of men."⁷ Bryden took this argument further, in his The Christian's Knowledge of God (1940), by opposing calls for both loyal patriotism and the naive pacifism of liberal-evangelicals that, he claimed, were easily exploited by the forces of capitalism and totalitarianism. When the Church became the ward of the State and contemporary order, he warned, it was doomed, as in the case of the church in Russia, to fall with that order. Nevertheless, in the present situation, the logic of the Church's challenge to all merely moral absolutes meant that the Christian's responsibility could only be to oppose totalitarianism, for totalitarianism was surely the epitome of attempts to make absolute, worldly claims on human life and the human soul. With its claim to control the bodies, minds, and souls of men, totalitarianism was "indeed anti-God in the profoundest meaning of the word."⁸ In opposing totalitarianism, however, Christians must not in turn submit to some absolute moral ideal, but rather act under the compulsion of Christ.

Despite their differences, the common theme in these positions was the insistence that the demands of the nation, and the western social order, were relative to the absolute claims of God. This

⁷Arthur C. Cochrane, The Church and the War (Toronto: Thomas Nelson, 1940), xx.

⁸W. W. Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1940), 250-1.

interpretation of the nation in the midst of World War II was in sharp contrast to the millennial endorsement that mainline Protestants had given to the war effort of World War I in the belief that it was the apocalyptic prelude to the realization of God's Kingdom in western civilization. In part, this difference may be attributed to the spectre of totalitarianism that threatened freedom and Christianity in the late 1930's. This concern for freedom, however, with its emphasis on freedom for religion and the church over against temporal forces, also reflected the shift of mainline Protestants from a Constantinian idealism that identified the Kingdom of God with the social order, to a theocentric Augustinianism that relativized the temporal order in the light of the eternal. Though in significantly different ways, their turn to theology reflected several common concerns and characteristics: an attempt to disentangle Christianity from the ambiguities of modern culture; a corresponding recognition of human sin and dependence on the grace of God; and the attempt to combine this theocentrism with modern critical method in the confession that God was transcendent and distinct from the historical-structural limits of human existence, and yet sovereign and active in experience.

The clearest sign of this new theocentrism was the turn of mainline Protestants to theology by the late 1930's. As Bryden had written in his The Christian's Knowledge of War (1940), what the world most needed, even amid the tragedy and thunder of war, was to hear the claim of God's judgment and grace upon man.⁹ This return to theology also was part of the dynamic which fragmented the FCSO during the early 1940's, as founders like John Line and R. B. Y. Scott repudiated its reduction to a social reform movement and sought to preserve the knowledge of a transcendent personal God and the mediation of Christ in a return to theology.

This turn to theology, and its specifically Augustinian themes, was especially illustrated in the publication in 1940 of the United Church's "Statement of Faith." Commissioned by the United

⁹Bryden, The Christian's Knowledge of God, 75-6.

Church's Committee on Faith, established in 1936 under the chairmanship of Richard Davidson, and followed in 1943 by the publication of John Dow's commissioned commentary, This is Our Faith, the "Statement" was the first extensive declaration of the United Church's faith since the less theologically oriented Basis of Union forged in 1908. As such, it symbolized the culmination of the twentieth century search for a modern, "enlightened evangelicalism." In contrast to apologists in the 1920's who proceeded from a scientific defense of religious experience, the Statement began simply from the proclamation that "[t]he Church's faith is the unchanging Gospel of God's holy, redeeming love revealed in Jesus Christ."¹⁰ To define that "unchanging gospel," the statement, as well as Dow's commentary, combined the Trinitarian theology of the Apostle's creed and Augustine's view of the moral tension between God's sovereign will and human sin, with the modern ideas of John Baillie's personal idealism, James Denney's Christocentric evangelicalism, and Karl Barth's emphasis on the radical otherness of God. Together, this theocentrism, or more specifically Christocentrism, suggested an interpretation of modern Christianity that reclaimed the historic orthodox emphasis on God's sovereignty and grace, while preserving a concern for historical reality by focusing on "the supreme facts" of "God's acts of judgment and of mercy" in Christ's entry into the world to redeem it.¹¹

By proceeding from the Trinitarian theology and structure of the Apostles' Creed, the statement abandoned earlier efforts, like those of Richard Roberts, to resolve the tension between divine transcendence and immanence. Instead, like the Apostles' Creed and like Augustine, it simply declared that God was the "eternal personal Spirit, Creator and Upholder of all things," thereby affirming that God was both a distinct personal being and the active, sovereign creator.¹² Using Barth's language, Dow declared that God was "wholly other" from creation, and yet was actively

¹⁰UCC, RP, 1940, "A Statement of Faith," 168.

¹¹UCC, RP, "A Statement of Faith," 168.

¹²UCC, RP, "A Statement of Faith," 168, I.

present in ruling creation. Also, its declaration of the divinity of Christ abandoned earlier liberal interpretations of Jesus as a virtuous, historical person in favour of an Incarnational Christology which viewed Christ as uniquely embodying God's will for human life and his intent to take humanity's sin upon himself. In turn, the Statement described the Spirit as the resurrected, living Christ "by whom God is ever at work in the minds and hearts of men."¹³ In contrast to the nineteenth century distinction between the righteous God of the Old Testament and the loving, forgiving God of the New Testament, according to Dow, the statement's Trinitarianism now emphasized the continuity between God's creative will to love that was displayed in nature, his righteousness that was fulfilled in Christ, and his active presence in the world.

As a complement to this Trinitarianism, the statement offered an Augustinian anthropology and moral interpretation of sin and redemption that reaffirmed the core of personal idealism. Echoing an earlier analogia entis, the statement claimed that what distinguished man from "the lower creatures" was his capacity to share God's thought and purpose, and his freedom to choose whether he would serve God.¹⁴ Thus it identified human personality with the life of the mind and will, and with an intrinsic moral responsibility and freedom. It was by virtue of these features that humanity was raised above nature and enabled, as the Westminster Confession put it, to love and serve God for ever.¹⁵ As part of this focus on personality, the Statement located the core of history and the cause of the world's problems in the moral tension of divine and human wills, thereby implying that the root impulse of social relations and history lay in humanity's moral personality.

The center of this modern Augustinian theology was a restatement of what by now was a familiar liberal-evangelical interpretation of sin and the atonement in terms of moral revelation and

¹³UCC, RP, "A Statement of Faith," 169, III.

¹⁴UCC, RP, "A Statement of Faith," 169, IV.

¹⁵UCC, RP, "A Statement of Faith," 168, I.

suasion. Sin was humanity's misuse of freedom for "low and selfish ends," resulting in man's alienation from God and his fellow-man and "a world of confusion and distress" in which humanity was "unable of himself to fulfill God's high purpose."¹⁶ Christ's death on the cross in place of humanity, in turn displayed God's loving purpose of forgiveness which moved men to repent and be reconciled to God.¹⁷ Christ's death did not provide merely for a legal substitutionary atonement, Dow argued, for the requirement of a payment for sin would mean that forgiveness was a matter of law rather than of grace. Instead, Christ's death, with faith and love unshaken, provided a moral revelation, and his "resurrection" occurred as the presence of his moral and creative Spirit living in the hearts of believers to restore their personality and to bind them to himself and to fellow-believers.

Most significantly, the statement offered a remarkably reserved interpretation of the Kingdom of God. In place of late nineteenth-century confident predictions of building the Kingdom of God on earth in the emerging social order, the statement portrayed the Kingdom of God as a present but ambiguous reality.¹⁸ In what amounted to a high view of the church, it located the Kingdom particularly in the church understood as a spiritual institution distinct from temporal structures. Centered, as Denney had insisted, in the risen Christ, the church was "the society of the redeemed" and "the organ of Christ's mind and redemptive will, the body of which He is the Head."¹⁹ Accordingly, the statement emphasized the "catholic" unity of the historic church as it was bound together by the inner life of the Spirit. In affirming the primacy of the church and the life of the spirit, it also described Scripture as the progressive revelation of God and his redemptive work in the

¹⁶UCC, RP, "A Statement of Faith," 170, V.

¹⁷UCC, RP, "A Statement of Faith," 170, VI.

¹⁸UCC, RP, "A Statement of Faith," 171, XI.

¹⁹UCC, RP, "A Statement of Faith," 170, VII.

world, but a revelation that followed from the church's experience.²⁰

In this way, the statement portrayed the church as the unique body of the Spirit in history. As such, the church served particularly as a consecrating agency in the world. Thus the statement defined the church's role in the limited terms of its pastoral function of proclaiming the gospel, the worship of God, the loving service of mankind, and the nurture of the flock. Its distinct mission, carried out particularly through its ordained ministry, sacraments, and pastoral care, was to orient the world to divine grace.²¹

Like Augustine's City of God, written after the sack of Rome, the Statement's concluding section on eschatology offered a realistic amillennialism which claimed that the Kingdom was "already but not yet." Though it called believers to a progressively sanctified life, the Statement described "this life" as an ambiguous age in which believers experienced growing righteousness, but also suffering and sorrow. Though a present reality to be displayed in social relations, the Kingdom was disclosed only partially and ambiguously "on earth." This life offered "a foretaste of the final redemption" and an "assurance of the divine favour," but it also left believers "striving and waiting in prayer" for the new order of God's Kingdom.²² The Kingdom, according to Dow, was a teleological promise that would be consummated at the end of time in a final judgement and a final revelation of God's Kingdom in its fullness. With that eschatological hope, believers could live in the present confident that God would keep them "to the end."

This portrayal of the Kingdom of God as a reality which was ambiguously present, but also an as-yet-unrealized transcendent hope reflected the profound reorientation of mainline Protestantism during the inter-war years to a sharp sense of tension and ambiguity in the present age. In the midst

²⁰UCC, RP, "A Statement of Faith," 171, IX.

²¹UCC, RP, "A Statement of Faith," 170, VIII.

²²UCC, RP, "A Statement of Faith," 172, XI, XII.

of war, however, that hope of transcendent telos gave assurance, according to United Church officials, that God's will and redemptive grace was certain despite the peril of historical life. According to the introduction given in the report of the Board of Evangelism and Social Service (BESS), the Statement declared the good news of grace for "a world in agony."²³ As in ancient times, Hugh Dobson suggested, the gospel was "born in days of calamity and war, and is peculiarly fitted to meet the deepest need of the disturbed and depressed soul in times like these."²⁴ For Dobson and the BESS, the good news of God's grace was now more vital even than God's ethic or righteousness, and it had provided sustaining comfort and confidence in the triumph of God's righteousness throughout the darkest periods of the church's history. God's grace, the BESS declared, was the starting point for faith that, despite the present din of "the sounds of destruction," there was a moral order which "makes the ultimate success of the destructive impossible," and which promises the victory of creative life as the very nature of Reality and the basis for building "God's righteous world."

As will be seen at a later point, the statement's modern Augustinian synthesis of personal idealism and classic Trinitarianism would become the subject of intense debate among mainline Protestants. In the United Church, and especially in the work of Charles Norris Cochrane, this synthesis would be developed into an Augustinian Christian humanism, while for the Presbyterian Barthian Walter Bryden, by contrast, that modern Augustinianism would represent a premature synthesis of Christ and culture. Indeed, Bryden's The Christian's Knowledge of God (1940), published in the same year as the United Church's "Statement of Faith," declared the Absolute "otherness" of God and his radical judgement against both culture and nature.

Despite these differences, however, the United Church's "Statement of Faith" also reflected the culmination of trends among mainline Protestants that Barthians like Bryden and John Line shared.

²³UCC, RP, 1940, "Evangelism and Social Service," 87-88.

²⁴UCC, RP, 1940, "Evangelism and Social Service," 87-88.

Indeed, Line, who by the 1940's had moved at least to a Barthian view of revelation, would replace Richard Davidson as secretary of the Commission on Christian Faith in 1946.²⁵ In broad terms, the statement indicated a sense among mainline Protestants of the tragic ambiguity of modern western culture. It also reflected the long struggle to disentangle the reality of God and Christianity from western culture and society, both to affirm the grounds and meaning of faith, and to claim a standpoint from which to speak prophetically to western culture. Its confessional starting point, and its assertion of the direct experience of the Spirit of Christ in the life of the church, seemed also to answer the difficulty of speaking of God in terms of modern critical science in such a way as to affirm that God could be known experientially, without reducing him to an aspect of the human psyche or social structure. Furthermore, the affirmation of a real personal God seemed also to preserve the personality, and thus the moral responsibility and freedom, of humans as his image-bearers. The reality of a transcendent personal God thus guaranteed a moral meaning for human life despite the enveloping bonds of historical-structural life. Indeed, their appeal to an Augustinian account of moral tension offered a moral realism that gave renewed emphasis to the reality of sin, and in doing so identified the root of problems in the world to be moral rather than structural. But this Augustinianism might also renew optimism, for it gave hope that grace ultimately would triumph in history.

This turn to theology coincided with a resurgent emphasis on the church as a distinct religious community. The United Church's "Statement of Faith" had suggested that the church was uniquely related to the transcendent spirit and its presence in the world. With this "vertical" reality, as Richard Roberts had described it, mainline Protestants also identified the "horizontal" life of the church with an ecumenical and universal "catholic" church distinct from western civilization and national identities. Symbolized in the resistance of the "Confessing Church" against Hitler in Germany, Richard Roberts had written in 1937, the church stood against a world which was characterized by the "reign of

²⁵UCC, RP, 1946, "Commission on the Christian Faith," 103.

secularism," and which it was called to redeem through its consecrating gospel and life of the spirit.²⁶ As John Moir notes, a similar ecumenical concern was expressed in 1936 by Presbyterian minister A. Peter Dunn. "The day for a narrow, sectarian viewpoint, or for a mere denominational appeal is past," Dunn declared after reviewing the problems of the Depression, "...[u]niversality or catholicity is the breath of our nostrils."²⁷

Emerging from International Missionary Federation-sponsored conferences at Edinburgh in 1910 and Jerusalem in 1928, this ecumenical identity had blossomed during the 1930's both locally, with the Joint Evangelism Committee established in 1933, and internationally with the 1937 Edinburgh and Oxford Conferences. These efforts would culminate during the 1940's in more permanent ecumenical organizations. In 1942-43, representatives of the Anglican, Presbyterian, and United Church colleges in Montreal began discussion of a joint Divinity Faculty to be federated with McGill University.²⁸ Also in 1942, in anticipation of the formation of a World Council of Churches, achieved finally in 1948, the main Protestant churches of Canada approved the formation of a Canadian Committee of the World Council of Churches (CCC).²⁹ That same year, the United Baptist Convention invited other churches represented in the Canadian Committee of World Council of Churches to a conference to begin planning for peace in the hope of developing a "more Christian Order in Canada."³⁰

Although the United Church would continue to seek a more organic union, the ecumenism

²⁶Richard Roberts, "A Theological Renaissance," Christendom, Vol. 2 (1937), 539.

²⁷Rev. A. P. Dunn, "Presbyterianism in the Twentieth Century," Presbyterian Record (January-April, 1936), quoted in Moir, Enduring Witness, 239.

²⁸UCC, RP, 1942, "Theological Faculty, McGill University," 185. See also PCC, AP, 1943, "The Presbyterian College, Montreal," 79.

²⁹UCC, RP, 1942, "Evangelism and Social Service," 82.

³⁰PCC, AP, 1942, "Report of the Committee on Evangelism and Church Life and Work," 79.

of the late 1930's and 1940's was markedly different from the pre-World War I notion of organic unity and national identity that had issued in the United Church. As proposed to the United Church in 1944, the constitution for a Canadian Council of Churches was intended to give expression to the unity of the Canadian churches in the universal Church, to coordinate common and cooperative actions, and to serve as an instrument for relating to similar institutions in Britain and the USA, and to the World Council of Churches.³¹ Rather than organic union, the new ecumenism was federal and cooperative. Without requiring legal or institutional uniformity, it accepted differences in confessional, ecclesiastical, and historic traditions while providing for theological exchange, cooperation, and a consciousness of a global Christian community now set in tension with a world defined in terms of national states and capitalist economic powers.

As church membership began to show moderate growth during the late 1930's and early 1940's, church leaders and scholars attributed that growth to the recovery of the essential theological truths of Christianity.³² As we have seen, by the late 1930's, declining church membership and finances had convinced the United Church's Board of Evangelism and Social Service that the Joint Evangelism campaign lacked significant impact. That impression coincided with Walter Bryden's perennial, though anecdotal, criticism of the campaign as ineffective. While campaigns for personal evangelism had failed to generate new membership and resources during the difficult depression era, John Line's disenchantment with the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order and its division between "old guard" Christian socialists and more secularized Marxists suggested that prospects for a Christian revolution were no more viable than personal evangelism.

In contrast, rising church participation in the late 1930's and 1940's was taken by church

³¹UCC, RP, 1944, "Proposed Constitution for a Canadian Council of Churches," 96-100.

³²For a discussion of moderate increases in church membership, and the wave of suburban church construction during the late 1940's, see Moir, Enduring Witness, 247-8.

leaders as a confirmation of its turn to theology. Already in 1937, despite reports of declining membership, the United Church's Board of Evangelism and Social Service (BESS) praised the work of the Committee on Faith for its inspiring "preaching of the great realities of the Christian faith, God's righteousness, the Incarnation, the Life and work of Jesus, His Death, Resurrection, Ascension and the Work of the Holy Spirit."³³ This affirmation of traditional orthodoxy was reiterated in 1938, when the report of the Committee on Faith was followed by reports of growing interest in the "return to Theology" among various study groups and conferences.³⁴ Since it again had to report decreasing numbers of new members despite the efforts of evangelism campaigns, the BESS called for a deeper religious commitment and theocentrism rather than more programs and resolutions.³⁵ While noting a deepening sense of both individual and corporate sin, it also reported a growing awareness of the need of transformation that could not be met with economic, sociological, or psychological solutions, for it was rooted in man's "real" need of God. The current return to "thought about God," the BESS claimed, reflected a growing theocentric concern and reliance on the grace of Christ. Despite discouraging membership figures and evangelism campaign results, the BESS concluded, the turn to theology at least provided "an increasing warmth and heartening tone" in church life, rising attendance, and a growing emphasis on trust in Christ alone.

After 1940, a gradual resurgence of new members gave new hope to United Church officials and further confirmed to them the vitalizing impact of theology. Despite financial woes that persisted from the depression and war, the BESS reported in 1940 that the numbers of new professing members were on the rise in every conference compared with 1937. In 1944, the BESS again reported rising interest in its preaching missions and church attendance. At one preaching mission at the University

³³UCC, RP, 1938, "Evangelism," 175, 177.

³⁴UCC, RP, 1938, "Board of Evangelism and Social Service," 304.

³⁵UCC, RP, 1938, "Evangelism," 177.

of British Columbia in 1944, more than seven hundred people attended evening services. Especially in the western cities, United churches were experiencing packed worship services in both morning and evening services, with some congregations having to meet in theatres due to lack of space in their church buildings. The total number of new members in 1943, at 23,910, represented the largest increase in membership in the previous decade.³⁶ During following years, these numbers continued to rise, with 25,547 new members in 1945 and 32,278 in 1946.³⁷ And in 1944 the BESS reported that 1941 census data showed changes in membership from the previous decade as follows: Roman Catholic membership increased 16 percent; Presbyterians declined 5 percent; Anglicans increased 6.5 percent; Baptists increased 9.1 percent; and United Church increased 9.2 percent.³⁸ The United Church was therefore nearly keeping pace with the increase of 10.5 percent in Canada's overall population.

Admittedly, the promise of rising numbers was ambiguous. Though gaining, increases in church participation still lagged behind the over-all increase of Canada's population. Also, as the BESS conceded, the 1941 census data had recorded 548,068 more members for the United Church than were actually on the membership rolls of the United Church, indicating the notorious inaccuracy of census data regarding active church participation.³⁹ Furthermore, increases in church membership were dwarfed by the 84 percent growth of organized labour during the war. The lack of response to its work among organized labour, and also among university students, the BESS feared, held out the dubious prospect that the United Church might "become a middle-class club."⁴⁰

³⁶UCC, RP, 1944, "Board of Evangelism and Social Service," 130, 273-75.

³⁷UCC, Yearbook, 1947, "Evangelism," 111.

³⁸UCC, RP, 1944, "Board of Evangelism and Social Service," 274.

³⁹UCC, RP, 1944, "Board of Evangelism and Social Service," 274.

⁴⁰UCC, RP, 1944, "Board of Evangelism and Social Service," 130, 273-75.

Despite these reservations, however, rising church participation seemed to be verified in the high demand for the United Church's "Statement of Faith," seemingly legitimizing its theocentric emphasis. When its first printing of 30,000 copies was sold out by 1942, new printings were ordered, and a catechism to accompany the statement was commissioned.⁴¹ Again in 1945 the Commission on Christian Faith reported high demand for new theological works, with sales of "The Statement of Faith" at 50,000; John Dow's This is Our Faith at 6,000; and the Catechism at 180,000.⁴² Such high demand, the commission concluded, reflected a high appreciation for the rigorous Biblical and theological preaching stimulated by the Statement.

While they celebrated the apparent resurgence of church participation, and the church's theocentric identity, mainline Protestants also urged the need to relate their newfound theocentrism to the transformation of Canadian society, thereby demonstrating their long-held concern to shape the broader social and cultural order of which they were a part. For many mainline Protestants, the recovery of the central theological truths of classic Christianity was important in order to restore the power of its gospel in modern civilization, especially following the apparent inadequacy of the techniques of personal evangelism and social reform to revive Christianity against the forces of secularization.

Signs of this social concern were evident in both Presbyterian and United Churches during the late 1930's. Peter Dunn's concern for universality, for example, included a concern that Presbyterians, and more broadly the Christian church, take up the social challenge of the twentieth century. Previous divisions between "evangelists" who emphasized the "things of the Spirit" and "social reformers" who sought "the betterment of social conditions" had created a false polarization. Instead, he claimed, Presbyterians should, "Bible in hand, lead the van of those who seek to bring all

⁴¹UCC, RP, 1942, "Statement of Faith -- Second Interim Report," 183.

⁴²UCC, RP, 1946, "Commission on the Christian Faith," 103.

the kingdoms of the world into subjection to the Kingdom of Christ."⁴³ Similarly, the Pronouncement issued by the Fifteenth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches, held in Montreal in 1937, called the church to respond to the Depression by using wealth for public rather than private enrichment, and amid the social distress, to keep the conscience of its members "alive to the spiritual and moral aspects of our social order."⁴⁴ As William Barclay commented in his introduction to the Pronouncement in the Record, "[t]he conscience of the Church is stirred by the world happenings of our time to a realization of the need for moral leadership. Whence could this better come than from the Churches of Christ?"⁴⁵

In 1936-37 the United Church had appointed representatives like C. E. Silcox to a Social and Economic Research Committee, and in 1942 it also endorsed the Christian Social Council of Canada.⁴⁶ In the expectation that World War II was a watershed that urgently called for the construction of a new world order, the task of shaping and transforming western society was magnified. Already in 1942-43, therefore, the Canadian Committee of the World's Council of Churches held a conference to begin planning for peace in the hope of developing a "more Christian Order in Canada."⁴⁷

The magnitude of that task was suggested more fully in the 1944 report of the Forward Movement Committee, established to prepare for the post-war peace by the United Church's General Council in 1943 with J. R. Mutchmore as chair and Gordon Sisco as Secretary.⁴⁸ The report warned

⁴³Rev. A. P. Dunn, "Presbyterianism in the Twentieth Century," Presbyterian Record (January-April, 1936), quoted in Moir, Enduring Witness, 239.

⁴⁴Quoted in Moir, Enduring Witness, 239.

⁴⁵Quoted in Moir, Enduring Witness, 239.

⁴⁶UCC, RP, 1942, "Evangelism and Social Service," 82.

⁴⁷PCC, AP, 1942, "Report of the Committee on Evangelism and Church Life and Work," 79.

⁴⁸UCC, RP, 1944, "Forward Movement After the War," 114-16.

that the church's message must be related to the world that would emerge after the war, and particularly to such social problems as mounting class conflict, urbanization and its impact on the family, questions about marriage and sexuality, and racial animosity. Underlying these immediate social issues, in turn, was a deeper and global struggle between different systems of ideas, particularly in the conflict between Communism and what was now regarded as a secularized Capitalism. Anticipating a post-war crisis similar to that which had followed World War I, the report declared that the present task of the church was to determine "the positive and transforming ends which the upheaval reveals." Certainly, the church could not support revolution for its own sake, nor could it subscribe to the materialist, economic, or psychological views of man that now prevailed in modern culture. The time called for more than moral renewal, therefore, for it involved a deeper "cultural crisis." Such a conflict called for a repentance that included both moral renewal and a change of one's "ruling ideas" to consider "the full implications of the love of God in our time." The church, therefore, must become alert and discerning of its cultural context, and seek to "re-establish unity" between religious beliefs and culture, if it was truly to acknowledge Christ as the Lord of history."⁴⁹

Thus mainline Protestant concerns for reviving the church and its theocentric roots in the redemptive activity of a transcendent God, did not thereby constitute an isolationist flight from concern for the broader well-being of Canadian society. While attempting to disentangle the truths of Christianity from western culture, mainline, modern Protestants retained their historical consciousness and their expectation that the redemptive work of God was located within the historical-structural world. They also remained self-consciously aware of their participation in the broader currents of Canadian and western civilization, and sought to establish the claims of God's Kingdom and the moral leadership of the church in the world. In the wake of the Depression and the rise of totalitarianism, it seemed clear to mainline Protestants that western civilization was in the throes of

⁴⁹UCC, RP, 1944, "Forward Movement After the War," 115, 117.

collapse, and would need to be reconstructed in a new world order. Here was both the opportunity and the challenge to make clear the relationship of a transcendent God to history. The attempt to do so, however, would reveal the divisions between the revival of an Augustinian-Platonic idealism and the radical neo-orthodoxy of Barthians like Bryden.

II. The Problem of Christianity and Culture

The debates among mainline Protestants in their attempt to resolve the relationship between a modern "evangelical" Christianity and modern culture was especially evident in the work of Charles Norris Cochrane, and in Walter Bryden's response to Cochrane's work. Cochrane's Christianity and Classical Culture (1940), on the crisis of Greco-Roman culture and the triumph of Christianity, offered a new synthesis of classic Trinitarian theology with Augustine's Christian-Platonic interpretation of metaphysics and history. In doing so, he offered a bridge from the modern Augustinian theology of the United Church's "Statement of Faith" to a comprehensive modern philosophy of civilization that seemed to revive the project of a Christian culture. Though chastened by the consciousness of moral tension between God's will and human sin, Cochrane's modern Augustinianism interpreted God as the transcendent Eternal source who was also the creative principle in the world, and also claimed, against secularized totalitarian "empires," the primacy of moral order and freedom in the world. But while Cochrane's modern Augustinianism inspired a wide variety of scholars, including Harold Innis and Northrop Frye, Walter Bryden warned that the Platonic idealism inherent in Augustine's thought threatened to return to a naive liberal-Protestantism and a premature resolution of the tension between God and humanity.

Charles Norris Cochrane (1889-1945) was born in Omeme, Ontario and graduated in classics

from University College at the University of Toronto in 1911.⁵⁰ After graduate studies at Oxford, he joined the University College's Department of Ancient History in 1913. Following service as a tank officer during World War I, he began publishing works on Canadian history, among them David Thompson the Explorer (1924) and portions, with W. S. Wallace, of This Canada of Ours (1926).

Cochrane's most significant works, however, came during the late 1920's and 1930's in his critical studies of classical thought and his development of a modern Augustinian interpretation of history. Cochrane's modern Augustinianism marked a crucial intersection of trends in modern Canadian scholarship. While clergymen-scholars searched for a theocentric interpretation of Christianity during the 1930's, some Canadian scholars in the social sciences, such as Harold Innis, moved away from strictly structural accounts of society to a greater emphasis on personal and moral responsibility.⁵¹ Similarly, Cochrane's interpretation of history would include the empiricist historicism of Carl Becker, but also the rejection of a strictly structural and rationalist interpretation in favour of an insistence that the empirical historical process was rooted in personal wills and moral freedom. Combined with his study of classical Christianity, Cochrane's work offered a new synthesis of modern social science and Augustine's theocentric interpretation of history. While United Church pronouncements on modern culture would reflect Cochrane's modern Augustinianism, Innis would also describe Cochrane as one of the leading modern philosophers of civilization.⁵²

These trends in Cochrane's thought become especially apparent when considering that his most famous work, Christianity and Classical Culture, was sandwiched between his study of Thucydides and the Science of History (1929) and his later critique of "The Mind of Edward Gibbon," published

⁵⁰Biographical information is from Harold Innis's obituary in "Charles Norris Cochrane, 1889-1945," Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, 12 (1945), 95-96.

⁵¹On Harold Innis, see Carl Berger, The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing Since 1900, 2nd Ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 101-2.

⁵²Innis, "Charles Norris Cochrane, 1889-1945," 95-96.

in 1942-3.⁵³ In these works, Cochrane criticized both classical thought and its modern Enlightenment forms in eighteenth-century rationalism and nineteenth-century idealism. At the center of these studies, he sympathetically contrasted Thucydides's scientific approach to history with the speculative rationalism of both classical and modern idealism. Like Hippocrates' naturalist science of medicine, he argued, Thucydides confined his science of history to empirical data and secondary causes and conditions, thereby breaking from the story-telling epics of earlier Greek historians and from the Greek dichotomy between an "unreal" natural reality and the transcendent forms that they claimed to arrive at by speculative reason. Thucydides' focus on natural, albeit secondary causes and conditions, correlated with a modern historicist understanding of the limits of knowledge, rather than speculatively over-reaching the bounds of science. On the other hand, as Cochrane wrote in a review of another work on the subject, Thucydides had located the "dynamic or principle of motion in human history, within history itself,...in the relationship between the aspirations and ideals of men, on the one hand, and, on the other, the material circumstances upon which their satisfaction depends."⁵⁴ Like modern historical realists, Thucydides was the first to acknowledge that the world was actually in process of development. And this process was not a meaningless process of chance nor merely the reconstitution of transcendent types; rather, its dynamic lay in the work of personal will shaping external circumstances, and so suggested effective and meaningful progress in the world.

This modern historical realism was one theme of Cochrane's later critique of Edward Gibbon's Enlightenment interpretation of the fall of Rome. The strength of Gibbon's method, Cochrane conceded, was his "experimental" method which translated history into the "intelligible" terms of

⁵³Cochrane's study of Gibbon was based on lectures given at Princeton and at University College, Toronto, and was published in two parts as "The Mind of Edward Gibbon," University of Toronto Quarterly, XII (1942-3), 1-17, 146-66.

⁵⁴C. N. Cochrane, review of John H. Finley, Jr., Thucydides in Classical Philology (January, 1944), p. 58, quoted in Innis, "Charles Norris Cochrane, 1889-1945," 95.

physical and moral causes, in contrast to the speculations of Germanic Romantics that ended in the worship of racism and power-politics.⁵⁵ But Gibbon's characterization of history as "'little more than a register of the crimes, follies and misfortunes of mankind,'" was borrowed directly from Voltaire, and reflected the rationalism of the philosophes and the arid erudition of classical Latin rhetoricians.⁵⁶ Like Carl Becker in The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophes (1932), Cochrane rejected the unhistorical mentality of eighteenth century "philosophes." He also criticized Gibbon's secularized interpretation: in his claim to find the causes of history on the premise of "observable uniformities of sensible phenomena," Gibbon a priori had reduced faith to an irrational delusion and thus repudiated the central Christian claim to the reality of God.⁵⁷ The limits of "intelligible" causes, Cochrane's critique suggested, also provided the space for human freedom within moral limits, and for the reality of humanity's relationship to a transcendent God.

Gibbon's reduction of history to a strictly human morality tale based on classical norms of vice and virtue, Cochrane argued, fell into the classical trap of treating history as a dialectic of freedom and order. Gibbon identified civilization with the rule of reason and freedom of the mind, and conversely identified the fall into barbarism with the unleashing of the passions and imagination. This dialectic, Cochrane argued, ignored the vital role of creative imagination in human nature and in the process of civilization, and assumed a static civilization in which the rule of reason was identified with order and the status quo. Moreover, Gibbon's interpretation anachronistically presumed to make the judgements, tastes, and gods of one period universal, and was fundamentally blind to the true issues of history. In fact, since he regarded all change from a rational order to constitute corruption, Gibbon's view of history, and his conclusion that civilization and freedom "bears within

⁵⁵C. N. Cochrane, "The Mind of Edward Gibbon, II," University of Toronto Quarterly, XII (1942-3), 160.

⁵⁶C. N. Cochrane, "The Mind of Edward Gibbon, I," University of Toronto Quarterly, XII (1942-3), 9.

⁵⁷Cochrane, "The Mind of Edward Gibbon, II," 147.

itself the seeds of its own dissolution," was inescapably pessimistic regarding the prospect of significant or progressive change in history.⁵⁸

Rationalists like Gibbon had avoided facing this pessimism, Cochrane warned, by deluding themselves that their own modern civilization was exempt from such dissolution. The gifts of civilization, Gibbon had claimed, once successively propagated, could never be lost. But what he finally meant by civilization, Cochrane concluded, was a materialist "acquisition and transmission of techniques, the techniques of the arts, of war, of commerce, and of religion."⁵⁹ These were also the gods of the industrial revolution and the machine age, and they reflected the assumption that "all that is needed for the defence of civilization is to command, if possible to monopolize, the techniques." As Cochrane wryly concluded, the modern world was discovering that others with more questionable purposes could play the same game. Ultimately, Gibbon's Enlightenment interpretation of history on the premise of uniformity and fixed factors presumptuously universalized contemporary practices, but denied human freedom and the "unsuspected potentialities" that opened history to growth and development rather than mere cyclic repetition.⁶⁰

In contrast to Gibbon's rationalist "anatomizing" of human behaviour and history, Cochrane emphasized that historical moments were at once unique and at the same time organic with "the texture of a total life" and the cumulative, creative process. The uniqueness of the particular was crucial partly because only thus could one truly confess that Christ died "once and for all." For Cochrane, furthermore, the combination of the unique particular and the organic continuity of the process ensured that human life was not merely a series of repetitive and meaningless patterns, but rather was a creative process of growth and development such as was suggested in the idea of

⁵⁸Cochrane, "The Mind of Edward Gibbon, II," 153-6, 158, 165.

⁵⁹Cochrane, "The Mind of Edward Gibbon, II," 159.

⁶⁰Cochrane, "The Mind of Edward Gibbon, II," 159, 164.

Becoming. This historical realism, Cochrane suggested, overcame the classic tension between freedom and order, for the "creative principle" in human life was "a moving principle, or a principle of motion no less than order."⁶¹ It also dispensed with the false antithesis in modern social science between "impersonal" and "personal" factors, for whatever factors were part of the "total situation" of historical developments, Cochrane declared, "the efficient cause of action is and can be nothing ultimately but the human will."⁶² For Cochrane, therefore, history was a cumulative, organic and creative process of becoming in which the "facts" described by scientific history must be taken as the external expressions of action of the personal will.⁶³

Cochrane's interpretation of Augustine in Christianity and Classical Culture, then, would assume Thucydides' critical realism in contrast to idealist abstraction, as well as a commitment to a neo-Kantian idea of the primacy of personal will and moral responsibility and freedom in history. Indeed, his lectures at University College and at Harvard during the 1940's would weave together Augustine's moral interpretation of history with Carl Becker's empiricist historicism.⁶⁴ His reconstruction of Augustinian "Christian realism," was significant for suggesting an answer both to the search for a guarantee of human moral freedom within the nexus of history, and to the problematic for "enlightened evangelicalism" of the relation between a transcendent God and historical-structural reality.

Completed in 1939 and published in 1940, the work coincided with the outbreak of war, and also with Walter Bryden's The Christian's Knowledge of God (1940). Cochrane's central theme was

⁶¹Cochrane, "The Mind of Edward Gibbon, II," 164-5.

⁶²Cochrane, "The Mind of Edward Gibbon, II," 160.

⁶³Cochrane, "The Mind of Edward Gibbon, II," 163.

⁶⁴Innis, "Charles Norris Cochrane, 1889-1945," 95.

his argument that the Trinitarian faith of Christianity, and especially Augustine's metaphysics, provided both the fulfillment and the revolutionary solution to the classical antitheses of matter and form, and freedom and order. Amid the crises of classical culture that seemed analogous to crises of the 1930's, Augustine offered a Christian realism that affirmed the reality of God's sovereign will in nature and history, and the progress of both God's purpose and human responsibility and freedom in history. For Cochrane, Augustine's Christian realism also affirmed that the historical process of becoming promised the full realization of humanity's divine potential. Despite its ancient subject matter, Cochrane's work was thus a "tract for the times," for it was a critique of the impasse of modern thought and the techniques of power that affirmed both a limited scientific method and the presence of spiritual reality in a teleological historical process.

In contrast to Gibbon, Cochrane argued that the fall of Rome was due, not to a paradoxical immoderate greatness nor to superstition and barbarism, but to the intellectual and moral failure of the Greco-Roman mind.⁶⁵ That failure was demonstrated in the rise of the Augustan imperium as the answer to the Roman struggle to reconcile freedom and community, and more cynically to legitimize the imperial power and wealth that had been gained through world conquest.⁶⁶ Despite his promises of reform, Caesar's accession to power marked the transformation of Rome into an instrument of order and power in the name of protecting world civilization.⁶⁷ The subsequent proclamation of Rome as the "Eternal City" by Hellenized Romans like Vergil claimed that the empire was both the ordained instrument for fulfilling the Roman classical ideals of human emancipation and order, and the achievement of the Greek effort to transcend the limits of time and matter and grasp through reason

⁶⁵Charles Norris Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957 [1940]), 157.

⁶⁶Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 3, 18.

⁶⁷Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 4, 8, 13, 19-22.

the eternal ideal.⁶⁸ Thus the classical ideal culminated in the Promethean presumption of identifying man's own political order with transcendent ideals. But in attempting to subordinate all citizens as objects of a universal and eternal rational order, Cochrane noted, the imperium became an intensely conservative order focused on the formal techniques of preserving power through legalism and force.⁶⁹

The fundamental failure of classicism, according to Cochrane, was its failure to grasp the dynamic relation between moral freedom and an objective order, and between Platonic ideals and the processes of material nature. By the 200's, the Greco-Roman world oscillated between a naturalistic Stoic "scientia" which claimed to find in nature a necessary logical order that justified reason and the imperial order, and a neo-Platonic Gnosticism which sought to escape the fate of the temporal world through intuitive communion with a transcendent One.⁷⁰ Both sides of this dichotomy failed to take account of the historical process of change and the possibility of progress, and instead descended into fatalisms that surrendered the significance and freedom of individual personality.⁷¹ The resulting bankruptcy of classicism came to light especially in the apotheosis of power during the third century civil wars and in the desperate claims of Diocletian to represent the eternal order in an absolute social discipline.⁷² By the late 200's, Cochrane suggested, the Greco-Roman system had come to an arid, but totalitarian impasse. Cochrane presented the rise of Christianity as a revolutionary philosophy that comprehended the dynamic cosmic process of history, and so answered the crisis of classical thought. He identified the core of that revolution in the Trinitarian formula of the Nicene

⁶⁸Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 27-8, 75-8.

⁶⁹Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 98, 146.

⁷⁰Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 160-72.

⁷¹Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 97.

⁷²Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 181.

council, and in the ideas of fourth-century advocates of orthodoxy like Athanasius, Ambrose, and Augustine. Cochrane's interpretation thus corresponded to the Trinitarian theology of the United Church's "Statement of Faith." His selection was the more significant in part for the positions that it repudiated. In contrast to the late nineteenth-century liberal Protestant hope of Christendom, Cochrane criticized the compromises made by Constantinian church leaders like Eusebius in their alliance with neo-Platonism and the empire. The Constantinian church, he noted, interpreted Constantine's triumph as the work of God's hand in history, and so reconsecrated the imperial order as the embodiment of the eternal spiritual order.⁷³ And lacking an adequate doctrine of original sin, their neo-Platonic Christianity was not essentially different from classical idealism or the Stoic belief in an immanent divinity and inherent human virtue. While its expectation of progressive amelioration of society through the state "deliver[ed] the future of Christianity into the hands of the new Machiavelli," the supposedly Christianized empire under the successors of Constantine proved unable to effect significant social change or stem the decline of the Roman empire.⁷⁴

Cochrane's critique of the classical dilemma was an implicit commentary on the oscillation of modern thought between idealism and scientia. Also, his comments on the Constantinian church applied analogously to liberal Protestant efforts to identify God's Kingdom with an earthly millennium constructed of natural law and human ideals. Those efforts, as Harold Innis commented, claimed for human dreams the status of the Eternal, translating man's "fantastica fornicatia" into the City of God.⁷⁵ Like Reinhold Niebuhr, Cochrane would reject a return to the pre-World War I identity of the Kingdom of God with the state or any other temporal or natural institution. In a rare explicit

⁷³Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 176-80, 184-95.

⁷⁴Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 196.

⁷⁵Innis, "Charles Norris Cochrane, 1889-1945," 96-7.

allusion to modern society, he likened the neo-Platonic synthesis to "that peculiar mixture of pagan humanitarianism and Christian sentiment which goes by the name of Christian socialism, a compound in which the real virtues of either element are largely neutralized by the other."⁷⁶ From the fate of Constantine's program of reform, he added, one might forecast the outcome of analogous modern movements.

Despite criticizing the Constantinian compromise, however, Cochrane did not propose to follow either the radical asceticism of early apocalyptic monastic movements or Tertullian's assertion of the radical discontinuity between Christianity and classical culture, echoes of which could be found in the ideas of Karl Barth and Walter Bryden. Although he admitted that Tertullian's insistence on the exclusive authority of God's self-revelation in Christ, and his challenge of classical science and the false claims of the empire to transcendence, broke through the classical dichotomy of reason and nature, Cochrane warned that Tertullian's rejection of classical idealism risked a new classical form-matter dualism that in practice was a "crass materialism" which too hastily rejected all that was good in nature and the classical tradition.⁷⁷

Between the neo-Platonic synthesis of the Constantinian church and the separatism of Tertullian and chiliastic monasticism, Cochrane found in Athanasius, Ambrose, and Augustine a mediating Christian realism which claimed God's sovereign will, as well as the moral tension between eternity and temporality, within history, and which enabled them to challenge and transform the classical tradition. The "orthodox" church fathers, he claimed, envisioned the Kingdom of God as a real spiritual entity within history, as "a society regenerated by the acceptance of Christian truth[.]"⁷⁸ "The real problem of the Church," therefore, was to work out a system of philosophy which would

⁷⁶Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 196.

⁷⁷Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 230, 247.

⁷⁸Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 359.

relate the first principles of its faith to understanding and practical application.⁷⁹ If the state was not to be final, he asked, what was, and what was its relation to the state and the legacy of the classical world? For Cochrane, Christianity could not live merely by negation or abstraction; rather, as a reality, it must relate to and be embodied in a temporal culture and community.

Cochrane's solution to this problem of relating Christianity to historical and social life was to translate the orthodox Trinitarian theology into philosophic, specifically ontological principles. The center of Augustinian "Christian realism," he argued, was the Nicene Creed's Trinitarian formula.⁸⁰ According to Cochrane, Nicaea and its apologist Athanasius had identified the Greek concept of the "arche" of Being with the Trinity, and in doing so had provided the classical world with a revolutionary ontological starting point: God as Father was the very source of all being and the "creative principle" who was both transcendent and yet active in nature.⁸¹ The Nicene assertion of the substantial unity of Christ and God affirmed that there was no hiatus between God and nature, nor between being and becoming. As the Word "in the beginning," Christ was the *logos*, or the rational will, and thus "the principle of order and discrimination in the cosmos." And the Holy Spirit was "the principle of energy or movement" which revealed the "substance of the Father which is in the Son." Hence the Trinity was the "divine principle" that was the source of Being and Order, and the unity of the Trinity indicated the unity of being in God.⁸²

The significance of the Trinitarian arche, according to Cochrane, lay in Augustine's affirmation of the moral and spiritual meaning of history. In his moderate monasticism, Augustine refrained from viewing nature as inherently evil, but rather sought to redirect life from "mundane

⁷⁹Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 230, 247.

⁸⁰Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 359-60.

⁸¹Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 362-6.

⁸²Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 237, 362, 364.

ends" to a beatific love of God and to a new spiritual motive for life in the "realization of creative peace" and "the Kingdom of God within."⁸³ In his The City of God, Augustine had shown that, seen through the wisdom of faith, history was not a "closed system" of logic or chance, but the creative operation of God in the world.⁸⁴ The true nature of reality was therefore a creative and personal spiritual substance extended in a hierarchy of being across what was one "plane" of reality. Rather than a dualism between order and motion, or between being and becoming, "the cosmos presented itself as a world of real, concrete, individual substances," each of which was a "natural" expression in an orderly process of becoming under "the intelligent and beneficent" sovereign will of God.⁸⁵ In short, history was itself the embodiment of the creative and dynamic logos of Christ.

For Cochrane, the heart of Augustine's "Christian realism," in contrast to speculative Platonism, was this ontological interpretation of the Trinity as the creative principle and ground of being.⁸⁶ This realism provided for a Christian humanism that was not merely anthropocentric, for the values of truth, beauty, and goodness were not merely "human ideals in the face of a soulless universe," but were given by God in the nature of the world and were accessible to humanity in the direct experience of Christ and the Spirit.⁸⁷ At the same time, the presence of the Word as the "creative principle" in the world was the very basis of human moral freedom and responsibility, of rational science, and of a "Christian communism" in which others were treated "as ends rather than as means." A world transformed by such spiritual principles would be characterized by mutual love and charity rather than competition and exploitation, and would meet the physical necessities of life

⁸³Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 342-3.

⁸⁴Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 397-8, 477-9.

⁸⁵Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 236-9.

⁸⁶Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 491.

⁸⁷Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 237, 480-1.

without distracting the mind from God.⁸⁸

The complement to this Augustinian metaphysic, in Cochrane's treatment, was a personalist anthropology which, though shorn of naive optimism and aspirations of transcendence, suggested a new synthesis of personal idealism with social realism. After Nicaea and Athanasius, he argued, the main problem for the fourth century fathers concerned the status of man "in the hierarchy of nature."⁸⁹ Cochrane's interpretation of Augustine began with his Confessions, and thus with his personalism and "phenomenology of the human mind." Augustine, Cochrane claimed, showed that human consciousness could not be reduced to reason, but consisted of a triad of being, knowledge, and will. In keeping with modern realism, he also described individual personality as organically related to a "continuous and cumulative" experience and a world of external relationships. Nevertheless, he insisted that personality remained an individual "subject," defined as a distinct "center of radiant energy" and an intelligent will, which could not be reduced to external relationships.⁹⁰

In interpreting Augustine's definition of personality as a spiritual substance identified with consciousness, Cochrane preserved Augustine's substantialist Platonic ontology even while repudiating a speculative Platonism. On this point, Cochrane defended Augustine against critics of his Platonism by arguing that, though Augustine had borrowed elements of truth from Plato, he had transformed Plato's speculative system.⁹¹ With this apology, Cochrane adopted the Platonic emphasis on the reality of spiritual substance and an hierarchical chain of being that were woven into Augustine's ontology and anthropology. For Augustine, and for Cochrane, man's status as God's image-bearer

⁸⁸Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 342-3.

⁸⁹Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 240.

⁹⁰Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 389, 402-3.

⁹¹Cochrane's defense of Augustine was directed particularly against skeptical "realist" and "liberal" critics of Augustine's Platonic mysticism. Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 376-84.

lay especially in the "spiritual" substance of a rational will that corresponded to the Word of God and set human personality above nature. Though human life depended on the body and the structured creation as well as God's will, the body was simply the organ for the self-determining, conscious will which was the center of human nature.⁹² It was by virtue of this rational will that humans were self-conscious, free, and irreducible individuals who could cooperate with God, and had the potential for "divine sonship" and deification. Augustine's anthropology thus resolved the classical juxtaposition of freedom and nature with a reconciliation of reason and will in human personality, and with a hierarchical chain of being that identified human personality with divinity.

According to Cochrane, Augustine also had resolved the relation between faith and science; indeed, he had saved reason and the will by denying classical pretensions for them and by putting them in their proper place. Given that humans were rational wills, the problem of human life lay in the fact that human personality could not be fully satisfied "on those levels of life which he shares with brute creation."⁹³ In contrast to the classical pursuit of transcendent reason, however, Augustine had argued that the self-consciousness that was the beginning of knowledge also carried with it the awareness that the self was subordinate to a given order and dependent on God as the "unconditioned source of Being, Wisdom, and Power." This knowledge of God as the creative principle came first of all directly in the inner man through "inner" self-knowledge, or what he called sapientia in contrast to scientia. The Being of God was therefore the presupposition of man's own existence, and faith's acknowledgement of the reality of God was the premise of understanding.⁹⁴

Augustine's famous claim to "faith for understanding," however, was not contrary to reason or "the life of sense," according to Cochrane, but rather was the assertion of full and natural human

⁹²Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 447.

⁹³Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 384, 389-90.

⁹⁴Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 402-9.

personality over against the false claims to the sovereignty of scientia and its materialistic reduction of personality. Human personality was most fully satisfied in an "intelligible and worthy goal" that ultimately could be met only in the love of God, and thus in "the love of truth, beauty, and goodness" itself.⁹⁵ Consequently, the meaning of life was to be found only on the plane of religion. But religion was not to be identified merely with subjective illumination; instead, the principle of the Trinity offered a new objective standard for faith's insight in the progressive revelation of divine truth in nature and history, and in the Incarnation. In turn, faith illumined existence by interpreting it "in terms of an absolute standard of truth, beauty, and goodness," thereby revealing the meaning of nature and history as "the theatre of divine activity."⁹⁶ Faith was a gift of insight for "sane and deliberate judgements," for with its insight into the true nature of reality and the fact that nature was subject to the will of God, faith gave direction to scientific reason and its limited role of describing nature.⁹⁷ In turn, the will also was saved from its degeneration into mere subjective willfulness, for reason guided by faith could now subject the will to the real divine order.⁹⁸ Thus faith gave new direction, freedom, and power to personality.

While Augustine's ideas seemed to restore a metaphysical realism, they also offered a moral realism which recognized the fact of evil and the tension between eternal ideals and present realities, and accounted for that tension in the conflict between personal wills in history. Cochrane's treatment of sin coincided with the moral view of the atonement in the United Church's "Statement of Faith," and echoed the nineteenth-century "moral government" theory. Augustine's Christian realism, according to Cochrane, resolved the Greek struggle to account for human failure and mortality in the

⁹⁵Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 390, 418-9.

⁹⁶Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 412, 416, 433-6.

⁹⁷Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 414, 417, 435.

⁹⁸Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 384.

doctrine of original sin. The fact of original sin meant that man's natural pursuit of the love of God was obstructed by man's own subjection of his spiritual personality to self-love and material ends.⁹⁹ Like Emil Brunner, Cochrane emphasized Augustine's view, contrary to classicism, that sin was not to be identified with nature, nor did it alter the constitution of human nature.¹⁰⁰ Rather, sin was man's own responsibility, a personal and moral defect that lay in man's failure to apprehend the spiritual essence of reality, and his "vain dream that he could usurp the place of the Creator and be another God." Sin rendered humanity unable to act "effectively" to know or will his true purpose, and it drew the inevitable penalty for violating the laws of nature that was evident in historical "retrogression." Indeed, since Adam's fall, which Cochrane identified as the proper beginning of human history, the reality was that humanity has been enslaved to sin.¹⁰¹

Since sin was a moral defect, salvation was first of all personal and psychological rather than collective or structural. As Cochrane put it, "the only creature of whom eternal life could properly be predicated was the individual human being, because he alone was the real unit of conscious and deliberate activity."¹⁰² And since the vestige of divinity remained in man and the world, the hope remained that man might be reborn to his natural "spiritual" and moral perfection. Salvation, therefore, was a matter of enlightenment, for it involved getting the individual "to recognize the truth" of his true spiritual nature, and thus emancipating man from ignorance and fantasy.¹⁰³ Such a renewal of the true man could come only from the source of Being through the revelation of God's Word in Christ and by the regeneration of good will by the Spirit. The work of this divine grace,

⁹⁹Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 395, 447-50.

¹⁰⁰Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 240.

¹⁰¹Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 241-4, 447-50.

¹⁰²Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 242.

¹⁰³Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 242-4, 450-2.

however, was not contrary to nature and humanity's true natural freedom, for it was essentially the restoration of man to his true constitution as the image of God and to his "natural law" of knowing and loving God.¹⁰⁴ Salvation was therefore the recovery of authentic, free, and creative personality.

Cochrane's interpretation of Augustine's Christian realism culminated in a renewed vision of moral progress through history. The crux of divergence between Christianity and classical thought, he claimed, lay in the Christian interpretation of history in terms of personal creative wills and the dynamic relationship between God and humans.¹⁰⁵ On the premise that the source of being was outside the world, classical thought identified history with a natural necessity that frustrated man's Promethean grasp for freedom. In contrast to this pessimism, the Christian view represented by Athanasius and Augustine's The City of God saw history not as a "closed system" or a system of chance, but as God's providential creative work in the world. History was "the record of the divine economy, the working of the Spirit in and through mankind," from the creation through fall and redemption to the eschatological "end of the Saeculum...."¹⁰⁶ Thus history was itself the location of divine purpose. And the central impulse of history was the dynamic relationship between personal wills, specifically the interaction of the divine creative principle and free human response.

According to Cochrane, this moral interpretation of history ensured human freedom and moral progress. Authentic human freedom, in this case, was not mere indeterminacy, but man's realization of the divine law which was the very condition of human thought and activity. The congenital impulse of man was to seek happiness in a "pax rationalis" in which reason and will would be reconciled, and where the universal values for man and human brotherhood would be recognized.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 453-4.

¹⁰⁵Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 456.

¹⁰⁶Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 368, 397-8, 458-68, 477-80.

¹⁰⁷Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 480-3, 486.

The basis of that unity, as indicated in the Trinitarian arce, was found only in the fixed starting point of God's will in the values of beauty, truth, and goodness which were given in the nature of the world.¹⁰⁸ According to Cochrane, then, "[t]he business of man as such is to glorify, by knowing and loving, God," and in doing so man realized both God's will and his own authentic personality.¹⁰⁹ To this end, time and space were not a threat but gifts and opportunities for individual human life and destiny in the "Saeculum." Indeed, for Cochrane, history was at once the record of the creative divine principle, and the "process of becoming" in the "cosmic drama" of the loss, recovery, and perfection of man's authentic personality and freedom and the realization of his divine potential.¹¹⁰ In short, history was characterized by divine grace and human freedom.

Cochrane's emphasis on moral progress within history resulted in a teleological, but emphatically not otherworldly interpretation of Augustine's eschatology. In developing this interpretation, however, he nevertheless shared the ambiguity of Augustine's depiction of the tension between two Cities. The basic antithesis in life, he argue, was not between transcendent ideals and material power, but between secular and spiritual faiths. The secular faith of the City of Man was manifest in the tendency to treat temporal, man-made goods as absolute goods, and thereby to worship a secular order typically embodied in property and the state and rooted in man-made values and techniques, in the expectation that these might satisfy human demands for order and happiness.¹¹¹ According to Cochrane, Augustine's portrait of the City of Man, and his warning against placing trust in temporal empires, accounted for "the facts of social history" in a way that classical thought never

¹⁰⁸Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 393, 481.

¹⁰⁹Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 373, 486, 488-91.

¹¹⁰Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 269, 243-4, 371, 483.

¹¹¹Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 490-2.

could.¹¹² In contrast to the secularism of the City of Man, the City of God recognized that the true source of being and power came from God, and more specifically lay in the real presence of his Word of truth, beauty, and goodness in the world.¹¹³

For Cochrane, then, the City of God existed in the world in the contemplation and willing of truth, beauty, and goodness.¹¹⁴ The life of the spirit, personality, and freedom were superior to, but not contrary to "mechanisms or organisms" like the state and material forces. As he explained in comments on Ambrose's view of the independent "spiritual order" of the church and the superior life of chastity, the life of the spirit did not deny nature, but rather fulfilled and transcended nature.¹¹⁵ The City of God, according to Cochrane, was a moral order characterized by freedom, good will, and love which were the true fulfillment of law. Temporal goods and institutions were relative good gifts of God's providence, but they were subordinate instruments of spiritual good. Thus Augustine's rejection of classical secularism, he claimed, was of "immense importance" insofar as it saw the state, not as "the ultimate form of community, but merely as an instrument regulating the relations of ...the 'exterior man.'"¹¹⁶ As an external order of law, the state's role was limited; ultimately it could not produce the perfect order by legislation, for the real "empirical values" of liberty, equality, and fraternity could have meaning only in an order which preserved "spiritual or 'personal' freedom." The Christian millennial hope, therefore, was a society united in God and "emancipat[ed] from temporality" -- that is, freed from purely secular attempts at salvation and happiness, to union with the divine

¹¹²Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 496.

¹¹³Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 501-2.

¹¹⁴Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 390.

¹¹⁵Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 374-75.

¹¹⁶Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 509.

values and creative principle which were the original constitution and teleological end of the universe.¹¹⁷

Finally, in contrast to Augustine's description of the City of God as a pilgrim community with an otherworldly destiny, Cochrane, as had Richard Roberts, portrayed the City of God as a moral Kingdom of God that was "becoming" in the process of history. That divine order could not be established merely in isolated abstraction, nor in a compromise with an essentially secular imperial order. Neither, Cochrane argued with clear reference to Reinhold Niebuhr's famous work, could it accept "as final any dualism between 'moral man' and 'immoral society,'" for to do so would deny the reality and promise of Christian hope.¹¹⁸ The millennial promise of the City of God assumed that the values of truth, beauty, and goodness were not only metaphysically real, but also "historically real." As those values were "thrust upon" consciousness in the process of history, they were to be "progressively embodied in the consciousness of the race."¹¹⁹ For Cochrane, then, the distinction between the present order and the divine order was one of time rather than location. True Christian realism, he claimed, enabled one to "catch a vision of the Divine Society which, though destined to ultimate triumph, subsists as yet by faith and like a foreign element, so to speak, in a community of unbelievers."¹²⁰ In a realist variation on Augustine's amillennialism, Cochrane thus suggested that the Kingdom was present already in the world, and though currently living in the between-times, its triumph would be the fulfillment of the Saeculum. The promise of the millennium, therefore, must orient Christians to a future telos rather than an otherworldly destiny. For the Christian, he claimed, "history is prophecy; ie. its true significance lies not in the past, nor in the

¹¹⁷Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 510-13.

¹¹⁸Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 510.

¹¹⁹Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 513-4.

¹²⁰Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 386.

present, but in the future, the life of 'the world to come.'"¹²¹ In the mean-time, the world was a school-house for the development of true, creative realization of divine values, lived in the hope of a millennial future of "abundant life" to which humans were called to work as the fulfillment of their humanity. Thus the actual world of experience was also the location of the transforming Kingdom of God in the world. Cochrane's reconstruction of Augustine's Christian realism offered a new vision of the progress of God's Kingdom within history that yet recognized the tension between God's will and the reality of sin. It also identified the creative, moral consciousness with divine grace, and claimed for that personality a freedom and meaningful purpose in history in shaping a culture of grace out of nature. In this way, as Harold Innis claimed, Cochrane offered a philosophy of civilization that seemed to reconcile structure and the primacy of human personality and freedom, and that gave meaning to historical civilization.

Cochrane also offered a Christian interpretation of history that seemed finally to resolve the relation between a transcendent God and the realities of temporal human life. In a review for the University of Toronto Quarterly, even Reinhold Niebuhr heaped effusive praise on Cochrane's work, though Cochrane had challenged Niebuhr's dualism of time and Eternity.¹²² Not only had Cochrane provided a brilliant critical history of the classical mind, Niebuhr wrote, but his was the first modern work to show the significance of a Christian understanding of history in contrast to the idealist and naturalist rationalism of classical culture. His recovery of Augustine's metaphysics had likewise recaptured the reality and moral tension between the Eternal ideal and natural reality. And in his depiction of the Trinity as the ground of being, he also had restored the centrality of classic Christian doctrine as the symbol of the ultimate meaningfulness of life -- a meaning that, Niebuhr still

¹²¹Charles Norris Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957 [1940]), 516.

¹²²Reinhold Niebuhr, "Christianity and Classical Culture," University of Toronto Quarterly, Vol. 10, No. 4 (July 1940-41), 505-10.

maintained, both transcended and yet was present in the process of history. But Cochrane had shown, he added, that it was only from the Christian perspective of the sovereign providence of God that the "curious compound" of fate and freedom, tragedy and creativity, could be given meaning. Having failed to find peace in its own secular or liberal Protestant attempts to construct the eternal order, Niebuhr concluded, modern civilization desperately needed to recover Augustine's formulation of the problem of life and history.

While rightly identifying Cochrane's reconstruction of Augustinianism, Niebuhr omitted Cochrane's criticism of Niebuhr's own distinction between transcendent moral ideals and temporal society, and his central claim that the divine ground of Being and the moral tension between God's will and sinful humanity were located in the historical process on the single plane of reality. Cochrane had recast Augustine into a modern critical realist mould that located the will of God within history, and that portrayed the City of God as dynamically "becoming" in the creative and spiritual process of history. As will be shown later in the chapter, it was this more progressive Christian realism that would inspire a revival of efforts among mainline Canadian Protestants, especially in the United Church, to shape a Christian culture after World War II. While wary of naive optimism and of "secular" and "mechanical" solutions, they would advocate a Christian culture in which grace, defined in terms of personal freedom, creativity, and moral imagination, would fulfill and transcend nature, but would do so within history.

One of Cochrane's sharpest critics, meanwhile, was Walter Bryden. In his lectures on Augustine and the early church during the 1940's, Bryden responded extensively to Cochrane's Christianity and Classical Culture (1940).¹²³ Although he appreciated and drew heavily on Cochrane's assessment of classical culture, he thoroughly rejected Cochrane's attempt to find in

¹²³Caven Library, Knox College, Walter Bryden, "St. Augustine, Ecclesiastic, Philosopher and Theologian (354-430)," undated, unpublished mimeograph.

Augustine a new Christian philosophy of life. His objection was not surprising, for his Barthian starting point was diametrically opposite to that of Cochrane: while Cochrane interpreted the Trinity as a "creative principle" located within nature, Bryden's The Christian's Knowledge of God (1940) was premised on the profession of a God who was radically Other and Absolute, and whose judgement upon sin negated nature. From Bryden's point of view, Cochrane's reconstruction of Augustine's Platonized philosophy represented an extension of liberal idealism that had more affinity with the Catholic rather than the Protestant tradition. Against Cochrane's Augustinian reconstruction, therefore, Bryden insisted, like Tertullian, that Christianity was rooted in a radically other origin which could not be reconciled with either nature or culture, much less with the classical tradition.

While Cochrane's interpretation had taken Augustine's self-reflective Confessions and especially his City of God as the culmination of his Christian thought, Bryden viewed Augustine's career as a prolonged conflict between Christianity and classical "sensuousness" that ultimately led to compromise with the classical tradition. In his early work, Bryden suggested, Augustine had described the church as originating from a radically distinctive eternal source. "Its Arche," Bryden claimed, "was in the Eternal, not in the temporal, so that the Church was thus recognized to be of a different order of existence from every other institution and culture, including classical culture."¹²⁴ Originating directly from the eschatological incoming of God's spirit, the Church was not a product of Nature or Time, nor could it be destroyed by the ravages of time. It was this eschatological view of the church, he added, that had inspired fourth century fathers like Ambrose to claim the "absolute self-autonomy of the Church" and its freedom from state control in his dispute with emperor Theodosius during the 370's.¹²⁵

Augustine's later turn to a "universal" metaphysical interpretation of the relation between God

¹²⁴Bryden, "St. Augustine," 12.

¹²⁵Bryden, "St. Augustine." 12, 16.

and history seemed to Bryden to compromise this eschatological vision of the church. Citing Christopher Dawson, he claimed that Augustine had moved from "a theology based on Scripture and confession," to "a philosophy based upon a survey of history" and "a speculative cosmology." In his notion that humans had both a good will and an evil will, and that "the things of time" were identified with the evil will, Augustine had incorporated into Christianity a Platonic dualism between spiritual and natural realities that surrendered God's sovereignty in the material world, and at the same time identified God with an element within human nature.¹²⁶ Thus Augustine's attempt to develop a "universal understanding of God's purposes in history" was based on classical Greek philosophy "rather than strictly [on] the theology of revelation." This synthesis of Christianity and classical thought obviated the need of divine grace and contradicted the New Testament witness to God's unique and decisive acts in an eschatology centered on the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ.¹²⁷ Though central to the Catholic tradition, Bryden argued, Augustine's attempt to synthesize Christianity with all thought was contrary to the Protestant Reformers' affirmation that the only basis for theology was "a living confessional relationship with the living God, this as strictly subject to God's word in Scripture." Augustine's move from a radical evangelicalism to rationalist philosophy, Bryden suggested, left in doubt whether he truly understood "the significance of Biblical Eschatology."¹²⁸

Bryden's critique of Augustine naturally applied also to Cochrane's reconstruction of Augustine's philosophy of history and his expectation that the City of God would be realized in the world through an immanent spiritual motive of love. Like Augustine, Bryden suggested, Cochrane had failed to understand "the truly radical difference which exists between Christian faith and Classical

¹²⁶Bryden, "St. Augustine," 14-15.

¹²⁷Bryden, "St. Augustine," 14, 16.

¹²⁸Bryden, "St. Augustine," 15.

Culture," and consequently his ideas remained entrenched in the liberal Protestant tradition.¹²⁹ Cochrane's analysis, Bryden conceded, demonstrated brilliantly the Roman attempt to achieve the Eternal order by imperialistic force, and thus to assert the self-sufficiency of man over circumstances. But the claims of classical philosophies like Stoicism and Platonism to an immanent or inherent source of virtue, Bryden warned, were echoed in modern "Liberal Idealism," including Cochrane's work. Classical and modern idealists alike attempted to locate the Arche in nature, thereby neglecting the Christian confession of God as a Creator who was radically different from creation and translating God into what Athanasius had termed a "mere artificer" rather than the Creator.¹³⁰ According to Bryden, the essential character of classical idealism was unchanged in modern times: "It always represents some sort of identification of cultural, social, political and patriotic values with what is considered to be ultimate or divine."¹³¹ And on the basis of its false synthesis, idealism assumed that established tradition and radical change could be reconciled with a progressive achievement of humanitarian practice.

At the heart of Bryden's criticism of Cochrane and Augustine was his Tertullian-like juxtaposition of confessional theology and rational human philosophy. Cochrane's interpretation, he claimed, reduced Christianity to merely the knowledge of a rationalized "creative principle" arrived at by human philosophy, and implied that the essential distinction between Christianity and Classicism was no more than that of a new philosophy.¹³² In contrast to Cochrane, Bryden argued that the central Christian reality, professed by Scripture and even by Athanasius and Augustine, was the concrete experience of a personal God and the "radical redeeming work of the Word" in Christ and

¹²⁹Bryden, "St. Augustine," 16.

¹³⁰Bryden, "St. Augustine," 18.

¹³¹Bryden, "St. Augustine," 17.

¹³²Bryden, "St. Augustine," 19.

the Spirit. For Bryden, the difference between classical culture and Christianity was the difference between human philosophical reflection and humble evangelical confession of a new personal experience of God in the eschatological reality of Christ.¹³³

In response to Cochrane's interpretation of Augustine, Bryden offered an interpretation of the relation between God and the world that he claimed was more radically evangelical and more consistent with the tradition of the Reformation. The Biblical view of the fundamental antithesis in life was not between ontological categories, but "between a reconciled Church and an unreconciled world, between a holy and righteous but merciful God, on the one hand, and fallen man who believed in his own powers, on the other."¹³⁴ In explaining this antithesis of faith communities, however, he translated it into a tension between grace and nature that left the prospect of Christian cultural transformation ambiguous.

This tension was most evident in Bryden's comments on the nature of the church and its relation to the state. Having identified the church with an eternal order that was fundamentally different from natural institutions, Augustine faced the dilemma of identifying the church as it lived "in the world but not of it." In rejecting the claims of a Roman papacy and "episcopal monarchy," Augustine had argued that the power of the church could not be identified with a particular place or tradition, but rather was delegated to all bishops through their succession from the apostles.¹³⁵ While there could be no localization of spiritual authority, the church was meant, however, to be the visible body of the Incarnation in the world. This dilemma was magnified in the Donatist controversy and the trend of nominal church membership following the church's alliance with the state. Augustine's solution of the dilemma of identifying the church in the world lay in his doctrine of

¹³³Bryden, "St. Augustine," 21-2.

¹³⁴Bryden, "St. Augustine," 16.

¹³⁵Bryden, "St. Augustine," 12.

election: while there could be no salvation outside of the church and its fellowship with the living Christ, he claimed that there was only salvation for those in the church who were the "elect of God." Augustine's doctrines of election and predestination were not mere fatalism, Bryden suggested, but expressions of the reality that the identity of the real "catholic" and corporate fellowship of the church was a matter, not of external forms and rituals, but of the authentic evangelical experience of Christ.¹³⁶

This attempt to distinguish the experience of the Spirit from external forms brought in question the status of all external institutional forms, especially that of the state. On this point, Bryden attempted to move beyond Augustine's ambiguity by reclaiming the position of the Protestant Reformers. Augustine, he argued, held that earthly institutions were relative to the authority of Eternity, and so he had rejected attempts to claim absolute authority for the state or to make the church serve an essentially pagan empire.¹³⁷ But Augustine also accepted the authority of the state as an instrument ordained by God for governing a sinful world and for enabling the church to function more effectively. Though convinced that the state's work, of itself, was insufficient to meet the spiritual needs of man, Augustine maintained that church and state could not be divorced from each other.¹³⁸ Ultimately, Augustine's view that the state was a divinely-appointed instrument to enforce the will of the church, and his view that the state and all temporal orders were evil, laid the foundations for Medieval claims to the superior authority of the church in temporal matters.

Bryden claimed that the Protestant Reformers had broken from Augustine's underlying Platonic dualism with a positive view of creation as ordered by God and therefore good. They saw both church and state as ordinances of God which must stand in essential relation to each other,

¹³⁶Bryden, "St. Augustine," 13, 80-1.

¹³⁷Bryden, "St. Augustine," 12.

¹³⁸Bryden, "St. Augustine," 24-6.

without subordinating one to the other. Contrary to Niebuhr's view of the state as an institution of power that must compromise between what is and what ought to be, while the church was bound to an absolute ethic, Bryden claimed that church and state each had its own legitimate and ordained role, for "Christ is Lord of the Nations as well as of the Church."¹³⁹

Bryden's appeal to the Reformers would mark a new appreciation for John Calvin's view of creation ordinances. Initially, however, Bryden proceeded to distinguish church and state in terms of the distinct realms of grace and sin. Though ordained by God, the state in the present age was "inherently Machiavellian" and self-interested; since its main task was to preserve its order and its citizens, it tended to make itself paramount over individuals, conscience, and other institutions and states.¹⁴⁰ By its nature, the state must seek a "modus vivendi" that could only be a relative, temporal expression of the good, or an approximately just or unjust order. "At its best," Bryden argued, the state was built "on what man can do to ameliorate conditions in the local situation...but the State never gets at the heart of man's trouble." The church, however, was the unique institution of grace in contrast to the state's function of temporal order. With its source in the Eternal, the church was "ever a new creation," and its activity was always that of self-sacrificial dying with Christ in order to save itself and its members. By its nature, it "can never be governed by anything other than the absolute law of holy love and righteousness. When the church seeks to use the powers of the state to enforce its will, it ceases to be the Church of God." The church's modus vivendi, therefore, was that of a radically new spiritual order in the midst of temporal orders.

For Bryden, then, church and state partook of fundamentally different orders that existed in an uneasy hierarchical tension. While the state was ordained as a necessary agency to protect life in a sinful, temporal world, the church was the product of an "eschatological event" which descended

¹³⁹Bryden, "St. Augustine," 26.

¹⁴⁰Bryden, "St. Augustine," 26-27.

"from above all historic and human circumstances" and pointed to the significance of life in the light of Eternity.¹⁴¹ The church was compelled to declare God's absolute claims and judgement upon the sinful world of man and the state. And it must do so without assuming the forceful methods of the state, or allowing the state to impose its order upon the church. As a result of the inevitable tension between church and state, Bryden warned, the church could never make a static or secure peace with the state such as was demonstrated in the compromises of the Constantinian church and in liberal Protestantism's sanctification of the nation-state and the capitalist economic system.¹⁴²

Bryden's comments on the relation of faith and science similarly identified these with two fundamentally different orders. Augustine's assertion of faith prior to understanding, he agreed with Cochrane, was not an antithesis between sheer "blind belief" and reason, but rather between an authentic confessional faith based on the real experience of God's revelation and a faith in rational reflection and the presumption that man can discern the purpose of God.¹⁴³ But Cochrane, according to Bryden, had portrayed Augustine's synthesis as an answer to the classical quest for rational certainty, and in doing so he had given priority to human reason while treating faith as merely the complement to that reason. It was this interpretation, Bryden continued, that had provided the basis for the Medieval duality between reason and faith and also the concept of the "analogia entis." By identifying faith with an inherent principle that answered to human reason, Cochrane had neglected that "faith's knowledge of God is the consequence of a unique action on the part of God" to establish a personal relationship with man through the work of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit."¹⁴⁴ Cochrane's view of faith was more like the Stoic concept of an immanent logos principle than the

¹⁴¹Bryden, "St. Augustine," 27.

¹⁴²Bryden, "St. Augustine," 81.

¹⁴³Bryden, "St. Augustine," 28-9.

¹⁴⁴Bryden, "St. Augustine," 30-1.

Biblical and Reformation view that the Trinity referred to real persons, and that God was known only as he revealed himself through the Spirit and the Word.

While insisting on the exclusively eschatological nature of faith, Bryden claimed that he did not mean that scientific knowledge from nature was illegitimate. Science was rational knowledge necessary for man's place as ruler in the created order, and to this extent was knowledge "truly designed for man and given by God."¹⁴⁵ As Calvin had suggested, since man was made "to meditate on the heavenly life," the knowledge of God was written on the human soul and disclosed in all of creation. Even the impact of sin, Bryden argued, did not entirely erase reason's "objective" testimony of God's Word from nature, so that everyone retained a "sense of the divine" and should be able to discern God's will from nature. But sin did limit the effectiveness of reason, so that complete knowledge of God, or the full "sense of the divine," could come only through the revelation of God himself in the Spirit and faith. Nevertheless, the gift of intelligence remained even in pagan thinkers, so that scientific reason still functioned to provide an approximate understanding and ordering of the structured world. Thus Bryden seemed to suggest that reason, understood as the objective scientific analysis of nature, retained a universal, though limited validity. It could not, however, claim to be self-sufficient or posit a total order for the world, the apprehension of the reality of God's Word in the world came only by the revelation of God in faith.¹⁴⁶

The underlying theme of Bryden's difference with Cochrane, therefore, lay in his insistence on the radical distinction between the orders of sinful nature and eschatological grace, in contrast to Cochrane's interpretation of the continuity of divine grace with a single plane of historical reality. While Cochrane had emphasized Augustine's claim that the "vestiges" of God's Word remained in the constitution of creation, Bryden declared that "sinfulness is of the very essence of temporal life

¹⁴⁵Bryden, "St. Augustine," 18-19.

¹⁴⁶Bryden, "St. Augustine," 32.

and being."¹⁴⁷ In this way, Bryden seemed to depart from the Reformers' view that the authority of the state rested on an originally "good" creation ordinance, so that for Bryden the state and law became temporal institutions necessitated by the reality of sin rather than institutions that might progressively be transformed in the City of God. In effect, the original creation order had no place in Bryden's Christological eschatology. Likewise, while Cochrane had emphasized Christ as the Word or "logos-principle" by which creation was ordered, Bryden insisted on distinguishing what he considered to be the redeemer Christ of the New Testament from Christ as the Word of creation.¹⁴⁸ In both the New Testament and the Nicene Trinitarian formula, he claimed, the church emphasized the redemptive work of God through Christ and the Holy Spirit "as a barrier against all immanent views of God's activity which might claim to have saving efficacy." Like Tertullian's famous query "What has Jerusalem to do with Athens?" Bryden thus claimed that the burden of the early church's witness was its rejection of any continuity between pagan thought and Christian faith and revelation. In reaction to the immanent theology of the liberal tradition, Bryden again sharply separated creation and redemption, claiming that Christianity offered, not a new philosophy of life, but an eschatological redemptive experience.

Bryden's distinction between the orders of nature and redemption concluded in a millenarian eschatology similar to that of Medieval chiliasts like Joachim of Fiore, but strikingly different from Cochrane's Augustinian progressivism. His millenarianism included a radical critique of contemporary culture and anticipated a thoroughly new redemptive order of the Spirit, but it also emphasized the discontinuity of the coming redemptive order from the present order of nature. According to Bryden, Augustine's City of God was not truly eschatological, for it was conceived through a reconciliation of Plato and Christianity in a "two-dimensional order" that identified Christianity with "timeless ideas"

¹⁴⁷Bryden, "St. Augustine," 26.

¹⁴⁸Bryden, "St. Augustine," 21, 30-1.

over against a transient phenomenal world, both of which were assumed to exist immanently in the "realm of time." Augustine's vision of the City of God, especially in Cochrane's interpretation, thus failed to acknowledge the "qualitative difference between Eternity and Time, God and man, and a real separation between the Holy God, the Righteous Creator, and His sinful creature, man."¹⁴⁹ Augustine had neglected a "third dimension," namely the eschatological, redemptive coming of Eternity into Time in the person of Jesus Christ that brings "all that belongs to Time" into judgement. According to Bryden, it was this eschatological entry of an "Act of God" into creation from beyond, rather than Augustine's timeless metaphysical principle, that constituted the genuine "progress" of the Kingdom and moved the world to a radically new apocalyptic end.¹⁵⁰

III. Conclusion

In the broadest terms, then, Cochrane and Bryden shared the turn of mainline Canadian Protestants to theology, and especially to the Nicene Trinitarian orthodoxy and the Protestant Reformers, in order to recover the essential truths of Christianity for a modern "enlightened evangelicalism." Their focus on the fourth-century church fathers who challenged the Constantinian synthesis of Rome and Christianity indicated their own repudiation of the pre-World War I liberal Protestant identity with western civilization, and their perception that twentieth-century Christianity also was in tension with a modern pagan civilization that, like Rome, was by 1940 manifestly in crisis. Through their recovery of classic orthodoxy, they accounted for that tension in terms of the moral antithesis between the reality of God's will and human sin. In doing so, they repudiated the late nineteenth century idealist synthesis of the divine will and western culture. By reclaiming the reality and grace of a sovereign God, they also asserted the freedom of human moral personality and the opposition of Christianity

¹⁴⁹Bryden, "St. Augustine," 55.

¹⁵⁰Bryden, "St. Augustine," 14, 16.

against the tragic attempt of modern society to impose its own order in the totalitarian state, the capitalist social order, and the techniques of power in rationalist science and technology.

The difficulties of recovering that orthodox Christian tradition, however, were compounded by their modern historical and critical commitments. On the one hand, their appeal to God's sovereignty and grace was also to provide the grounds for freedom of the spirit over against structures of modern thought and society that seemed impermeable to change by mere human effort. Their disagreement about the relationship between divine grace and modern culture was permeated not only with the theological and philosophical debates within the early church, but also with the modern problematic of speaking God from a perspective within the matrix of historical-structural experience. Cochrane's interpretation of the Trinity as the "creative principle" within the world, and Bryden's insistence on eschatological revelation, offered strikingly different answers to the modern evangelical struggle to grasp the relationship between God and the world, and between Christianity and culture. In his interpretation of Augustine's Christian realism, Cochrane offered a progressive, but now sobered revision of liberal Protestant idealism, Cochrane reclaimed the presence of God's will amid the ambiguities of current history, and also the hope that free, creative personality and a culture transformed by grace might triumph over nature and mechanism. Though no less critical of secular modern culture, Bryden envisioned a radically eschatological redemptive order which was discontinuous with human culture. While Cochrane's progressive Augustinianism called for the transformation of modern culture to its true end, specifically a culture of grace characterized by the triumph of creative, free personality, Bryden's eschatological millenarianism asserted a transcendent gospel of grace and the freedom of the church against the claims of secular contemporary culture.

Chapter 10:

The Culture of Grace and the Gospel of Grace

The work of Charles Norris Cochrane and Walter Bryden to define the relation between grace and nature provided the intellectual foundations for mainline Protestant proposals for reconstruction after World War II. Both Cochrane and Bryden had advocated a culture of grace that recognized the reality of sin, and also claimed freedom for the life of the spirit and sanctified human freedom. While they affirmed the legitimacy of social institutions like the state, they also insisted on their relativity and responsibility to serve God and the common welfare. In their concern for transforming Christian culture and society, both Cochrane and Bryden advocated an order that combined freedom and moral community over relative structures.

Their differences, however, gave rise in the post-World War II era to different visions of the meaning of Christianity and God's Kingdom for modern culture and society. On the one hand, Cochrane's Augustinian "Christian realism," with its underlying Platonic ontology, provided the intellectual foundation for a moral interpretation of history that both comprehended the structural realities of existence and yet assured the freedom of creative personality. The implications of this Augustinian revival were worked out especially in the pronouncements of the United Church and in the early work of scholars like R. C. Chalmers, John Irving, and Northrop Frye. Here the twin themes of an Augustinian theology of grace, such as was articulated in the 1940 "Statement of Faith," and a progressive Augustinian view of history, were woven together to reclaim a central role for Christianity in transforming modern civilization into a Christian culture. In particular, they identified what might be called a culture of grace with the triumph of creative culture and free personality over nature in history. In the Presbyterian church, meanwhile, Walter Bryden led the transition from a Barthian emphasis on an existential experience of the eschatological Word to claim a distinctly

transcendent gospel of grace and a radically new lordship of Christ over all spheres of life.

I. Instruments of Grace: the Augustinian-Idealist Revival

The growing engagement of the United Church with social and cultural issues during the 1940's was evident in the series of commissions that it established to coincide with its "Statement of Faith" (1940) and John Dow's This is Our Faith (1943). In 1941 the Board of Evangelism and Social Service (BESS) established a Commission on The Church, Nation, and World Order, chaired by Gershom W. Mason with Ralph Mutchmor as secretary, and in 1943 extended into the Church Forward Committee. Though arising out of the need to clarify the church's relation to the state during the difficult circumstances of war, its main purpose was to address issues related to the reconstruction of a peacetime order. According to the BESS, it followed from the task of proclaiming God's Word that the church must "interpret the mind of the United Church concerning the whole range of social and economic problems."¹ Having issued its theological views in the Statement of Faith, it was time for the church to relate that faith to the needs of social reconstruction.

This response was reinforced with the establishment in 1942 of a Committee on the Christian Family, which was extended in 1945 to the Commission on Christian Marriage and Christian Home, chaired by Chief Justice J. C. McRuer and with J. R. Mutchmor as secretary. Before its report in 1946, the commission would also receive contributions from C. E. Silcox, Psychiatry professor Karl Bernhardt, and Hugh Dobson, among others.² The commission's task originated out of concern for vaguely identified problems of youth during war and the need to preserve the "goodness and purity" of the home "to safe-guard our country's youth, enabling them in confidence, to fight a good fight for

¹United Church of Canada (UCC), Yearbook, 1942, "Board of Evangelism and Social Service," 85, 99.

²UCC, Record of Proceedings (RP), 1946, "Commission on Christian Marriage and Christian Home," 105-6.

God and King and native land."³ Concern for the purity of the family grew with the 1944 BESS report that the Canadian rate of divorce for every 100,000 people had grown from 1.4 in 1918 to 21.4 in 1941.⁴ According to the BESS report, rising divorce rates were caused by social changes and pressures, such as urbanization, the separations brought by wars, economic distress, the growing freedom of women both in the concession of their right to sue for divorce in 1924 and their growing role in the work-force, lowered moral standards influenced by the growing influence of a commercialized mass media, and a growing generation gap. By 1946 the Commission on Christian Marriage and Christian Home reported that the family was being "threatened at its source by secularism and materialism," and since the family was the fundamental social institution, its disintegration threatened the entire social order.⁵

These efforts to relate Christianity to contemporary culture culminated in the appointment of the United Church's Commission on Culture in 1946 to study the development of modern culture and the needs and problems involved in transforming modern culture to a "more Christian pattern," and to identify the role of the Church in the redemption of culture.⁶ Initially held by K. R. P. Neville, the chairmanship of the commission was passed in 1948 to Professor J. F. Macdonald, with Randolph C. Chalmers as secretary. In 1949 the commission submitted a brief to the Royal Commission on Canadian Arts, Letters, and Sciences, and in 1950 it delivered its report on "The Church and Secular Culture" to the United Church's General Council. That report was a one-hundred page survey and diagnosis of western culture and an interpretation of the relationship of Christianity to the western tradition. Although Macdonald and Chalmers were its main authors, the report was based on papers

³UCC, RP, 1942, "Evangelism and Social Service," 83-84.

⁴UCC, RP, 1944, "Board of Evangelism and Social Service," 277-8.

⁵UCC, RP, 1946, "Commission on Christian Marriage and Christian Home," 105-6.

⁶UCC, RP, 1946, "Evangelism and Social Service," 67.

contributed by John Line, John Irving, Northrop Frye, Mary Quail Innis, Kenneth Cousland, Lorne Pierce, and numerous other scholars. Many of those contributions were published in a trilogy of books on the relation of Christianity and western culture edited by R. C. Chalmers and John Irving.⁷

The report's final recommendations included closer ties between the church and cultural institutions, including more chaplains for universities and a request that the newly-formed Canadian Broadcasting Corporation appoint a full-time religious leader to direct religious broadcasting, and more thorough training of the church's teachers, music directors, and ministerial candidates, in cultural and social matters.⁸ Beyond these particular steps, however, the report also urged the church and its ministers to make clear the relevance of the gospel to all aspects of life and everyday work, and also to acknowledge contradictions between Bible and present belief so as to show that while God remains the same, man's knowledge of him enlarges with the increase of knowledge and established truth through history. Above all, as we shall see, the report proposed an identification, as C. N. Cochrane had suggested, of religion and redemptive grace with the creative moral imagination. In doing so, it also marked the resurgence of an idealist interpretation, now qualified by an Augustinian sense of moral tension, of the relationship between Christianity and culture.

Indeed, at the center of these efforts to relate Christianity to modern culture was an Augustinian view of world order, but translated, as Cochrane had illustrated, into modern terms of moral tension and progress within history, and in terms of a hierarchy of grace and nature in which the church assumed the role of directing the moral life of the nation. This Augustinian approach was indicated most explicitly by the Commission on The Church, Nation, and World Order. In fact, in

⁷The trilogy consisted of The Heritage of Western Culture; Essays on the Origin and Development of Modern Culture, Randolph Carleton Chalmers, ed. (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1952); The Light and the Flame; Modern Knowledge and Religion, R. C. Chalmers and John A. Irving, eds. (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1956); Challenge and Response; Modern Ideas and Religion, R. C. Chalmers and John A. Irving, eds. (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1959).

⁸UCC, RP, 1950, "Committee on Culture," 144-5.

its 1942 report concerning the relation of Christianity to contemporary social and economic problems, the commission began by declaring its Augustinian starting point:

World Order is defined by Augustine as basic to justice and peace, the existence of both of which is realized only when, and if, Order prevails: and by Order, Augustine meant 'A system of right relations,' that is a God-given and God-ordained system.⁹

The report would proceed to enumerate the principles of "right relations" which the commission considered to be "God-ordained." What is significant here is the commission's insistence that principles of social justice and world order must be based on the distinct sovereign will of God.

Moreover, in asserting the church's role in declaring those principles, the commission, and also others, echoed the hierocratic doctrine of Pope Gregory VII in his eleventh-century revolutionary claims to the moral authority of the church in temporal affairs. In particular, they claimed that the church had an interest in social and cultural affairs on the grounds that God-given moral principles were located in and relevant for temporal life, and also on the assumption that such moral principles were spiritual matters and therefore the domain of the church.

That the church had an interest in social and cultural matters was a claim made by virtually every United Church commission established during the 1940's. The Commission on Christian Marriage and Christian Home, for example, warned that the threat of "secularism and materialism" to the life of the family also threatened the Kingdom of God. Since the family was a fundamental Biblical symbol for understanding man's relation to God, and a central moral institution in Scripture and Christian life, its disintegration also threatened the church and its power to sustain itself.¹⁰ Likewise, in his introduction to the report of the Commission on Culture, J. F. Macdonald offered a broader argument for the church's intrinsic interest in culture.¹¹ Though the primary role of the

⁹UCC, RP, 1942, "Church, Nation and World Order Interim Report," 129.

¹⁰UCC, RP, 1946, "Commission on Christian Marriage and Christian Home," 105-6.

¹¹UCC, RP, 1950, "Appendix: Report of the Commission on Culture," iii-vi.

church was now generally recognized to be evangelism, he urged, this concern could not dismiss culture for a "narrowly pietistic" view of evangelism without serious consequences for both faith and culture. In broadest terms, Macdonald argued that the salvation of souls must include "the cultural enterprise of men," for culture was in fact "the soul of man writ large."¹² The church's efforts to relate its faith to social life was laudable, according to Macdonald, but it must be extended to consider the relations of Christianity to culture if the church was to redeem contemporary cultural crisis.

In several cases, these apologetics also portrayed a progressive Augustinianism as an alternative to either secularized reform or Barthian pessimism, and as the only option that offered a Christian view of meaningful engagement with, and transformation of, culture. Already in 1939, the report of the United Church's Board of Christian Education, authored by Secretary Frank Langford and Chairman T. W. Jones, noted that its attempt to re-examine the whole philosophy of Christian Education had brought to light conflicting pressures from two opposing extremes. On the one hand, "left-wing moralists and social reformers" demanded an emphasis on moral conduct and social ideals "as purely human achievements, without any reference to God as the author and source" of those ideals. On the other hand were those who demanded a Barthian emphasis on the absolute transcendence and sovereignty of God so exclusive as to leave "no room for education or any other human effort for good."¹³ As a third alternative, the report proposed to hold a faith that recognized the "eternal tension" between God's transcendence and human responsibility, but yet insisted on both and promised to synthesize all truths to "make the human spirit sensitive to all the many voices that speak of God and bid us love God with all our hearts and our neighbour as ourselves."¹⁴ Implicit in this alternative was the belief that the voice of God was present in historical reality, and a Christian

¹²UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," ii.

¹³UCC, Yearbook, 1939, "The Board of Christian Education," 38.

¹⁴UCC, Yearbook, 1939, "The Board of Christian Education," 38.

humanism that called for the discovery and embodiment of divine love in social and cultural activity.

J. F. Macdonald's apologetic for the church's engagement with culture portrayed similar choices. Throughout its history, he claimed, the church tended to oscillate between two "false positions" regarding its relation to the world. On one hand was the tendency to identify the Church with the world so much that it became difficult to distinguish the church "from idealistic and high-minded service clubs or the peoples of the Church from very moral yet very pagan humanists."¹⁵ In this tendency, the church became merely a moral life-preserver of a dying culture, and in fact contributed to secularization. On the other hand was the tendency to identify the church as standing over against the world, judging its sin in the name of God and offering the Gospel of redemption, but failing "to see the Gospel in its total dimensions." Such an identity failed to understand "that God's purposes of redemption include the whole world and the totality of man's life in the world." Though right in its ultimate concern for the eternal destiny of man, such concern was wrong if it did not realize

that God's will as revealed in Christ is for the transformation of time and space and the whole of life by eternity.... For the Scriptures maintain that both in Creation and Redemption God manifests His loving will to exercise a sovereignty of grace over the whole of the created order.¹⁶

Like Cochrane, Macdonald thus assumed that redemptive grace was continuous with an order of divine will -- Cochrane's "creative principle" within the world and human being. Similar to "orthodox" Medieval Catholics from Gregory VII to Thomas Aquinas, Macdonald suggested that redemptive grace was the completion of nature.

Without identifying the alternatives, the 1942 report of the Commission on The Church, Nation, and World Order articulated the central premise and implications of this progressive

¹⁵UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," v.

¹⁶UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," v.

Augustinianism by claiming that transforming divine principles were present in the world. In developing that claim, it also demonstrated the ontological hierarchy of spirit and nature that was implicit in C. N. Cochrane's work. The report described God as the sovereign creator and the human image-bearer as "a spiritual being, linked to the natural order by his physical body, gifted with self-conscious intelligence and moral responsibility, and intended to live in community with God and with his fellow men."¹⁷ Thus, as Cochrane had suggested, human life in the world was rooted in moral relations: accordingly, it was humanity's sinful refusal to live in loving communion with God that infected it and society with evil and brought upon it God's judgement. By implication, this moral interpretation of human life meant that humanity's moral relations with God, and impact of sin and redemption, were intrinsically historical, meaning that they were lived out in the historical world, under the claims of the universal lordship of Christ.

Like Augustine, the report translated the moral tension between divine will and human sin into the ontic categories of spirit and nature that it identified with the realms of church and natural institutions. Recalling Augustine's two cities, the report described Christians as living in two kinds of communities: they were members of the universal church community, but they also were members of races, families, nations, economic systems, historic cultures, and states. "They live thus," the report claimed, "under the tension (actual or potential) of a two-fold loyalty, on the one hand to God and to the whole family of mankind, and, on the other, to the people to which in God's purpose they belong and to the state which is its organ of social authority."¹⁸

Assuming that the "natural" community as well as the spiritual was instituted by God, the report, borrowing from the 1937 Oxford Conference report, described their relationship in terms of a hierarchy: "[t]he state 'in the political sphere is the highest authority, but stands itself under the

¹⁷UCC, RP, 1942, "Church, Nation and World Order Interim Report," 130.

¹⁸UCC, RP, 1942, "Church, Nation and World Order Interim Report," 131.

authority and the judgement of God.'"¹⁹ While the church must respect the authority of the state "as the organ of justice, security and order within the nation," the state had no authority over conscience and religion. To the contrary, according to the report, the church had responsibility for "the spiritual well-being of the nation," and as such it legitimately claimed liberty for the church to be the church in its task of worship, doctrine, evangelism, and of condemning public evils and proclaiming the Divine purpose for life. In other words, the church's task as the instrument of grace was that of interpreter of God's moral will, and thus the moral arbiter and transformer of natural society.

On the basis of this hierarchy, the Commission on The Church, Nation, and World Order proceeded to declare a "universal moral standard proper to human beings as such, ... and to the way of deliverance from oppression, war, fear and want."²⁰ Making its point explicit, it claimed the right to demand from the state adherence to "the sacred and inviolable standards of the laws of God," which it enumerated in a list of human rights and duties. Thus it sought to limit the growing claims of the modern state by claiming that the state was subject to a divine Order interpreted by the church.

As its list of human rights and duties indicated, the commission sought to limit the state by asserting the primacy of personal freedom, but also to affirm the positive moral duty to seek the communal welfare. Consequently, the rights and duties that it set forth might be described as a Christian version of corporate liberalism. The general principle of World Order, it claimed, was that as God's image-bearers, persons were "made by God for freedom, responsibility, fellowship and cooperation in the service of God and of the common good of men."²¹ Freedom and duty were inextricably intertwined: man had the right to life and freedom, but also the duty to serve God and his fellow-men in community. This Christian interpretation of corporate liberalism was the

¹⁹UCC, RP, 1942, "Church, Nation and World Order Interim Report," 131.

²⁰UCC, RP, 1942, "Church, Nation and World Order Interim Report," 131.

²¹UCC, RP, 1942, "Church, Nation and World Order Interim Report," 131.

culmination of developments that were in embryo during the 1930's, including the 1934 Commission on Christianizing the Social Order and the support of Richard Roberts for the policies of W. L. M. King's Liberal government. The 1938 report of the Committee on Economic and Social Research, of which C. E. Silcox was secretary, had argued for a system of unemployment insurance and unemployment aid as a central feature of social security.²² Drawing from 1937 Oxford Conference report, the Committee refused to absolutize either classical liberal views of economic individualism or a planned, publicly owned economy. The pursuit of social justice, it claimed, must begin from faith in Jesus and the commandment to love God and neighbours, and through that faith it must recognize both the supreme worth of persons and the nature of the nation as a gift from God.²³ In particular, the Committee had proposed to balance democracy and social welfare. Though no form of government or economic system could be taken as the final expression of God's Kingdom, it claimed, the democratic system best preserved the freedom and worth of personality. But while it warned of the need to guard the liberty of persons against the threat of totalitarianism, the committee attributed the greatest threat to the welfare and rights of ordinary people to the capitalist system which concentrated wealth and economic power in the hands of a few who felt little responsibility to society, and whose "predatory activities require to be curbed."

On these principles, the Committee on Social and Economic Research began to advocate limited public programs, such as a public unemployment insurance program with public aid for those who were uninsured. It did so, however, with stipulations that government programs were only relative goods and that social welfare ultimately rested on personal moral responsibility and good will.²⁴ Accordingly, it suggested that an unemployment program function as an insurance scheme

²²UCC, RP, 1938, "Economic and Social Research," 161.

²³UCC, RP, 1938, "Economic and Social Research," 164-5.

²⁴UCC, RP, 1938, "Economic and Social Research," 166-73.

in which employees, as well as employers and government, contributed an appropriate premium so that all citizens would feel some responsibilities. It further suggested that the program's premiums should not be so high as to deter or negate the possibility of participation, while benefits should be high enough to provide adequate welfare but not so high as to supplant the incentive to work where possible. Wary of supplanting voluntary action, the committee also suggested that the tax revenues required for such programs should not be so high as to leave citizens with no resources for contributing to voluntary philanthropy. And finally, it urged that for efficiency such programs should be administered by one level of government, and preferably by a non-partisan agency such as a National Employment Commission. Though it had no solutions to offer the Rowell-Sirois Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations, the committee recommended a federally funded and administered insurance scheme, with an aid scheme administered by municipalities.

These pre-World War II proposals were affirmed and expanded by the various United Church committees during the 1940's as staples of a Christian World Order. In its 1942 report the Commission on The Church, Nation, and World Order, proceeded to claim an expansive list of rights and duties that included the right and duty to honourable work, the right to freedom from fear and the duty to cooperate with one's fellows to defend this freedom, the right to a meaningful status in society and a "proper share" in government and the duty of integrity and service to the common welfare, the right to justice and the duty to defend justice and show mercy in social and economic relations, the right and duty to pursue knowledge and achieve the best that one could be, the right to an orderly life, a home, leisure and joy, and the duty to overcome obstacles to life abundant.²⁵ In accord with those principles, the 1942 sessional committee on Evangelism and Social Service endorsed the Liberals' Unemployment Insurance plan, and recommended a similar program to extend health services through

²⁵UCC, RP, 1942, "Church, Nation and World Order Interim Report," 131-2.

a federal contributory health insurance measure.²⁶ And in approving the principles declared by the Commission, the 1942 General Council recommended that the Commission also examine proposals like the Atlantic Charter on which the United Nations would be founded, as models for international collective security and "economic democracy."²⁷ By 1944, the Commission on The Church, Nation, and World Order, now reconstituted as the Church Forward Movement committee, urged that the times required Christians to be "members of one another:" that the strong be willing to bear the burdens of the weak, and that they support a "larger measure of social control for the common good" in order to meet the needs that were demonstrated during the depression and would be even greater after the war. Acknowledging such "imperatives" not only would base the church's message on Christian principles, but would also appeal to rural, industrial, and younger segments of the population and so deliver the church from "the danger of being a middle class institution."²⁸

While thus expanding the claims of "World Order," the underlying premises remained the primacy of a sovereign divine moral order and personal freedom and responsibility. Hence, while approving and expanding the principles declared by the Commission on The Church, Nation, and World Order, the 1942 General Council concluded that no new World Order could succeed apart from the spirit of Christ.²⁹ World Order was above all a moral principle of which government was at best a limited instrument. And since moral responsibility also required personal freedom, the BESS declared in 1943 its support for civil liberties against the power of the state, urging the federal government to lift its ban on the Communist Party and to restore the property of the Labour Farmer Temple Association, and calling for the lifting of the Padlock Law in Quebec and recognition of the

²⁶UCC, RP, 1942, "Evangelism and Social Service," 82.

²⁷UCC, RP, 1942, "Evangelism and Social Service," 83.

²⁸UCC, RP, 1944, "Forward Movement After the War," 117.

²⁹UCC, RP, 1942, "Evangelism and Social Service," 83.

principle of collective bargaining and sane, progressive, and cooperation between labour and employers.³⁰

The primacy of moral order and personal responsibility was also the central theme of the 1946 report of the Commission on Christian Marriage and Christian Home, chaired by Chief Justice J. C. McRuer, with J. R. Mutchmor as secretary. The twentieth century norm of Christian marriage, according to the report, was "one man and one woman bound together of their own free will and choice, in...equal companionship of free personalities dedicated to each other for mutually desired ends[.]"³¹ To define the role of marriage and the family, the report adopted Augustine's view of the three functions of marriage, namely: companionship and intimacy in accord with humanity's creation as social creatures and as male and female; procreation; and the sacramental or divine vocation of the family as the primary unit for a moral social order.³² Before elaborate rules of annulment undermined its sanctity, the report claimed, this Christian view of marriage and its entrenchment in Medieval canon law had helped to stabilize the family and society, and to improve the status of women. Above all, however, as the primary moral institution of society and the basic Biblical symbol of humanity's relation to God, the Christian family was vital to the church and the Kingdom of God.

Arrayed against this moral conception of the family, the report warned of the forces of "secularism and materialism" that threatened the family, including the upheavals of industrialization, urbanization, and migration of peoples; popular new psychological theories which recognized the personality of women but also encouraged their desire for independence, and which spread the demoralizing idea that suppression of the self's instincts was wrong; the influence of the mass media; the growing encroachment of the state on activities and responsibilities of the family; separation

³⁰UCC, Yearbook, 1943, "Board of Evangelism and Social Service," 102-5.

³¹UCC, RP, 1946, "Commission on Christian Marriage and Christian Home," 108-110.

³²UCC, RP, 1946, "Commission on Christian Marriage and Christian Home," 108-110.

during war-time; and economic distress. All of these had in common the fact that they were external, structural realities. Underlying them, however, according to the report, was the main threat in the rise of materialist and hedonist ideologies that denied spiritual and moral realities, and supplanted absolute devotion to marriage partners and children with the pursuit of self-serving pleasure.³³ At this level, the crisis of the family -- indicated in rising divorce rates and problems of "purity" -- was a conflict of moral principles. Hence the most important solutions for improving family life, the report urged, were better preparation and maturity for marriage, and a commitment to moral principles rooted in the love of God that in turn offered love and security to each family member. That moral foundation would ensure that each family member would be treated as a person with absolute worth, so that securing the welfare and development of each member was a matter of highest importance.

Not surprisingly, the problem of regulating marriage and divorce highlighted the tensions that remained between church and state in a moral view of society. In the status of marriage, the report acknowledged, issues of morality and law were interwoven.³⁴ In the modern age, the state viewed marriage as a contract between parties, and was compelled to protect the interests of the parties to that contract. It could not refuse to provide for legal separation or divorce for the sake of religious or moral reasons, without a more serious infringement on its role as legal protector and on moral freedom.³⁵ Thus, any attempt by the church to reimpose its norm for marriage on society by legislation akin to Medieval canon law was impossible in a modern democracy.³⁶ On the other hand, however, the state could do little by legislation to create the love and moral responsibility that alone gave permanence to marriage and thereby brought stability to society and the state. The commission

³³UCC, RP, 1946, "Commission on Christian Marriage and Christian Home," 110-15.

³⁴UCC, RP, 1946, "Commission on Christian Marriage and Christian Home," 109, 124-5.

³⁵UCC, RP, 1946, "Commission on Christian Marriage and Christian Home," 127.

³⁶UCC, RP, 1946, "Commission on Christian Marriage and Christian Home," 109.

recommended, therefore, that while the church should not endorse separation, it should uphold the sanctity of marriage as instituted by God and requiring life-long fidelity, and it should provide counselling to avoid divorce and severely restrict sanctifying the remarriage of divorced persons.³⁷

Such a position conceded that law and moral order were at least temporarily out of step -- that "[w]hat the Church indissolubly binds together in the name of God, the State renders asunder by legal enactment, and an incongruous situation prevails."³⁸ This incongruity, according to the commission, reflected the ambiguity faced by the Christian church living with pagan and secular influences in a broken world. Even Moses and Jesus had recognized the reality of human sin that warranted legal separation, though in the gospel of Matthew this legal status did not provide a moral dissolution of the marriage bond.³⁹ Ultimately, then, the moral good was a possibility only through grace:

The Christian teaching on divorce and re-marriage can only be understood in the light of Jesus as the Messiah, and the larger setting of the Kingdom of God. Jesus called upon men to enter the Kingdom as sons, and live in God's family by the aid of a power other than their own. What the law could not do to achieve better moral living, the divine Spirit made possible. The Grace of God is the catalyst for moral ascendancy and removes the condition that breeds divorce....The role of the Christian Church therefore is not in the field of authoritarian rule, but in a leavening of contemporary life."⁴⁰

The moral norm was therefore an eschatological ideal that could be realized only under the conditions of grace. The church's role, accordingly, lay in the cultivation of the superior moral life that would prevent divorce, rather than in the legislative prevention of divorce.

By the late 1940's, the difficulties presented by brokenness in modern culture were epitomized in the dilemma of atomic power and the Cold War. In its reports for 1946 and 1948, the United

³⁷UCC, RP, 1946, "Commission on Christian Marriage and Christian Home," 143.

³⁸UCC, RP, 1946, "Commission on Christian Marriage and Christian Home," 124.

³⁹UCC, RP, 1946, "Commission on Christian Marriage and Christian Home," 126.

⁴⁰UCC, RP, 1946, "Commission on Christian Marriage and Christian Home," 128.

Church's Committee on the Church and International Affairs, chaired by Henry Langford, declared that atomic technology had "created a situation pregnant with the greatest possibilities for good or evil."⁴¹ At one and the same time, atomic power had protected freedom from totalitarianism, and even opened the possibility of beneficial atomic energy, and yet brought the world to the brink of destruction. Moreover, the committee confessed, the impossibility of identifying completely with any side in the Cold War brought home the meaning of Augustine's view of the ambiguity and relativity of temporal life.

In the Christian view all our human institutions contain evidence of our folly and frailty. In challenging things as they are the Christian citizen does not deny values inherent in all our culture and he strives ever to preserve them. In looking toward reform and the building of a nobler order of society he stands always for the Christian ethic and reserves the right constructively to criticize all orders, all cultures and all systems of economics and national organization.

Unlike Augustine's hope of an ultimately otherworldly destiny, however, the committee retained an optimistic hope that ongoing reform might build a "nobler order" of society. Under God, it claimed, all human edifices were relative, but in God, all human efforts also had the potential for good.⁴²

II. The Soul of Culture

The realization of that hope for the good fruit of human culture depended, however, upon the transformation of modern culture in such a way that it would bring science and technology, economics and politics, under the acknowledgement of God's reign. As the International Affairs committee concluded,

[t]he economic and political problems of our time, created by scientific and technological development, (including the atomic bomb), cannot be solved by the cultural resources of secular civilization. Our disorder can only be overcome by God's Order and Reign. There must be a rebirth of the soul of man to a spiritual

⁴¹UCC, RP, 1948, "Board of Evangelism and Social Service," 368.

⁴²UCC, RP, 1948, "Board of Evangelism and Social Service," 368.

conception of the meaning and destiny of life, and it is the Church's supreme task to bring the world to a saving knowledge of God in Jesus Christ.⁴³

It was this project of transforming the very foundations of culture that was taken up by the Commission on Culture established in 1946.

More fully than any other, this commission assumed the main ideas of C. N. Cochrane's progressive Augustinianism and his identity of redemptive grace with the free creative impulse of humanity. In his introduction to the commission's report J. F. Macdonald, defined culture as "the thought forms, the mental climate, customs, assumptions and activities of the people," which together constituted "'the soul of man writ large.'"⁴⁴ The creative will which was the dynamic impulse of culture, he added, was central to the Biblical view of man. As image-bearer, man was called to imitate God as Creator and Redeemer:

[t]hat is, man is called to be a creator, to exercise his creative gift of spirit with its freedom, in loving response to the call of Him by whom he has been made. To the one who yields himself to this call, God graciously bestows the gift of His creative Spirit. All human creativity is thus a dialectic between human freedom and divine grace.⁴⁵

Macdonald proceeded to tie religion and creativity together, for religion directed natural human creativity to its proper end. Religion, as Augustine had suggested, was a reverence for the holy "Other Than Man and Things" which was the source of unity and wholeness in life, and the concern to integrate human conduct with that source of unity "through the discriminating pursuit of values."⁴⁶ Thus religion provided the "instrument" and "pattern" of culture, while culture was the expression of religion in the incarnation of humanity's God-like creative spirit.

⁴³UCC, RP, 1946, "Board of Evangelism and Social Service," 65.

⁴⁴UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," iii.

⁴⁵UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," v.

⁴⁶UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 1.

Like Cochrane, Macdonald thus identified the creative impulse with human nature and the divine ground of being, and portrayed religion, and the realities of sin and redemption, in terms of abuse and reconsecration of the dynamic creative impulse. Constrained within humanity's moral relationship with God, humanity's exercise of free creativity readily was corrupted by sin into self-serving ends rather than for the glory of God. In fact, self-serving creativity was "the very essence of sin," and the mark of secular culture was "the attempt to engage in creative activity without reference to the Divine creator from whom ultimately all power in Heaven and on earth derives."⁴⁷ The crisis of modern culture and its fragmentation under competing absolutes and instruments of power was ultimately due to the sinful misdirection of the creative imagination.

In turn, however, redemptive grace meant the liberation of creative freedom and moral imagination to shape culture and history to its proper end. Jesus was the historical incarnation of the "dynamic force" and the "scale of values" which was "in God's mind at the creation," and "by which it was incumbent upon them to live[.]"⁴⁸ As the revelation of God's creative mind, Jesus was the answer to man's cultural quest for the unity of being and the clue to the good way of life intended for humanity. That this answer had come through history indicated, moreover, that the full disclosure of "universal values" through faith in a transcendent and morally holy God was to come through the course of history and cultural development.⁴⁹

Macdonald's identity of grace with the free creative impulse included the challenge of "whether the Christian Church from the standpoint of its faith can justify the creative works of the artist, the philosopher, the poet, the reformer, or whether it must confine its endeavours to the creation

⁴⁷UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," vi.

⁴⁸UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 1.

⁴⁹UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 1, 4.

of 'saints.'"⁵⁰ The issue for cultural transformation, he emphasized, was not merely whether the church considered the artist as morally good, but whether the church and religion could affirm and transform creativity itself. Answering his own challenge, he urged that the church's declaration of judgement and grace was not a call "to forsake the world which is God's good creation, but rather to love the world in God and for God." In fact, grace brought the recovery of "joy and freedom" in being "co-creators" with God. Creativity was the gift of God to man in creation, and was restored in redemption.⁵¹

The identity of grace with the creativity suggested by Macdonald and the Commission on Culture indicated the revival of an historically-conscious neo-Kantian idealism that approached neo-Hegelianism in its location of the divine spirit, as Cochrane's historical realism emphasized, within the "plane" of historical reality in free, creative personality. Though Augustinian in its sense of the moral tension between God's sovereign will and human sin, it also portrayed the resolution of that tension as occurring within history in a teleological process of becoming. And through that process, it anticipated the triumph of grace in which the free dynamic of creativity and moral imagination would transcend and fulfill "natural" structured reality.

This identity of grace with free creativity was one of the central themes of Canadian humanities scholarship, both within and beyond the United Church, in the immediate post-World War II decades. Indeed, the contributions of scholars like Northrop Frye and John Irving to the report of the Commission on Culture indicates at least some of their early concerns, and also ensured that the commission's report reflected those concerns.

Appropriately, given its commitment to historical realism, the commission's diagnosis of its ills was based on an historical survey of western culture. In their studies of the Greco-Roman and

⁵⁰UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," ii.

⁵¹UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," ii, vi.

Medieval legacies, Mary E. White, professor of Classics at Trinity College, and Kenneth Cousland, professor of Church History at Emmanuel College, echoed Cochrane's portrayal of the disintegration of classical culture and Augustine's transformation of the classical legacy with spiritual moral values and a theocentric view of history.⁵² Based on Cousland's comments, the report claimed that the Medieval synthesis of classical and Christian culture, philosophy and theology, and state and church, had given "visible form to the Kingdom of God" in a comprehensive unity of the western world based on Augustine's view of Christian order.⁵³ Though it had abused its position by legally compelling uniformity, the supremacy of the church during the High Middle Ages expressed the supremacy of God's universal spiritual rule, and thus suggested a model for a renewed Christendom.

The crisis of modern culture, according to the report, was rooted in the turn from Medieval universality to the Renaissance and Reformation. While the Reformation stressed the sovereignty and grace of God, its complementary emphasis was on liberty of conscience. At the same time, the Renaissance liberated man, especially science from scholasticism, claiming the right to approach nature directly, but also developed a claim to human autonomy and an interpretation of nature as a "simple, orderly system, whose processes are mathematically necessary."⁵⁴ The resulting loss of Medieval universality, as John Irving explained borrowing from Arnold Toynbee, produced a disequilibrium between the modern technological control of society and the moral values which should govern society.⁵⁵ Capitalism and the disorders of modern industrial society therefore followed from the

⁵²UCC, RP, 1950, "Appendix: Report of the Commission on Culture," 6-8. See also the chapters on "The Greek and Roman Contribution," by Mary E. White, and on "The Contribution of the Early Church," and "The Contribution of the Middle Ages," by Kenneth H. Cousland, in The Heritage of Western Culture.

⁵³UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 9-10.

⁵⁴UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 11. See also R. C. Chalmers, "The Contribution of the Renaissance and the Reformation," in The Heritage of Western Culture, 78-88.

⁵⁵UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 11. See also John A. Irving, "The Sciences and Philosophy in Modern Culture," in The Heritage of Western Culture, 88-102.

scientific revolution and its divorce of "ends from means." "The time clock, the adding machine, the assembly line" were, according to Irving, symbols of the impact of modern science and its reduction of life to technological control and productivity.⁵⁶

In one of the most famous of his early themes, Northrop Frye's contribution on "Trends in Modern Culture" identified this modern disequilibrium especially with America.⁵⁷ America, Frye claimed, was the first, and thus the paradigm, of modern western societies. As the commission's report summarized it, the "axioms" that defined America were typical of eighteenth-century Deism which maintained that the only real world was the physical world of the natural order; that nature was "red in tooth and claw"; that religion provided no revelation of another world, but rather was essentially morality; that God was to be found in man, and in nature to the extent that it was subdued by human purpose; that the "chief end of man" was to improve his own lot; and that progress was achieved by the advance of science that enabled man to triumph over nature and man's "atavistic," irrational impulses, and increase his bodily comfort.⁵⁸ In its refusal to apprehend transcendent divine realities and moral purpose, America epitomized modern secularism. The root of this secularism lay in the modern ideological axiom of laissez-faire which insisted on the autonomy of the individual. In fact, the spirit of laissez-faire was at once "anti-Christian," and ultimately opposed to genuine freedom, for it led not to genuine democracy, but to "managerial dictatorship." Fascism and Communism, then, were merely the more recent apocalyptic forms of the laissez-faire hope that man might, through technological control, construct his own naturalized utopia.⁵⁹ Paradoxically, those modern ideologies and systems were religions, but were nevertheless "anti-religious," for they

⁵⁶UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 12.

⁵⁷Northrop Frye, "Trends in Modern Culture," The Heritage of Western Culture, 102-17.

⁵⁸UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 13.

⁵⁹UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 14.

repudiated the "eternal perspective" without which man went mad with "'angst'."

For Frye, as for Macdonald and the Commission on Culture, the crisis and sin of modern culture lay in its secularism. In its interpretation of nature apart from God, and thus its lack of real moral imagination, it had falsely "dethroned God."⁶⁰ And in doing so, it had distorted the values of western culture, such as the rights of the common person, the equality of man, the democratic basis of political authority, and the ethic of justice and love that had been inspired by Christianity. By abstracting and absolutizing certain features of these values, modern society had displaced its faith to lesser false gods like the law of progress, success, science, the state, the will of the people, material and economic factors, or simply a materialistic nihilism. Modern society's confidence in the ability of these illusory gods to solve humanity's sin and create the utopian society, however, could only end in disaster and disillusionment. Citing such Christian humanist critics as C. S. Lewis, Paul Tillich, and Emil Brunner, the report claimed that the false gods of modern culture left man's conscience unsatisfied and his spiritual life empty, resulting in a general sense of malaise that left the offices of psychiatrists crowded.⁶¹ Furthermore, by cutting itself off from the spiritual fountain of life, modern secular culture had lost its creative impulse and freedom and was left, in the words of T. S. Eliot, a "wasteland."⁶²

To challenge this secularized wasteland, the United Church's Commission on Culture proposed to reclaim the synthesis of Christianity and classical thought in the western tradition, on the basis of a progressive Augustinianism like that of Cochrane. That proposal began with an attempt to reconstruct a Christian humanism in which religion and culture were reconciled. Quoting Nicholas Berdyaev's The Fate of Man in the Modern World (1937), the report declared that "In making himself

⁶⁰UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 34.

⁶¹UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 34-6, 53-68, 82.

⁶²UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," vi.

God, man has unmanned himself."⁶³ By declaring his autonomy from God, modern man had alienated himself from the spiritual source of existence and from his true self, with the result that his freedom and reason had become ego-centric and demonic. As Walter Horton had suggested in his "realist" Christian humanism, the failure of humanism was not in its achievements as such, but in its exclusion of God and the loss of transcendent values by which to order and judge the ends of society.⁶⁴

The Christian solution to the crisis and anxiety of modern culture was a humanism that was theocentric, and especially Incarnational. Citing Augustine's Confessions, the report claimed that man was a "theological" being made for fellowship with a transcendent God who, as the ground of being and righteousness, gave meaning to creaturely life.⁶⁵ The Incarnation, in particular, confirmed God's essential character as redemptive grace and love rather than law. It also confirmed the promise of "God's image in man" and so demonstrated "the kinship of God and man," and it confirmed that creation had a "spiritual or sacramental significance" as "the vehicle of the divine self-disclosure."⁶⁶ And while the Incarnation affirmed the value of the creation, through the Spirit of Christ God remained active and immanent in the world to give renewed creative vitality to whomever would receive it in faith. Christianity therefore meant that humanism, rather than becoming "sub-human," could become a "higher humanism" in recognizing the worth of humans before God. And as Frye had declared, Karl Marx notwithstanding, religion provided the hope, energy, and the ideals from which to work at transforming the world.⁶⁷

⁶³UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 69.

⁶⁴UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 59, 71-2, 86.

⁶⁵UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 70-84.

⁶⁶UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 82-6, 89.

⁶⁷UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 14.

Implicit in this "sacramental" Christian humanism, as in the case of Cochrane, was a Platonic ontology and anthropology that suggested a renewal of the analogia entis. What made man uniquely human was his "capacity" as an image-bearer to relate with God in a loving communion of free persons, or what Martin Buber called a dimension of "I and Thou."⁶⁸ At one point, the report described humanity as "a compound of the angelic and the demonic, the heavenly and the earthly."⁶⁹ The human spirit was grounded in the "Divine Spirit," and in religion the believer was translated "into a spiritual realm in which man can see life steadily and see it whole under the aspect of eternity."⁷⁰ Thus the claim of humanity's spiritual nature and of a "sacramental" view of creation assumed that the physical or material order of creation was subordinate to the spiritual, and that in faith, humans could transcend the objective structural limits of creation to apprehend God's thoughts and absolute ethic in the world.

Within this sacramental view of the world, religion and culture were inextricably related; in T. S. Eliot's words, "religion is the soul of culture." According to the report, culture was the instrument and incarnation of God's action in history, and from the human side culture was always responsible to God and relative to the transcendent standard of God.⁷¹ From A. N. Whitehead's Adventure of Ideas (1933), the report argued that the "impractical ethics" of Christianity were not simply for another world, but were a standard by which to judge human society and urge man on to further progress towards an "unrealized world."⁷² Such an ethic could not be lived, however, in a secularized humanism; rather, humanity was responsible to God in all cultural activity and social

⁶⁸UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 82.

⁶⁹UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 86.

⁷⁰UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 82.

⁷¹UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 84-5.

⁷²UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 72.

relations, so that no area of life could be a matter of moral indifference. Accordingly, human life and the physical, natural world, were to be subordinated to spiritual ends, to serve as the canvas for humanity's spiritual relation with the eternal.

From this assumption, the Commission's report offered a Christian interpretation of culture, society, and history that claimed a place for religion in culture and the western tradition. In the case of literature, for example, it claimed that the western tradition of literature was informed by religion, while religion gave the arts their broadest and deepest reach. According to Frye, western literature and poetry had always a strong religious reference; indeed, poetry by its nature was the human attempt to articulate the infinite in creative ways, though this creative imagination was threatened by the commercialization of the literature "industry" and the subjection of literature to propaganda for the purposes of dictatorship.⁷³

In its section on the sciences, the commission claimed that Christianity offered a solution to the secularization of modern thought and the excessive claims for science and technology, economics and politics, that were central to the modern crisis.⁷⁴ The supposed conflict between science and religion, the commission argued, was due to "mutual misunderstanding" in which science had usurped absolutism for itself, and religion had been "obscurantist" in using scripture as a textbook on the sciences.⁷⁵ Religion had no quarrel with proper science, but only with the presumptions of "scientism" which claimed to explain all of life in terms of its objective method. Against such claims, Christianity held that objectivity could not grasp the totality of experience, for the Creator was greater

⁷³UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 43.

⁷⁴The report's section on science followed the lead of John A. Irving, "The Sciences and Philosophy in Modern Culture," in The Heritage of Western Culture, 88-102, and also contributions by Helen Sawyer Hogg, Archibald G. Huntsman, W. S. Taylor, Murray G. Ross, John Webster Grant, as well as editors John Irving and R. C. Chalmers in The Light and the Flame.

⁷⁵UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 11, 15, 79.

than the creation. Properly understood, science and faith were "on different levels of human experience." Science provided empirical description of the facts of nature and the skills for dealing with the objective world, but it could offer no solution to the moral truth or belief in God. Religion, however, interpreted the experienced world in terms of a meaningful whole and gave direction to the use of skills. Science therefore needed to admit a place for religion and moral values, especially when it came to understanding human nature and social relations. Since the sources of human activity and purpose lay in free will and intelligence, its problems and norms could only be grasped through religion.⁷⁶

In its proposal for a Christian social order, the commission asserted that aspects of social life like economics and politics were similarly limited. Though western industrial society had achieved material progress in its standard of living and technological advance, it had done so at the cost of moral and social welfare.⁷⁷ The Christian view of society offered by the commission inverted the secular view of society. While Christians were to strive for the Kingdom of God in the midst of society, the reality that the Kingdom was "supernatural" and judged "all natural orderings of life" meant that all social systems were relative; none was to be taken as the final Kingdom of God.⁷⁸ Indeed, it claimed, it was only through the bonds of Christian faith that true community, and the resolution of conflicts between individuals and groups, could be achieved. Contrary to the current anarchy of "pagan individualism," the Christian view of creation meant that humans were bound together as creatures and were called to recognize the personality of others.⁷⁹ In contrast to modern nationalism that defined the community in "sub-human" terms of soil or blood, the Christian view of

⁷⁶UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 15, 79-80, 99.

⁷⁷UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 30.

⁷⁸UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 90-91.

⁷⁹UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 78.

true brotherhood and unity followed from the mutual reconciliation that followed from repentance, faith, and the "discipline of divine love" in which each recognized the other as persons loved by and related to Christ. Thus it was only in the light of the claims of God's Kingdom and Christian faith that individuality and community were reconciled in a way that affirmed the full development of individual character and freedom and the mutual relations and common purpose of service to God.⁸⁰

Christian society, then, was society organized under the umbrella of God's Kingdom and the divine norm of love. Borrowing from John Baillie's What is Christian Civilization (1945), the commission appealed to John Calvin's Geneva as the model of a Christian society in which every part of corporate life was subordinated to the will of God.⁸¹ Applied to economics and politics, this principle meant that no economic or political system could claim finality; but rather, each was called, according to Calvin's principle of vocation, to serve God's glory and human welfare. This approach, the commission claimed, resolved the dilemma of modern economics between individualist *laissez-faire* and social security. While there was no economic order, including socialism, that could claim to be "Christian," Christianity could insist that economic life was authorized by God and called to serve the glory of God and the welfare of man.⁸² With this common task the "battleground" between worker and manager should be overcome, and economics should be directed to serve personality and the welfare of workers and the community. While this did not necessitate the end to individual ownership, the reality of the sinfulness of human nature meant that confidence in a beneficent system of *laissez-faire* was naive. Since economic activity should be devoted to personality and community, both free enterprise and economic control were "two aspects of a total economic truth." Human welfare was achieved not by excluding one of these, but by appropriating what was worthy from each,

⁸⁰UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 78, 82, 90.

⁸¹UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 93-4.

⁸²UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 75, 91.

though without identifying the Kingdom with any economic system.

The commission proposed a similar Calvinistic interpretation of the subordination of the state to the will of God. The tendency to totalitarianism was a pagan demand for absolute loyalty that was, as Cochrane had shown, epitomized in the Roman empire, and that arose from the state's attempt to arrogate the authority of God to itself. From a Christian perspective, however, the state was a temporal institution ordained by God to serve the glory of God and the welfare and free development of the people.⁸³ At the same time, then, it was only in the light of God's endowment of rights and his love for men that human rights could be inviolable. If regarded as man-made or conferred by society or the state, rights could as easily be taken away in the name of the state, as was done in Nazi Germany.⁸⁴ Thus the commission affirmed the legitimate authority of the state and its right to receive the support and sacrifice of its citizens, but insisted that no form of government, whether authoritarian or democratic, could claim either absolute authority or the identity of God's Kingdom. Rather, Christians must support those forms which promoted meaningful life for the masses, and which enabled all to participate "creatively in the self-realization of the community" at all levels.⁸⁵

The primary solution to the crisis of secular culture, the commission claimed, was the need to restore the place of religion in education. A similar concern about religious education had been indicated in the United Church already prior to World War II in the efforts of Henry Langford, secretary of the United Church Board of Christian Education, to rethink Christian education beginning in 1939. In 1942 the Board stressed that, "in the present world struggle, and because we believe that man is a child of God," it was urgent that every person be educated in Christian truth, and in their

⁸³UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 76, 92.

⁸⁴UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 76-77.

⁸⁵UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 93.

religious inheritance and destiny.⁸⁶ At that time, however, the board's conception of Christian education was limited to church ministries and study groups, and to the colleges and seminaries of the church, with little reference to the public day school education system.

In 1944, with C. A. Myers as secretary, the board began to broaden its strategy by trying to link "religious education" with public day schools.⁸⁷ Noting that of the two and a quarter million children in public elementary and secondary education, some one million and a half were "probably" Protestant, but that only some three-quarters of a million or fifty percent of these were enrolled in Protestant Sunday Schools, the board sought a more effective method of reaching those unchurched children by cooperating with the school system and advocating the schools' responsibility in religious education. Among the potential methods of enabling that religious education, the board clearly favoured a system of collaboration between an inter-church committee and provincial Departments of Education to develop an adequate curriculum, textbooks, and the training and selection of teachers. In contrast to the alternatives of having merely voluntary religious education provided by clergy during school hours, or the Province of Ontario's proposal to integrate religion into a curriculum developed and administered solely by the Department of Education, the system provided by the board would ensure contact between church and state while also providing for comprehensive religious education.

Though the Commission on Culture did not address the administration of education, it pressed even further in its argument for incorporating religion into education. Anticipating Hilda Neatby's argument several years later in her So Little for the Mind (1953), the commission criticized what it assumed was the pragmatism that had come to dominate education, arguing that it failed to teach people how to live since its focus on relativist "social adjustment" excluded or reduced the basic truths

⁸⁶UCC, RP, 1942, "The Board of Christian Education," 294.

⁸⁷UCC, RP, 1944, "Board of Christian Education," 126-28.

about God that were necessary for a coherent meaning of the whole of reality. Truth ultimately was moral, the report claimed, since it concerned man's relation to God. Hence education must teach the truth "in love and for love," and it must constrain man to a decision about loyalty to Christ.⁸⁸ Religion was not merely an "elective" in education, but rather the most significant element that gave meaning and purpose to life. Indeed, the greatest need of the age was for Christian education and thought to counter the secularization of culture and mass media.⁸⁹ And Christian teachers, it urged, must "permeate all that they teach with the spirit and principles" of Christianity so as to train people, as T. S. Eliot suggested, to "think in Christian categories."⁹⁰

To restore the central role of religion in education, the commission called especially for a renaissance of the liberal arts of the western tradition. In support of this revival, the commission endorsed Harvard University's report on General Education in a Free Society (1945) and its proposal for a greater emphasis on general education that would provide "something more" than training in the sciences and languages. That "something more" was the wisdom of the western tradition, and especially Plato's "vision of greatness and a capacity to evaluate life in terms of the beautiful, the true, and the good," not merely for utilitarian ends, but so that man might adjust himself to the nature of the universe itself.⁹¹ But in keeping with a modern historical consciousness, it also sought to disclose transcendent truths through the "classical learning" of the historic western tradition, or what it called the "great traditions, ideas, ideals and principles, the real things by which men live."⁹² Contrary to the relativist and pragmatic methods of modern education and its hostility to tradition, the

⁸⁸UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 97.

⁸⁹UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 75, 99.

⁹⁰UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 80.

⁹¹UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 66-7.

⁹²UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 99.

commission claimed that in the tradition of "Greek thought and Christianity" were the spiritual sources, or what Sir Richard Livingstone had called the "'vitamins' and the 'life-blood,'" of western civilization.⁹³

The commission's proposal thus assumed, as had Cochrane, an underlying organic continuity between Christianity and the classical tradition. At the same time, it also assumed a continuity between theology and philosophy. On the one hand, the intent of the proposal was to recover a religious, theocentric basis for life. To that end, the commission proposed to restore Theology, if not formally then at least in principle, to the role of "Queen of the Sciences." In this role, it suggested, theology should be able to synthesize all knowledge and ensure that knowledge was seen in relation to God.⁹⁴ In actuality, however, its focus on an historical and "enlightened" discovery of transcendent truth finally led to philosophical reason rather than theological confession. Indeed, in his over-view of the report, J. F. Macdonald declared that the key to the new liberal education was the recovery of Philosophy that would re-establish the equilibrium between facts and values. In the absence of that balance, modern society had linked scientific technique with an uncritical "free play of individualism" producing, among other consequences, the capitalist economic order. Modern society therefore needed to balance social facts with clear social values that disclosed the meaning of facts. "Social facts without social values," he declared, "are meaningless; social values without social facts are impotent."⁹⁵ While the study of the social order must indeed be scientific, so also a rational philosophical analysis was needed that would examine the ends of social institutions in a way that was related to the existing realities of social structures. Though the basis of that philosophical examination of values must be rooted in the religious faith in a creative and moral human nature, and thus in the

⁹³UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 65.

⁹⁴UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 80.

⁹⁵UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 12-13.

belief in divine grace, it was philosophy that offered "the capacity to formulate rational value-judgements based, not on romanticism, but on a sound philosophical analysis," thereby providing for a rational treatment of values and an "enlightened religion."

Ultimately, the commission considered this reconciliation of philosophy and theology, and of Christianity and classical culture, to be consistent with the fundamental nature of Christianity. Seen in the light of Christ, the unity of life on the ground of eternal principles meant that knowledge of all times and in all branches was true for all time.⁹⁶ Thus the revelation of eternal truth could be found within history:

we still have a foundation upon which men and women of moral and religious conviction may build, and despite the degeneracy of much that for centuries has been the support of men of goodwill, much still remains. Only when mankind dares to listen to this residue, dares also to listen to the voice of God who speaks forever in the human heart, and takes seriously the objective revelation of God's love as it is in Christ Jesus, can the leaven of the secular conscience become purified and enlightened, and mankind find a way of life that will bring peace and security to the nations, and joy and creative life to individual men and women.⁹⁷

Here was a vision of a modern sacramentalism which interpreted the meaning of the world in terms of its relationship to a transcendent God, and which claimed to find echoes of that meaning in the world.

The proposal to recover the voice of God in a reconstructed western tradition, however, was also chastened by an Augustinian interpretation of history that emphasized both the moral root of history and the tension between God's eternal will and human history. In its section on modern views of history, the commission juxtaposed that Augustinian interpretation with modern secular and "utopian" interpretations of history, most especially the Marxism which had divided the FCSO, and

⁹⁶UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 24.

⁹⁷UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 36.

which the commission argued reduced history to material causes and a self-sufficient process.⁹⁸ Drawing especially on Herbert Butterfield's Christianity and History (1950), the commission portrayed history as emphatically not "self-explanatory" or autonomous, but rather, in keeping with its sacramental view of the world, as unfolding under the rule of God. At its core, therefore, the dynamic of history lay in moral relations, and it displayed the realities of sin, divine judgement, and the mysterious over-ruling of human good and evil by divine Providence. Nevertheless, the moral nature of history also meant, as Butterfield claimed, that it involved the action of free moral persons, and therefore remained open-ended and unpredictable. According to the commission, this interpretation gave assurance of the moral purposefulness of history and the hope, confirmed by Christ who was the "clue to the meaning of history," that the end of human action was directed by God toward his saving purpose.

Despite this confidence, the report remained ambiguous about the destiny of history. Like Augustine, it described man as a citizen of two worlds, namely the temporal world of social relations and duties and the eternal Kingdom of God to which man owed ultimate loyalty.⁹⁹ Thus the report, as had Augustine, identified the moral antithesis in history with an ontological duality. While claiming that its Augustinian view of history constituted a call to moral action in the world in the certainty that God's purpose would triumph, the commission also claimed that man was "both a citizen and a pilgrim in history."¹⁰⁰ In contrast to secular utopianisms, the commission claimed, paradise would not be accomplished "within space and time," but rather was reserved "only for eternity." Though the supernatural Kingdom of God impinged on the present order, making possible moral progress in the world, the reality of history was that evil and good were left to grow up together until

⁹⁸UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 74, 87.

⁹⁹UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 89.

¹⁰⁰UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 74, 89.

the end of history. The fulfillment of history, therefore, was "not in this world. Its fulfillment is from beyond the time scene when Christ shall come again to reign and God shall be all in all."¹⁰¹ Though not an event within history, however, the background of eternity hoped for in faith provided Christianity with the realism which recognized both progress and regress, and the transcendent claims of the Kingdom by which man might work toward "a true society in the world."

In its own way, the commission's Augustinian view of history offered a motive, though sobered with moral realism, for ongoing transformation of western civilization. As John Baillie had suggested in his What is Christian Civilization (1945), the dialectic between earthly civilization and the Christian eschatological ideal provided both a moral realism and a moral dynamic. Though thankful for the permeation of Christian ideals in western civilization, and striving to implement them more fully, Christian faith recognized that all earthly civilizations were corrupt and destined to perish. Nevertheless, while the society that "relaxes its hold upon the eternal" was sure to perish prematurely, Western civilization, with its Christian faith in the eternal and a "more chastened estimate of its own majesty and the knowledge that 'here we have no continuing city[.]'" might be made more durable.¹⁰²

III. Grace Against Nature: the Neo-orthodox Critique of Culture

While clergymen-scholars especially in the United Church strove to recover a Christian culture in post-World War II Canada, Canadian Presbyterians moved in the starkly opposite direction of emphasizing the discontinuity of Christianity and culture. Although John Moir has attributed that trend largely to conservative "anti-ecumenists" like W. Stanford Reid,¹⁰³ much more consideration should be given

¹⁰¹UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 74-78.

¹⁰²UCC, RP, 1950, "Report of the Commission on Culture," 96-7.

¹⁰³John S. Moir, Enduring Witness, 2nd Ed. (Hamilton: The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1987), 253.

to the influence of Barthian theology, and especially to the influence of Walter Bryden. Bryden shared Cochrane's Augustinian critique of classical and modern secularism and the attempt of modern man to impose his own order by the techniques of rationalism and power. As he rose to prominence in the Presbyterian Church during the 1940's, his Barthian insistence on the exclusive judgement and grace of a transcendent God, and the eschatological origins and destiny of the church, permeated the agenda and pronouncements of the church. By the late 1940's, however, he and his Presbyterian colleagues combined that Barthian exclusivism with the recovery of Calvinist ideas about God's sovereignty and the claims of Christ over all spheres of creation. In synthesizing Barthianism and Calvinism, Presbyterians like Bryden developed an alternative vocation of cultural transformation that sought, not the progressive realization of the western tradition, but a revolution of modern culture toward a radically new Kingdom of God.

During the 1930's, as the Presbyterian Church gradually resolved the most pressing difficulties of disunion, its engagement with the task of evangelizing Canadian society had begun to parallel that of the United Church. In 1933 Presbyterians had joined the Joint Committee for the Evangelization of Canadian Life, and also expanded task of Committee on Evangelism to include "Church Life and Work."¹⁰⁴ And in 1935 the Presbyterian Church joined the Social Service Council of Canada, which at the time was concerned with problems involving moving pictures, temperance, housing, and "decency."¹⁰⁵ During the war, it developed these social and ecumenical activities further. The 1941 General Assembly, for example, endorsed several overtures urging that the church devote greater effort to building the Christian civilization in Canada that the nation was sacrificing for in the war.¹⁰⁶ To

¹⁰⁴Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC), Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly (AP), 1933, "Report of the Committee on Evangelism," 106.

¹⁰⁵PCC, AP, 1935, "Report of the Committee on Evangelism and Church Life and Work," 124.

¹⁰⁶PCC, AP, 1941, "Minutes," 61, and "Appendix," 147.

that end, the Assembly directed the church to renewed study of the Word, and instructed the Committee on Evangelism and Church Life and Work to work with boards of other churches to develop an appropriate response to the challenge of Christianizing civilization.

By 1943, urgent calls to Christianize Canadian society seemed to come from all sides in the church, though such calls also began to emphasize the moral nature of the perceived crisis, thereby paralleling the rising Augustinianism in the United Church. In 1943, the Presbyterian Board of Evangelism and Church Life and Work reported on the social impact of the all-consuming war effort. War enlistment had drained the young men and women from the churches, war-time industrial demands brought round-the-clock production without Sundays off, while factory work took even women from volunteer church activities. Few had time left even for Sunday worship, and even this time was threatened with alternative amusements like the Sunday opening of movie theatres and sports.¹⁰⁷ In response, the board urged resistance to secularization of the Lord's Day, and renewed evangelical preaching and education.

Indeed, Presbyterian Church committees increasingly stressed the need for moral and spiritual renewal. In a 1945 statement on economic and social problems, the Board of Evangelism and Church Life and Work declared the need for further study, but also that "no nation can expect Security, Order, and Spiritual Blessing unless it first accept the spiritual and moral demands of Christ."¹⁰⁸ In its regular report for 1945, the Board also pleaded for the renewal of religious education in the public schools, arguing that the horrors of war and sorrows of mankind "are traceable to a broken moral law and the consequent judgments of a God that men ignored," and that the times demonstrated "the

¹⁰⁷PCC, AP, 1943, "Report of the Board of Evangelism and Church Life and Work," 95.

¹⁰⁸PCC, AP, 1945, "Report of the Board of Evangelism and Church Life and Work," 95-6. Emphasis in the original.

stupendous need for a renewal of the moral and spiritual foundations of our Western civilization."¹⁰⁹ Already in 1942, in fact, the Board had welcomed growing interest in religious education in the public schools.¹¹⁰ Though thankful for the opportunity for ministers to provide Bible instruction in the public schools, however, the board also feared that the system was inadequate in larger cities there were more schools than available ministers. In 1945, the board reported efforts by the Protestant churches to press provincial education boards to incorporate Religious Education into the curriculum of the schools, "and thus make the teaching of the Christian Faith a part of the child's mental fare."¹¹¹ Like the United Church, the Presbyterian Church endorsed the Province of Ontario's scheme for Biblical instruction by the Board of Education itself, with the stipulation that textbooks be revised in consultation with representatives from the Reformed Communion.

The trend of Presbyterian engagement with the moral transformation of civilization was further highlighted in 1945 when the name of the Board of Evangelism and Church Life and Work was changed to that of the Board of Evangelism and Social Action, with C. L. Cowan appointed as full-time secretary.¹¹² As Peter Dunn, Convener of the Board, wrote in 1947, the change in name signified that the Board had "a wider field of activity and called more pointedly to members to practice the principles of their faith in all life's relationships...."¹¹³ That same year, the Presbyterian Church participated in forming the Canadian Council of Churches, and an ecumenical plan for a new campaign, entitled Advance for Christ, to deepen and extend the spiritual life of the nation.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹PCC, AP, 1945, "Report of the Board of Evangelism and Church Life and Work," 96.

¹¹⁰PCC, AP, 1942, "Report of the Board of Evangelism and Church Life and Work," 79-80.

¹¹¹PCC, AP, 1945, "Report of the Board of Evangelism and Church Life and Work," 96.

¹¹²PCC, AP, 1945, "Minutes," 69; 1946, "Report of the Board of Evangelism and Social Action," 103.

¹¹³Peter Dunn, "What's In a Name?" Presbyterian Record (March 1947), cited in PCC, AP, 1947, "Report of the Board of Evangelism and Social Action," 84.

¹¹⁴PCC, AP, 1945, "Minutes," 68.

After 1945, however, virtually in mid-stride, these expanding efforts to Christianize Canadian civilization were taken in the direction of a more radically exclusive, and generally Barthian conception of the evangel. This shift was hinted at in the 1946 report of the Board of Evangelism and Social Action, which, with C. L. Cowan now as full-time secretary, could consider its long-term plans and the problems of evangelism. According to the report, renewed theological interest, extensive efforts at evangelistic missions, and new church building all indicated that there was no lack of commitment in the Presbyterian Church.¹¹⁵ To the contrary, according to the board, the Presbyterian Church was recovering from the "disaster" of 1925, and had under God's guidance a vital contribution to give to Canada and the world. Despite this prosperous activity, the board reported increasing difficulty in its efforts to evangelize an age that was apathetic to the evangel:

The problem is how to communicate the Gospel to an indifferent age and a world given over to secular pursuits and the pursuit of pleasure. Advances can be made in localities, and progress is noted in churches here and there, but the permanence even of such advances is sometimes doubtful. The fact must be faced that there is a world-wide indifference to or open hostility towards the Christ. The tragic result of this is seen in the decline in morals, in the collapse in many quarters of decent social standards, in the increasing number of divorces, in drunkenness, in juvenile delinquency, and in crimes of violence and shame, and all this in spite of the countless social agencies at work throughout the world!¹¹⁶

Even within the Presbyterian church, the report added, the problems of a small and dispersed membership, theological differences, and regional differences frustrated the work of evangelism. Such a situation called, the board concluded, for the church to reflect on its responsibilities and efforts, on its faith and doctrine, and humbly wait upon God "who alone is sufficient for the problems that face us."

In addition to this theological reconsideration, the Presbyterian church withdrew from the joint Advance for Christ campaign, and established its own Advance for Christ and Peace Thankoffering.

¹¹⁵PCC, AP, 1946, "Report of the Board of Evangelism and Social Action," 100.

¹¹⁶PCC, AP, 1946, "Report of the Board of Evangelism and Social Action," 100.

In his report on this action, William Barclay, chair of the Presbyterian Advance for Christ Committee, explained that the committee could find no grounds for cooperation with other communions due to "essential differences between the various campaigns."¹¹⁷ At the heart of those differences, by Barclay's account, was a view among Presbyterian representatives that the work of Christ could not be "organized" by the church, for the advance of the church depended on the conviction created by Christ himself. The proper act of the church was not merely self-promotion, nor the presumption to create faith, but to respond in thanks and Christian obedience. "The Church exists," Barclay declared, not to perpetuate its own tradition, but "to preach the Gospel, to compel people to decide about Jesus Christ even though they may not want to do so, and to teach the meaning of the Christian Faith."

This disengagement from social amelioration in favour of a more exclusive reliance on Christ coincided with the rise of Walter Bryden, James Smart, and A. C. Cochrane, and an emerging new generation of scholars influenced by Barthianism, in the Presbyterian Church. Most significant among these was Bryden: with his address on The Significance of the Westminster Confession to the 1943 General Assembly, he had gained wide respect, which was confirmed in his permanent appointment as principal of Knox College in 1945. Although a conservative wing that included W. Stanford Reid, T. Wardlaw Taylor, and F. Scott Mackenzie also contributed to an anti-liberal opposition to ecumenicity, it was especially Barthians like Bryden who would dominate the doctrinal reflection of the Presbyterian Church during the 1940's and 1950's. The two major committees established to lead this reflection were the Committee on Articles of Faith, which was appointed in 1942 and delivered its initial "Statement of Faith" in 1945, and the Commission on Church and Nation, appointed in 1949. Together, those two committees reflected the immediate post-war Presbyterian understanding of Christianity and its relation to contemporary Canadian culture. Bryden was a pivotal figure in both committees, and to the objection of conservatives like Reid they would bear the stamp of his Barthian

¹¹⁷PCC, AP, 1946, "Minutes," 28.

emphasis on an exclusively eschatological Word.

The 1942 appointment of a Committee on Articles of Faith followed the "Paris deliverance," which consisted of overtures to the General Assembly of 1942 requesting freedom to use forms of worship other than those approved by the 1875 Basis of Union of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, and which by implication juxtaposed freedom of conscience, church order, and the status of the Westminster Confession's affirmation of the state's authority in the church.¹¹⁸ As the 1945 General Assembly noted, the ambiguity of the Basis of Union on such matters effectively left the church with no clear position on the relation of church and state, and more significantly, with no effective common confession.¹¹⁹ The committee appointed to address the latter issue included Peter Dunn, Joseph Wasson, A. C. Cochrane, Walter Bryden, W. Stanford Reid, T. Wardlaw Taylor, and E. G. Thompson. Eventually, Principal F. Scott Mackenzie and his successor at Presbyterian College in Montreal, Robert Lennox, J. B. Rhodes, and Donald V. Wade, among others would serve on the committee.

The committee's first "Statement of Faith" in 1945 was intentionally tentative and partial, focusing on issues that it considered pertinent for the times and for an essential confession of Christian faith.¹²⁰ Its first article, "The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God," echoed the theme of Bryden's The Christian's Knowledge of God (1940) by taking as its starting point the problem of human sin. Assuming the radical discontinuity between God and humanity, the statement declared that man could no longer know God from revelation in creation, and that God revealed himself only through the Word of the living Christ that was recorded in Scripture and interpreted by the Holy Spirit. From this emphasis on human sin and immediate revelation, the statement proceeded to declare humanity's reliance solely on God's unilateral grace in a Christ "from above," as well as an Anselmic

¹¹⁸PCC, AP, 1945, "Appendix: A Statement of Faith," 301.

¹¹⁹See the overview in PCC, AP, 1950, "Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation," 140.

¹²⁰PCC, AP, 1945, "Minutes," 61; "Appendix: Statement of Faith," 302.

understanding of atonement in which Christ's death alone satisfied God's just judgment and propitiated for human sin.¹²¹ Its Christology rejected any attempt to belittle the divinity of Christ or the miracle of his Incarnation, and in the doctrine of election it affirmed that grace in Christ was the unilateral and "eternal" work of God.¹²² Likewise, it declared that the church was the creature of God's Word and Spirit, and as such was, as Bryden emphasized in his critique of Cochrane, uniquely "born from above."

Like the central themes of Bryden's own works, then, the Presbyterian statement portrayed grace as strictly eschatological, and in order to make its point clear it explicitly negated any continuity between grace and creation. Though man was created a "living soul" with the capacity, as the Westminster Confession claimed, to have free and eternal communion with God and to do his will, the reality of original sin meant that man had "bound" himself over to God's just judgement.¹²³ Because of that sin there could be no knowledge of God apart from direct divine revelation, whether by "unaided intellect or emotion" or through any other religions or gods, nor were the Scriptures merely the record of man's religious experience and search after God.¹²⁴ Though the preservation of creation was indeed the work of God's grace, that grace was revealed solely in Christ, so that neither history, nature, or philosophy could provide any preparation for the revelation of grace. It was only in his confession of his "utter unworthiness" that man could experience God's grace, and only in the faith given by God's grace could man know God's Word in creation.¹²⁵ The statement also rejected what it took to be the liberal idea that man's sin was merely imperfection, or that "communal

¹²¹PCC, AP, 1945, "Statement of Faith," 302.

¹²²PCC, AP, 1945, "Statement of Faith," 304-5.

¹²³PCC, AP, 1945, "Statement of Faith," 303.

¹²⁴PCC, AP, 1945, "Statement of Faith," 302.

¹²⁵PCC, AP, 1945, "Statement of Faith," 303.

or civic virtues," on their own, could be identified with the fruits of the Spirit. Though God's providential grace enabled man to abide by "necessary virtues" in his relations with fellow-man, he was incapable in anything regarding "things above" in the sense of knowing and doing God's will or contributing to his salvation. Human righteousness, and man's true purpose, were to be realized only through the eschatological Christ.

The statement's emphasis on the eschatological uniqueness of grace and the church over against sinful nature, however, meant that the church's relation to the world in the present age was deeply ambiguous. Though its origin was transcendent, the church remained human, and therefore "frail and weak" since its members still awaited the fullness of redemption. The church was visible where, and insofar as the Word is preached and received by faith and the sacraments rightly administered; indeed, it was through these instruments, though in human words and signs, that God's Word of grace was declared in the world. But as Luther had argued in his theology of the Word, the heart and truth of the church remained invisible in the sense that its life was "hid with Christ in God," for no one could observe the work of the Spirit. In setting the church apart from all "natural" associations and institutions, the statement meanwhile described the latter as institutions which "necessarily emerge for the protection and preservation of men and society in their temporal conditions because of their bondage in sin."¹²⁶ In contrast to Cochrane's emphasis on the continuity of creation order with redemptive grace, the Presbyterian statement thus viewed "natural" institutions as products of God's providential grace to restrain sin. As such, they were subordinate to God's will, but they were temporary, and they functioned in terms of natural law rather than redemptively.

The ambiguity that resulted from this view was evident in the statement's position on the relation between church and state. The state, it claimed, had legitimate authority to maintain just laws and to use the power of the sword, for it was authorized by God "in consequence of man's sin" for

¹²⁶PCC, AP, 1945, "Statement of Faith," 305.

the glory of God, for the public good, and for the protection of God's people and the freedom of the Gospel.¹²⁷ Church and state therefore had different tasks that related to different orders. While the state belonged to the temporal order of sin, the church's role was "fundamentally redemptive and of eternal significance, i.e., to save, deliver and release the souls of men from the bondage of sin and death."¹²⁸

Though church and state had related interests, and in some sense were intertwined in temporal life, the statement protested profusely against the attempt to subject one to the other. While it made brief allusion to Catholic claims to the superiority of the church over the state, it especially warned against modern totalitarian attempts, exemplified by Hitler, to make the church a function of the nation. Though they had different tasks, both church and state were "directly" subject to Christ, rather than to one another.¹²⁹ Ecclesiastical authorities must not "interfere in the laws of the secular realm, claim jurisdiction over its peoples, or deprive any of its citizens of their lawful rights within the realm."¹³⁰ But conversely, the state could not assume control over the church's administration of the Word and sacraments and "the keys of the kingdom of heaven," nor could it claim ultimate power over the minds or souls of people. By implication, the state also could not legitimately impose upon the church's teaching of the Gospel, including in religious education in the public schools.

While this separation of tasks implied that both church and state had legitimate functions, the statement suggested that their association with the different orders of grace and nature meant that they tended to inherent conflict. Christians, according to the statement, lived in two worlds: though "primarily...citizens of 'Heaven,' they are also ... citizens of the secular realm upon which they are

¹²⁷PCC, AP, 1945, "Statement of Faith," 306.

¹²⁸PCC, AP, 1945, "Statement of Faith," 307.

¹²⁹PCC, AP, 1945, "Statement of Faith," 307-8.

¹³⁰PCC, AP, 1945, "Statement of Faith," 307-8.

dependent for maintenance, justice and peace." So long as the state was "under and subject to God," Christians owed the same loyalty to the state as any other citizen.¹³¹ But the tendency of man to subvert power to himself, particularly through the instrument of the state, meant that there was an inescapable tension between the claims of church and state. While the church must be humble and long-suffering in the face of persecution, it was also called to "pronounce judgment" on injustices by the state and remind it of its divine obligations. In times of tyranny and oppression, such as Hitler's totalitarianism, this prophetic task might even mean encouraging active opposition to the false state, even to the use of arms, so that the church might "witness to the freedom and absolute claim of God's Word upon all men, and upon all nations."¹³²

The statement concluded with a view of the relation between the social order and the Kingdom of God that at first glance seems to contradict its insistence on distinguishing between the orders of redemptive grace and sinful temporality. The whole social order, it claimed, was subject to God, and the Kingdom of God was the universal rule of Christ in all things. This claim, however, assumed that the Kingdom of God was constituted by the eschatological entry and positive revelation of God's Word into the world. Through the Word, Christians were made new creatures in all human relationships, and "adjusted" themselves so as to live for God's glory in the family, trade, and state.¹³³ From the perspective of the radical impact of the Word, the statement repudiated attempts to separate some aspects of life from the operation of that Word and so reduce Christ's claim to only the realm of religion and morals. In the Christ of grace, rather than the continuity of the logos of creation claimed by Cochrane, all aspects of life were one, and "the Kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdom of our Lord and His Christ." The Kingdom of God would not be brought about

¹³¹PCC, AP, 1945, "Statement of Faith," 306.

¹³²PCC, AP, 1945, "Statement of Faith," 307.

¹³³PCC, AP, 1945, "Statement of Faith," 308.

by state action; rather, it would come about through the regeneration of the nations to obedience to God through the work of God's Word, and in this sense it would progress only on the basis of "sound doctrine and the true faith."¹³⁴

In the meantime, then, the committee strongly asserted freedom for the church. On the particular issue of liberty of conscience, however, it made clear that its claim to freedom meant specifically a positive, Christian view of freedom from sin and judgement, and for obedience to God, rather than the license of self-will or the absolute rights of natural conscience or "private judgement." There was no freedom of conscience "except where the natural conscience of man has come under the compelling power of the Word and of the Spirit of God," for only thus did man willingly accept God's will.¹³⁵ Hence the "liberty of conscience" clause in the 1875 Basis of Union was applicable only the freedom of the church from the state; it could not mean the right of private, natural conscience to judge in matters of religion, for that would leave the church with no binding confession and no real submission to the Word of God. Freedom of conscience simply meant that the state had no right to interfere with individual conscience by requiring religious tests, but the church nevertheless had the duty to bind the conscience and require religious tests of its office-bearers and members. In short, freedom meant freedom for the church and the gospel of grace.

This initial "Statement of Faith" was significant in several ways for the Presbyterian Church. Most immediately, it stirred debate within the church that spanned several years, and brought about a division between its neo-orthodox and conservative wings. The emphasis of the Statement on human sin, the eternal work of God, an eschatological and supernatural Christ, and freedom for the church, were points that conservatives and Barthians could agree on, at least tentatively. Still, submission of the 1945 statement to the presbyteries for review and response returned in 1946 a host

¹³⁴PCC, AP, 1945, "Statement of Faith," 308, 309.

¹³⁵PCC, AP, 1945, "Appendix: Statement of Faith," 307-8.

of questions about its negation of opposing views, and its unfamiliar conception of the Word and revelation, the nature of the church, and the relation of Christ to God the Father and creator.¹³⁶

As the Committee on Articles of Faith attempted to clarify its views on these matters, it also alienated conservatives. The committee reported that the church's confession must be the reflection of the working of the Spirit in its own members; hence it rejected copying confessional statements from other churches, and also felt free to criticize the Westminster Confession.¹³⁷ In fact, its Barthian insistence on a radically unique, direct revelation of the Spirit subsequently led to several paradoxical distinctions. While claiming that creation did witness to Christ, and that man should be able to know God from creation, the committee's 1947 report claimed that human sin and suppression of the truth left man with the paradox of "having a knowledge of God from these testimonies and yet not knowing Him" except out of the eschatological and new work of the Word.¹³⁸ It also attempted to distinguish between the words of Scripture and the "authentic witness" of the Word that came through the prophets and the apostles, yet it claimed that Scripture an absolute and uniquely inspired Word that was "more than a witness" because "God Himself speaks in it." Though revelation and the human witness could be distinguished, they could not be separated; one could not go behind the text of Scripture in order to discover a revelation apart from the text.¹³⁹ Yet again, while the church was called to declare God's Word, no human word could be identified with the Word of God, for to speak of God was possible only in the miraculous condescension of Christ's spirit to enter the words of man.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶PCC, AP, 1946, "Report of the Committee on 'Statement of Faith,'" 334.

¹³⁷PCC, AP, 1946, "Report of the Committee on 'Statement of Faith,'" 335.

¹³⁸PCC, AP, 1947, "Report of the Committee on Articles of Faith," 181.

¹³⁹PCC, AP, 1947, "Report of the Committee on Articles of Faith," 182.

¹⁴⁰PCC, AP, 1947, "Report of the Committee on Articles of Faith," 182.

Suspensions that the committee's view of revelation contradicted the Westminster Confession and Shorter Catechism were deepened in 1948 when the committee criticized the Westminster Confession's doctrines on the "eternal attributes" of God and on election and "double predestination" for presuming that man could know God's eternal mind and that human characteristics could be extended to God.¹⁴¹ For a truly evangelical doctrine of election, the committee suggested, one need only look to God's revelation in Christ and the Holy Spirit. And since they could not presume to know the mind of God, Christians could only assume that God called all to believe, and that Christ had been the representative sacrifice on behalf of all men, and that therefore all were elect.¹⁴² Finally, the committee sharply distinguished between grace and reliance on law and forms. Since God's law as revealed in Christ was a loving will, the law was not to function legalistically to allow man to establish his own righteousness; rather, it was to disclose man's guilt and God's judgement, and to direct man to Christ and to a life of grace that was distinct from legalism and God's providential laws for physical, economic, and social life.¹⁴³

The committee's Barthian challenge to the Westminster Confession's scholastic Protestant claim to lay down in its doctrine the eternal mind of God led to the open dissent of conservative Presbyterians. W. Stanford Reid argued that the committee's criticisms went beyond its mandate to develop a Statement of Faith based on the Bible and the Westminster Confession.¹⁴⁴ When the committee added in 1949 that the institutional church and ecclesiastical forms, or the "agreements of men," could not be identified with the essential unity of the church that was hidden with Christ,

¹⁴¹PCC, AP, 1948, "Report of the Committee on Articles of Faith," 129-31.

¹⁴²PCC, AP, 1948, "Report of the Committee on Articles of Faith," 132-3.

¹⁴³PCC, AP, 1948, "Report of the Committee on Articles of Faith," 136-7.

¹⁴⁴PCC, AP, 1948, "Report of the Committee on Articles of Faith," 137.

conservatives refused to concur.¹⁴⁵ In a dissenting minority report, W. H. Fuller, David Kerr, and T. Wardlaw Taylor defended the obligation to participate in the fellowship of the Church, and argued that the true Church was indeed visible in the "forms" that marked the true church, such as proclaiming the Word, administration of the sacraments, and exercise of discipline.¹⁴⁶ Coinciding with this dissent was the resignation from the committee of W. Stanford Reid and F. Scott Mackenzie, who had joined the committee in 1948.

A second dimension of the statement was its sharp difference, especially in its assertion of radical human sin and the discontinuity between grace and creation, from the progressive Augustinianism that led the United Church statements to identify with the western tradition. Bryden rejected the progressive Augustinian identification of the divine with a spiritual principle that was "becoming" in creation. Throughout his post-war work, Bryden insisted that all "human reason, science, philosophy and culture" had failed man; man could find no security in himself or his civilization.¹⁴⁷ In his inaugural lecture as Principal of Knox College in 1945, he began from the declaration that humans have nothing to bring to the urgent tasks of God in the present age.¹⁴⁸ "The world," he claimed, "by its nature always stands in a state of rebellion against God, strives to crucify the Son of His Glory and invariably ends up in a riot of savagery and of wanton living."¹⁴⁹ Sinful humanity in all ages turned from God to follow Nature and their own human impulses. Consequently, whatever work the church might do was made possible only by the eschatological presence of God's

¹⁴⁵PCC, AP, 1949, "Report of the Committee on Articles of Faith," 313-15.

¹⁴⁶PCC, AP, 1949, "Report of the Committee on Articles of Faith," 316.

¹⁴⁷Walter W. Bryden, "The Church, Today and One Hundred Years Ago; An Anniversary Sermon (1950)," in Separated Unto the Gospel, 17-18.

¹⁴⁸Walter W. Bryden, "The Church of God and the World," in Separated Unto the Gospel, 46.

¹⁴⁹Bryden, "The Church of God and the World," 46, 58.

spirit that brought to humanity a radically new life characterized by the recognition of Christ as lord over all things.¹⁵⁰

Bryden's depiction of this eschatological "new" order emphasized its radical discontinuity with an old order. God never, Bryden claimed,

adds old things to new things. He never creates the truth which saves men by putting together that which embraces the best in the old and that which is most promising in the new. He does not seek, as we do, to revive a decaying age, to procure a new start, to create a real confidence in the hearts of men by discovering some middle way between what is old and what is new.¹⁵¹

In keeping with Barth's paradoxical crisis, Bryden insisted that the good news of God's presence in the world in Christ always brought judgment that preceded forgiveness, and that signified "the complete disillusionment of man in his natural evaluation of himself."¹⁵²

Throughout the post-war period, Bryden distinguished this view from the progressive Augustinian revival of Christian humanism. Already in his 1945 inaugural address, he criticized Sir Richard Livingstone's appeal to revive the Arts and Humanities that the United Church's Commission on Culture would adopt in 1950. Though Bryden agreed that the trend of modern culture to the technical sciences was not adequate for rebuilding civilization, he disputed Livingstone's claim that Greek thought was part of a true "spiritual" basis for western civilization. While Greek thought indeed was part of western culture, he claimed, the Holy Spirit was the only true spirit, and it "stands over against all 'flesh,' cultural as well as sensual."¹⁵³ Elsewhere, Bryden argued that a radical view of grace challenged the "idealist" and Greek logos identity of grace with a "so-called 'higher' rational-

¹⁵⁰Walter W. Bryden, "The Holy Spirit and the Church (n.d.)," in Separated Unto the Gospel, 31, 36.

¹⁵¹Bryden, "The Church, Today and One Hundred Years Ago," 19.

¹⁵²Walter W. Bryden, "Jesus Christ -- the Call of God (n.d.)," in Separated Unto the Gospel, 155; Walter W. Bryden, "Creeds and Confessions, Some Preliminary Considerations as a Preparation for the Historic Study of Creeds and Heresies (nd)," in Separated Unto the Gospel, 99.

¹⁵³Bryden, "The Church of God and the World," 62.

principle, immanent in man and in the world, presumed to be the sole creative agency of all there is of worth in civilization, culture and religion."¹⁵⁴ He conceded that there may be a creative-principle in life, and that earthly virtue was indeed the providential grace of God that pointed to the eternal, but this meaning was visible only in the light of the Spirit. Meanwhile, all so-called virtues of man were under the curse of sin. To identify the creative principle with the redemptive Holy Spirit was disastrous to Christianity, for it suggested a new self-sufficiency for the world that rested on a false dichotomy between spiritual life, identified with inner mental life, and the external world.

In fact, Bryden claimed, Greek thought was part of the crisis of modern culture because it assumed something within humanity as the norm by which man could judge and approve of himself, and as a result it ended in "a morass of relativisms and subjectivisms."¹⁵⁵ According to Bryden, however, the true antithesis involved different kinds of spiritual life, in which the work of the Holy Spirit marked the "utter discontinuity between God and sinful man, between the Divine Spirit and the Human Spirit."¹⁵⁶ The radical newness brought by the eschatological revelation of Christ therefore raised "embarrassing questions" about the "Imago Dei and the Analogia Entis," for it suggested that there could be no approach to God, and no revelation, by analogies to nature or human personality.¹⁵⁷

For Bryden, then, the eschatological work of grace was juxtaposed with historical tradition and philosophical reason. The work of the spirit, he claimed, was no historic human accomplishment, but the gift of "God's descent into the world for its redemption," and it was made felt in the world

¹⁵⁴Bryden, "The Holy Spirit and the Church (n.d.)," 40.

¹⁵⁵Bryden, "The Church of God and the World," 63.

¹⁵⁶Bryden, "The Holy Spirit and the Church (n.d.)," 41.

¹⁵⁷Walter W. Bryden, "Eschatology and Biblical Revelation, (nd)" in Separated Unto the Gospel, 111.

of sin only through the presence of the Spirit in the church.¹⁵⁸ The main problem of the modern church was not the external threat of secularizing forces, but the danger that the church itself tended to become "civilized" by reducing itself "to the dimensions of the apparent necessities of our various civilizations, national 'traditions' and 'ways of life.'" The domesticated church tended to become entrenched in the status quo, giving its support to the pursuit of material wealth and cultural advance in peace-time, and to justifying the national interest in war-time.¹⁵⁹

Rather than looking back to its traditional humanism, Bryden urged the church to seek its authentic life in the eschatological grace of God. In an article on "The Church and the Future," he warned that man could not "dig our faith out of ourselves" with a Humanism that attempted to "bypass the living Christ and the Holy Spirit."¹⁶⁰ Here Bryden quoted an article by William Manson in the Scottish Journal of Theology:

We must be prepared to cease looking backward only to origins, digging ourselves in on old traditional ground, trying to capitalize grace in what we already have, interpreting the trust committed to us, merely in terms of what has come to us out of a holy past."¹⁶¹

The source of the church's life lay not in a humanist tradition or moral virtue, nor carefully reasoned creeds or fine ritual, but in the actual experience of the gospel which came from beyond. As Manson had concluded, "the church must understand its future eschatologically."

The correlative to this eschatological gospel was a pietist emphasis that identified the life of faith first with confession and prayer.¹⁶² Contrary to the recovery of philosophic reason suggested

¹⁵⁸Bryden, "The Holy Spirit and the Church (n.d.)," 44.

¹⁵⁹Bryden, "The Holy Spirit and the Church (n.d.)," 38.

¹⁶⁰Walter W. Bryden, "The Church And The Future," in Separated Unto the Gospel, 93. Though undated, Bryden refers in this work to articles dated March 1951.

¹⁶¹Bryden, "The Church And The Future," 93-94.

¹⁶²Bryden, "The Church, Today and One Hundred Years Ago" 20-1.

by progressive Augustinians, Bryden claimed that faith could not be explained by reason, for it had its own axioms that could only be witnessed to by confession and by a theology understood as "faith thinking itself out, face to face with God."¹⁶³ Furthermore, Bryden claimed that prayer was "the intensest form of Christian action," for when Christians prayed they confessed that God acts, and that they depend on his action.¹⁶⁴ Hence it was in the Church's prayer-life that the modern "Incarnational theology" truly came to fruition.

More broadly, as he explained in his inaugural address, the church was in opposition to the world since it was uniquely the creature and witness of the Word that was in "grim struggle" against a sinful, rebellious world.¹⁶⁵ Bryden set this uniqueness against the modern tendency to erase the differences between the church and the world, and to judge Christianity in terms of humanitarian virtues or critical science. That the world no longer took the church seriously nor feared its militancy, he claimed, was due partly to the domestication of the church itself and its failure to challenge the world.¹⁶⁶ On several occasions, Bryden quoted the damning words of Soren Kierkegaard: "Woe unto the Church which does not embarrass the world."¹⁶⁷ Christ had come, not to bring peace, but a sword of judgment against the world, including against the church's own conformity to the world. Likewise, the church was called to oppose the world with a new life rooted in the Spirit of Christ.¹⁶⁸

These references to a "new" order, however, suggested a third dimension of the Presbyterian confessional position after 1945, namely the emergence of efforts to relate redemptive "judging-

¹⁶³Bryden, "Creeds and Confessions," 102.

¹⁶⁴Bryden, "The Church And The Future," 90-1.

¹⁶⁵Bryden, "The Church of God and the World," 49-51, 70.

¹⁶⁶Bryden, "The Church of God and the World," 52-4.

¹⁶⁷Bryden, "The Church of God and the World," 59; Bryden, "The Church, Today and One Hundred Years Ago" 15.

¹⁶⁸Bryden, "The Church of God and the World," 56, 61.

saving" grace more fully and positively to life of Church in the world. Hints of this concern for an alternative, specifically eschatological interpretation of the relation of grace and culture were present already in the 1945 "Statement of Faith." By 1950, however, the twin themes of Bryden's retrospective on "The Church, Today and One Hundred Years Ago," openly indicated the connection of this concern to his earlier emphasis on the exclusiveness of God's Word.¹⁶⁹ After reiterating his familiar claim that the revelation of God's Word was radically distinct from human action, nature, or culture, he went on to emphasize that the eschatological entry of God into the world brought a radical newness into human life.

Between 1945 and his death in 1952, Bryden, and the committees of the Presbyterian Church, began to focus on identifying this new life of the Spirit and the call to live that life in the world. The life of the spirit, Bryden argued, did not mean a monastic withdrawal or institutional separation from the struggle against sin in the world, but rather a life rooted in the eschatological Spirit lived within creation.¹⁷⁰ In one of his most famous sermons, given over the CBC in 1947, Bryden described the power of the Gospel, not merely as separating believers to a new theory or religion, but as freeing man from himself to a completely new life of faith and freedom to serve God. Christ was "radically against this world; but,...., just because He was so profoundly for it."¹⁷¹ Hence the coming of Christ was for the purpose of making creation new.

Thus Bryden turned to God's "yes" for the world, and accordingly his emphasis on the eschatological, judging Word opened upon a millenarian vision of the radical renewal of creation through redemptive grace. The gift of grace was a call, or vocation, to a new life of obedience in the

¹⁶⁹Bryden, "The Church, Today and One Hundred Years Ago" 14-21.

¹⁷⁰Bryden, "The Church of God and the World," 66-7.

¹⁷¹Walter W. Bryden, "St. Paul The Preacher, As Separated Unto The Gospel, A Sermon Delivered Over the CBC in February 1947," in Separated Unto the Gospel, 9, 11.

midst of a sinful world.¹⁷² His rejection of "culture," he claimed, was not a "sheer pessimism," but a recognition of the reality of both sin and redemption. Only a true Christian, he claimed, had a right to be an optimist "in a world like this"; not, however, "because of what he can survey in the world," but because of the knowledge that God actually enters the world to save it.¹⁷³ In contrast to the "smug and complacent optimism" that characterized the American continent, Bryden added, it was only from the realistic belief in Eternity that one could believe "in this world and all of its relative values."

In comments on "The Church and the Economic Order" for the committee on Articles of Faith, Bryden began to draw a more positive view of God's providence in the temporal order.¹⁷⁴ Against the claim that economics and politics had a "right of existence in and of themselves," Bryden claimed the Reformers' view that, though necessitated by the Fall, they were established by God as aspects of his providential grace, and therefore were subject to God's Word. Despite their differences, both Luther and Calvin saw the state, for example, as authorized by God to restrain sin and so preserve life.¹⁷⁵ In contrast to the Roman Catholic view of the supremacy of the church over the state, according to Bryden, the Reformers asserted that church and state each were legitimate and were directly responsible to God in their specific functions.

While attempting to claim their legitimacy, however, Bryden continued to suggest an ambiguous relationship between God's "providential" grace in temporal economic and political structures, and his "redemptive" grace in Christ. Though Christ had come to abolish the world insofar as it was completely in the grip of sin, yet the provisions in the world for law and government, and

¹⁷²Walter W. Bryden, "Jesus Christ -- the Call of God (n.d.)," Separated Unto the Gospel, 158-60.

¹⁷³Bryden, "The Church of God and the World," 64-5.

¹⁷⁴Walter W. Bryden, "The Church and the Economic Order," in Separated Unto the Gospel, 71-6.

¹⁷⁵Bryden, "The Church and the Economic Order," 71-3.

charity and kindness, were God's providential ordering.¹⁷⁶ In a partial shift from his earlier separation of Christ and creation, Bryden now claimed that Christ was also the Creator of the world, or the Word of God's creative Providence, as well as Redeemer of the world, though he "may function with a different purpose in different spheres."¹⁷⁷ Consequently, the church must recognize Christ as Lord of the nations and of economics, and must take a vital interest in these concrete spheres of life, for they were the work of God's creative activity in human affairs. In fact, the Christian should have a deeper concern for the world than the worldly man, for he must view his responsibility in creation in the light of his "heavenly citizenship."

Bryden's post-war struggle to clarify the relationship between the Word and the world thus left an unresolved tension between his affirmation God's providence in the historical-structural world, yet his repudiation of that world on account of its association with sin. His distinction between creative and redemptive providence reflected his attempt to avoid an "immanent" theology which located the Word of grace within the creation order, but it also posed a conflict between law and grace as such. Consequently, his interpretation of the transforming meaning of grace, in contrast to proposals to recover the western tradition, was that of a life rooted in the existential experience of the Spirit in the present, and the anticipation of a radically new order. His vision of a new order suggested, however, that it could not be identified either with traditional forms or with an original creation law-order. Instead, the new order was an order of freedom for the life of the spirit in the midst of temporal and sinful structures.

While affirming the legitimacy of providential structures, therefore, Bryden ultimately regarded them as subordinate, or relative, to the experience of God's redemptive Spirit, suggesting that the renewal of redemption was located primarily in the renewed minds of subjects rather than in an

¹⁷⁶Bryden, "The Church of God and the World," 62.

¹⁷⁷Bryden, "The Church of God and the World," 74.

objective change in structures. Despite its providential legitimacy, Bryden argued, Calvin held that the state's function in restraining temporal evils was subordinate to the church's redemptive function. In part, this meant that the church might legitimately resist, though without recourse to "worldly (political or military) power," the state when it denied the Lordship of Christ. Furthermore, the realm of law was always relative to redemptive grace. Urging the church not to become entrenched in the status quo and resistant to change, Bryden suggested that economic and political changes were "either of the authorship, or by the permission of Jesus Christ,...., and thus with a purpose, somehow, to serve the free course of His Gospel under any possible circumstances."¹⁷⁸ The gospel was broader than, and transcended, static economic and political interests. Consequently, the church should be adaptable to new developments, and its judgements regarding political and economic matters

must never be one of rigid rule, governed by abstract principles which may be in his possession by tradition or prejudice. It must be a judgment prayerfully taken in the light of the circumstances which immediately confront him and with a concern for human welfare in general; with the belief, moreover, that He Who is the Lord of all that takes place in life will be his guide.¹⁷⁹

Thus Bryden suggested an existential approach to ethics that would be relative to the times, but also to the authentic transforming guidance of Christ's Spirit and his will to love "in the precise Now."¹⁸⁰

Bryden's interpretation of the order of grace, therefore, was one in which grace brought the radical transformation of the eternal into the present reality of a sinful world. In an article on "Eschatology and Biblical Revelation" for the Committee on Articles of Faith, Bryden argued that the eschatological inbreaking of the Word did not mean the end of time, but the entry into and transformation of time by the eternal.¹⁸¹ Time and history were not merely transient, for God had

¹⁷⁸Bryden, "The Church of God and the World," 75.

¹⁷⁹Bryden, "The Church of God and the World," 76.

¹⁸⁰Bryden, "The Church of God and the World," 77.

¹⁸¹Walter W. Bryden, "Eschatology and Biblical Revelation, (nd)" in Separated Unto the Gospel, 110-3.

declared the creation good, and in that sense time was "embraced" within eternity. Furthermore, the eternal could be known to man only as God entered into time in the Incarnation. The eschatological Incarnation indeed meant "the end of time and the end of man as a sinful creature within the realm of time as he is absorbed in the interests of these alone."¹⁸² But this judgment did not mean merely the annihilation of time or man, but rather the fulfillment of these as their true purpose was exhibited in the Incarnation. Christ's coming, therefore, brought into time a new and full meaning of man, the world, and its relationship with God that stripped man of his presumptions and compelled him to confess his sin and acknowledge his Lord.

As a radically new order distinct from creation, however, Bryden suggested that the order of grace was one of freedom for the Spirit in the relative situations of temporal life, and liberated from what he saw as the shibboleths of human traditions and institutions. While the marks of the new eschatological life of the Spirit in the world were to be found first of all in the faith and confession of believers, they were found secondly in an "infinite concern about people" or a "gratuitous love" manifested in "a real identification of ourselves with other people in their cares, anxieties and fears, as if we actually lived in their lives, and thus truly knew them."¹⁸³

Bryden's shift in focus from the exclusive judging Word of God to attempt to relate that Word of grace to creation suggested a way for Barthian Presbyterians to take up the challenge of post-war reconstruction with a positive view of the radical transformation brought about by grace. As Bryden's Barthian ideas dominated the 1945 "Statement of Faith," so his struggle to relate grace to creation was reflected in the efforts of Presbyterian Church committees, through the late 1940's and 1950's, to broaden their understanding of the claims of grace on contemporary society and culture. As they did so, they also displayed the ambiguity that characterized Bryden's views. While they affirmed the

¹⁸²Bryden, "Eschatology and Biblical Revelation, (nd)" 110-1.

¹⁸³Bryden, "Jesus Christ -- the Call of God (n.d.)," 163.

legitimacy of a structured world and sought its transformation through eschatological grace, they also identified transforming grace with an existential freedom for the gospel that contrasted with the modern sacramentalism of progressive Augustinians.

As in the case of the 1945 "Statement of Faith," the social positions adopted by the Presbyterian Church immediately after World War II reflected a fleeting common cause between conservatives and Barthians, but also a trend toward Barthian positions similar to that of Bryden. In 1946, for example, Rev. Charles C. Cochrane, who later would sympathize with Joseph McLelland's "progressive Barthianism," submitted a motion to the General Assembly for a sharper separation of church and state in religious education.¹⁸⁴ In doing so, Cochrane challenged the Board of Religious Education's efforts, as late as 1945, to encourage religious education in the public schools. In an argument that both conservatives and Barthians might accept, Cochrane claimed that religious education in the public schools prejudiced the democratic liberties of religious minorities, and that the teaching of religion by the state surrendered the historic separation of church and state. Furthermore, as the Westminster Confession also asserted, the teaching of the gospel was committed by Christ, not to the state, but to the church. If any teaching of religion was done in the schools, it must be by the church alone.

Cochrane's emphasis on what might be called the liberty of grace was also reflected in other Presbyterian Church statements during the late 1940's that interpreted social issues in terms of "grace" rather than either moral or legislated legalism. The 1948 report of the Department of Evangelism and Social Action on government proposals to ease divorce laws and to implement an exclusively Civil Marriage law cited the coincidental reports of United Church and Anglican Church on the same topic,

¹⁸⁴PCC, AP, 1946, "Minutes," 51. See also John S. Moir, Enduring Witness (Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1987), 262, 269.

as well as the views of modern Christian humanists like Emil Brunner, C. S. Lewis, P. T. Forsyth.¹⁸⁵ While it concurred with the general views of these sources, the Presbyterian report suggested an approach that was explicitly oriented toward grace rather than either legislation or moral pressure against divorce. Both Scripture and the Calvinist tradition, it argued, viewed marriage as a sacred creation ordinance that both church and state were called to uphold.¹⁸⁶ The recent pronouncements offered by the United and Anglican churches reflected this Calvinist position, at least to the extent that they did not leave questions of divorce and remarriage simply a moral issue at the discretion of individual ministers.¹⁸⁷ But the Presbyterian report suggested a more liberal response to the problem of divorce that went beyond especially the Westminster Confession's position of strict legal and moral sanctions against divorce except on the grounds of adultery and desertion. Noting that some persons, desperate for a lawful divorce, "colluded" in engaging in adultery in order to create the only grounds of lawful divorce in most provinces, the report regretted that legalism should drive people to such evil measures. The church, it suggested, should rather exceed the state in grace, presumably by adopting a more forgiving response to cases of divorce.¹⁸⁸

Though "liberal" in its opposition to legalism, the Board indicated in its 1948 report on temperance that the freedom of grace remained responsible to God. Noting a growing opinion in favour of Christian liberty which argued that there was no Biblical injunction against alcoholic drink, the Board countered that liberty was not license to that drunkenness, but a liberty to obey God's Word.¹⁸⁹ Though alcohol was not evil in itself, but rather part of God's gift in the created order,

¹⁸⁵PCC, AP, 1948, "Appendix: Supplementary Report, Board of Evangelism and Social Action," 342-4.

¹⁸⁶PCC, AP, 1948, "Appendix: Supplementary Report, Board of Evangelism and Social Action," 342-4.

¹⁸⁷PCC, AP, 1948, "Appendix: Supplementary Report, Board of Evangelism and Social Action," 345.

¹⁸⁸PCC, AP, 1948, "Appendix: Supplementary Report, Board of Evangelism and Social Action," 348.

¹⁸⁹PCC, AP, 1948, "Appendix: Supplementary Report, Board of Evangelism and Social Action," 352.

abuse of that gift in drunkenness was still sinful, for sin was a matter of the heart, and not of external objects. Furthermore, the board concluded, Christian liberty was fulfilled in love, and out of love for one's neighbour at the risk that alcohol posed for him, Christians ought to choose freely, rather than by force of legislation, to abstain from alcohol.

By 1949 the Board of Evangelism and Social Action, now with Gordon Peddie as chairman and Stuart B. Coles as secretary, reported its broader struggle to devise a constitution for the board that would provide an "effective and evangelical definition" of its tasks, so as to relate an authentic Evangel to social action without descending into either narrow pietism or secularized socialism.¹⁹⁰ In addressing this problem, the board paralleled Bryden's efforts to move to a more positive interpretation of the meaning of grace for contemporary society and culture. While acknowledging that social action was not the mark of an evangelical church, the board argued that an evangelical church must be engaged in social action, for "faith without works is dead."

As an initial position, the board defined its role in terms of the church's "prophetic-apostolic responsibility to declare the whole counsel of God, to preach Christ and Him crucified" for the whole complex of social relations. Its task was "to help 'the Church' faithfully to confront 'the world' with all the personal and all the social implications of Christ's Evangel."¹⁹¹ The underlying unity of evangelism and social action lay in Christ, who was both justifier by his sacrifice and judge by his universal sovereignty and claim over all spheres of life. Hence evangelism and social action were related, it claimed, in "an essential duplexity" that involved both redemptive "justification" and "justice."¹⁹² To promote both of these, the Board assumed the task of teaching, proclaiming, and applying "the revealed will of Christ to all evangelical and all social issues as occasion shall arise --

¹⁹⁰PCC, AP, 1949, "Report of the Board of Evangelism and Social Action," 149.

¹⁹¹PCC, AP, 1949, "Report of the Board of Evangelism and Social Action," 150.

¹⁹²PCC, AP, 1949, "Report of the Board of Evangelism and Social Action," 154.

whether the occasion be economic, political, cultural, or religious, in form."¹⁹³

After the board received overtures to clarify the relationship of the church to political, social, and economic justice, the 1950 General Assembly appointed a Joint Committee on the Church and the Nation to prepare a "declaratory clause," intended to supplement the Westminster Confession, that finally would pronounce the church's confession on both the relation of church and state and the status of freedom of conscience.¹⁹⁴ Bryden was a prominent member of the Committee, and his influence would dominate the committee's first report, which was submitted shortly before his death in 1952. Subsequently, the committee would issue two revisions, the final one being sent down to the presbyteries in 1954 as the "Declaration of Faith in Church and Nation."¹⁹⁵

The central concern adopted by the committee was "a recovery of the full Biblical doctrine of the Kingship of Christ" as it applied to both church and "nation," the latter of which it took to represent the whole community of social relations.¹⁹⁶ As its model for this agenda, the committee drew especially from the report of Church of Scotland Commission on Church and Nation which published "God's Will for the Church and Nation" in 1945. In taking up the task of bridging the 1945 "Statement of Faith" with the relations of church and state in social matters, the committee's work also demonstrated the growing concern of Barthians like Bryden to relate the grace of God to the cosmic claims of God's Kingdom. As in Bryden's own scholarship, these concerns compelled Presbyterians to clarify the implications of an eschatological Evangel for creation and history. As it addressed these

¹⁹³PCC, AP, 1949, "Report of the Board of Evangelism and Social Action," 150.

¹⁹⁴PCC, AP, 1949, "Report of the Board of Evangelism and Social Action," 154. PCC, AP, 1950, "Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation," 140. Members of the committee included Walter Bryden, J. G. Berry, D. W. Kerr, Robert Lennox, J. B. Rhodes, T. Wardlaw Taylor, Donald V. Wade, Joseph Wasson, W. F. Butcher (secretary), S. B. Coles, E. C. McCullagh, and Gordon A. Peddie.

¹⁹⁵PCC, AP, 1954, "Minutes," 82.

¹⁹⁶PCC, AP, 1954, "Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation," 242. PCC, AP, 1951, "Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation," 87.

concerns, the committee moved to an interpretation of the tension between grace and the world that emphasized a teleological historical process, rather than a strict ontological dualism between eternal and temporal orders.

For the most part, the first report of the Joint Committee reiterated the position of the 1945 "Statement of Faith" on the relation of church and state. Christ was lord over the whole of life, and had ordained both the church and the nation. While they each had their distinct nature and function, they were related in being responsible to the will of God. This insistence on each sphere having its own legitimate function and authority from God, the report noted, was an alternative both to the threat of totalitarian claims by the state, and to the resurgence, evident in the activism of the modern papacy and the establishment of the Vatican City, of "Romanism" which claimed that the state was subordinate and received its authority only indirectly from God.¹⁹⁷

The report also represented a further development on Bryden's work, particularly in its now clear distinction between creation's ontic goodness and the moral problem of sin, and in its affirmation of the continuity between creation and redemption. Despite the fact of sin, God's redemptive grace and creative power in Christ were one, rather than separate functions.¹⁹⁸ The report therefore affirmed the lordship of Christ as creator, and the positive role of humans created as God's image bearers to rule the earthly orders under Christ. Likewise, it lowered the barriers between church and temporal realm, for the church was not to "hold her spirituality aloof" from economic and political life, nor was the life of the church abstracted from the life of the world. As the prophets had declared it, God's Word brought disturbing judgment, but also redemption, to Israel's social and economic life. The church was to be involved in "all the work-a-day affairs of human existence," since Christ was lord and mediator of God's grace not just for the regeneration of souls, but also of God's providence

¹⁹⁷PCC, AP, 1951, "Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation," 90-1.

¹⁹⁸PCC, AP, 1951, "Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation," 92.

for the physical and natural world.¹⁹⁹ In its description of the relation of church and state, therefore, the report claimed that the spheres of economics and politics, along with ecclesiastical life, were part of God's providential ordering of life that he preserved despite sin, and that were revealed and redeemed in Christ. To be sure, sin affected the whole of life, so that the triumph of God's grace in Christ, though intended for both church and nation, was not yet visible in either the state, nor even fully in the church.²⁰⁰ Nevertheless, both church and state were parts of the comprehensive Kingdom of God which still stood, despite human sin.²⁰¹

The 1951 report thus made a significant shift in suggesting that the tension between sin and redemption was not merely between the realms of nature and grace, but rather cut across all of life. "It is in all of life's circumstances," the report claimed, "such as citizenship, employment, marriage, parenthood, and recreation, that we either glorify or dishonour our Lord, and prove the integrity or hypocrisy of our confessed faith in Christ as Lord indeed."²⁰² The reality of sin had indeed distorted God's original righteous ordering of creation and infected all human relations with "enmity, injustice, and death," and therefore all things relevant to human life now could be known only through God's grace in Christ. For this reason, the report continued to emphasize the centrality of Christ, rather than an original creation order and its inherent, immanent potential for fulfillment. Only with Christ's return at the end of time would his reign become openly visible in all the spheres of life.²⁰³

For the ambiguous "between-times" of the sinful present and the new creation, however, the report continued to differentiate between the redemptive role of the church in proclaiming God's rule,

¹⁹⁹PCC, AP, 1951, "Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation," 88.

²⁰⁰PCC, AP, 1951, "Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation," 92.

²⁰¹PCC, AP, 1951, "Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation," 88, 92.

²⁰²PCC, AP, 1951, "Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation," 93.

²⁰³PCC, AP, 1951, "Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation," 92-3.

and the role of the state, as Calvin had suggested, in restraining the effects of sin. While God's grace and rule had greater visibility, or was more fully acknowledged in the church than in the state, both were works of God's grace. As the Reformers had claimed, both were called to be servants of Christ, and in the broadest sense were different aspects of the Body of Christ.²⁰⁴

In these foundational comments, the report reflected a shift from the more Augustinian legacy with which Bryden struggled, to a more explicitly Calvinist treatment of a covenantal grace that encompassed creation. Consequently, in its more specific comments, the report claimed that economics and politics were to serve Christ in their positive functions, and that the tension of sin and redemption was displayed in these mundane activities. God's law for the economic order, it declared, is the law of stewardship that recognized economic power as a trust from God. Moreover, people would be judged "according as they in their day-to-day commercial transactions have furthered or perverted the administration of Christ's love and justice towards all mankind."²⁰⁵ Likewise, it declared that civil government was responsible as his "ministers" to curb the effects of sin and promote justice, freedom, and welfare in the relations between people.²⁰⁶

The relation between the church and the spheres of economics and the state, in this context, was one of mutual support in their respective tasks. In the broadest sense, the church, understood as the whole body of Christ, extended into the economic and political spheres insofar as its membership included Christians involved in economic and political responsibility. The state's task, for example, was to enable the free proclamation of the gospel by preserving public peace and "impartially" guarding the rights of citizens. But this was a limited task which must leave the church its due recognition and the carrying out of its tasks; indeed the state must listen to the church's

²⁰⁴PCC, AP, 1951, "Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation," 92-3.

²⁰⁵PCC, AP, 1951, "Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation," 94.

²⁰⁶PCC, AP, 1951, "Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation," 95-6.

pronouncements when "minister[s] of Christ's Word or any other member of the Church" reminds the state of its call to righteousness.²⁰⁷

The institutional church, meanwhile, could claim no special economic or political insight, nor could it identify any political or economic system with the Kingdom of God. Rather, the church's task was to proclaim the obligation that participants in economic and political life had to Christ, for example by reminding all parties in the economic system to conduct themselves according to the law of stewardship.²⁰⁸ As well, the church's tasks involved prayer for the nation, and prophetic preaching against injustice and secularization, and the good news of forgiveness. But having done that, the church also was called to "rise from her knees and come down from her pulpit" to act as the merciful neighbour to those suffering from injustice and economic exploitation, so as to demonstrate Christ's sacrificial grace in service to the world.²⁰⁹

The 1951 report, then, resolved the tension suggested by Bryden between creation and redemption in such a way that redemptive grace brought a new creation which finally fulfilled, rather than negated, creation. In further developments on this statement from 1952 to 1954, coming after the death of Bryden and his replacement on the Joint Committee by James D. Smart, then at Rosedale Presbyterian Church in Toronto, this resolution was articulated even more completely. In response to one particular question, the committee's 1952 report reasserted the 1945 position that, if faced with a totalitarian state, the church was indeed responsible to lead open and armed resistance, rather than passively leaving resistance against evil tyranny to unbelievers.²¹⁰ More broadly, it remained undaunted in explicitly claiming the centrality and lordship of Christ over all creation as necessary

²⁰⁷PCC, AP, 1951, "Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation," 94-5.

²⁰⁸PCC, AP, 1951, "Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation," 94-5.

²⁰⁹PCC, AP, 1951, "Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation," 95.

²¹⁰PCC, AP, 1952, "Appendix: Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation," 159.

in order to avoid a merely general reference to God that was indistinguishable from other world religions, or from a mere polite deism.²¹¹

Indeed, the revisions of 1952 and 1954 affirmed both the whole Trinity, "One God, Creator and Redeemer," and the centrality of Christ as Mediator and lord of heaven and earth, as well as the eternal Word "through Whom all things consists."²¹² Implicit in this affirmation was a new understanding of continuity between creation and redemption, so that all spheres of creation were claimed through redemption for the Kingdom of God. Under the claim of the Gospel, the church could admit no political, economic, or cultural creed as final, for these were inherently secular or temporal.²¹³ Rather, in its preaching, sacraments, and discipline, the church was to confront the nation with Christ's judgment and grace that now extended to all of life. As the Board of Evangelism and Social Action declared in 1954:

The gospel has relevance not only for man's 'soul' but rather for his whole life. Christ came not to save souls but men. In saving humanity He was concerned with the whole man. A man's body was not considered unimportant and his physical well being in society could not be overlooked.²¹⁴

Social problems were not merely matters extraneous to grace; they were bound up with the reality of sin, but were also the objects of transforming grace.

While affirming the continuity of an original creation order with redemption, the revisions of 1952 and 1954 also concluded with statements on eschatology which described the tension of sin as being resolved in a teleological process through history. Though they did not repudiate Bryden's earlier focus on an immediate experience of the eschatological Spirit in the "now," their concern to

²¹¹PCC, AP, 1952, "Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation," 155-8.

²¹²PCC, AP, 1952, "Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation," 152; PCC, AP, 1954, "Appendix: Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation," 243.

²¹³PCC, AP, 1954, "Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation," 244.

²¹⁴PCC, AP, 1954, "Report of the Board of Evangelism and Social Action," 261.

relate that Spirit to life in the world in the post-war search for reconstruction brought a broadening view of the claims of God's Kingdom which also distinguished between the present age in which the lordship of Christ was not fully disclosed, and a future complete fulfillment.

The position adopted by both revisions, as well as a 1955 statement by the Committee on Articles of Faith, was that of a classic, Christocentric amillennialism that contrasted with both the progressivism of Cochrane and a resurgent premillennialism.²¹⁵ The Kingdom of God was present already, not by the inherent constitution of creation, but through Christ's work and the presence of the Spirit in the church. In the present age, however, man remained "beset by sin" in every relationship. History in the "between times," therefore, was a "conflict between the Kingdom of God and the usurping kingdom of darkness." Nevertheless, in faith the church looked forward beyond the brokenness of the present order to the future destiny of history in the return of Christ, the final judgment, the bodily resurrection, the healing of life of the nations, and thus the full disclosure of Christ's Kingdom "over all creation."²¹⁶

Here for the first time the Barthian legacy in the Presbyterian Church offered a positive hope that the world not only might be judged, but that the fruit of that judgment might be the transformation of the structural-historical world into the Kingdom of God. In contrast to the progressive Augustinian synthesis of Christianity with a Platonic search for the good in creation, however, the Barthian legacy was that of a millennial new order under the exclusive lordship of Christ. Though disclosed most fully in the church's confession, both church and state, and indeed all

²¹⁵PCC, AP, 1955, "Committee on Articles of Faith," 226-29. By this point, the membership of the committee consisted of a new generation of scholars, including Principle Robert Lennox, Professors Keith Markell, John Weavers, Donald V. Wade, David W. Hay, Joseph C. McLelland, and several ministers. The committee's report drew especially from lectures by John McNichol, principal emeritus of Toronto Bible College, which examined and challenged dispensational premillennialism.

²¹⁶PCC, AP, 1955, "Committee on Articles of Faith," 227-8. PCC, AP, 1952, "Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation," 154.

spheres of life, were to be "reform[ed] by the Word of God."²¹⁷

IV. Conclusion

By the late 1940's and early 1950's, then, both United and Presbyterian Protestants had reconstructed Christian visions of cultural transformation. The common feature of those visions was an Augustinian view of history as a process characterized by moral tension between responsible human agents and a transcendent sovereign God, and thus as the drama of sin and redemption. Three themes were especially prominent in their modern Augustinian visions of history. First, their interpretation of history was chastened with a new emphasis on the reality of sin and of the tension between the Eternal and the temporal, providing the basis for a new modus vivendi which saw Christianity in tension with modern secular western civilization. Secondly, from their modern historical consciousness, they repudiated Augustine's "otherworldly" view of the destiny of history and insisted that the drama of sin and redemption was worked out and resolved within history. Thirdly, their focus on that moral relationship as the core dynamic of history had a two-fold meaning. On the one hand, it affirmed the legitimacy of historical-structural reality as God's creation and the instrument of moral wills. But on the other hand, that historical-structural reality was also relative and subordinate to the free exercise of God's will expressed in his Word, and to human personality understood as conscious will. Thus their Augustinian interpretation claimed the primacy of freedom and grace in the midst of the historical-structural world, and indeed claimed a transcendent perspective from which they might prophetically critique that world.

Beyond that common Augustinian root, however, mainline Protestants also had developed two contrasting interpretations of the course of the redemptive drama. Through Barth's emphasis on the Wholly Otherness of God and the eschatological inbreaking of divine judgment and grace over against

²¹⁷PCC, AP, 1954, "Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation," 245.

historical-structural creation, Presbyterians like Bryden had broken most fully from Augustine's Platonic ontology and the idealist legacy in Canadian thought. And moving from Barth's modern eschatological theology, Bryden and like-minded colleagues who dominated the Presbyterian church in the post-war decade began to recover especially a Calvinist view of the claims of a sovereign and redeeming God on contemporary society. Notably, however, the legacy of Barth's eschatological theology meant that this modern Calvinism looked, not to the restoration of creation order or historical traditions, but to the existentially present and revolutionary claims of Christ's spirit and to a future completion of the millennium in the life of the spirit.

For most mainline Protestants, however, especially those in the United Church, the modern revival of Augustine's metaphysics rejuvenated the post-Kantian idealist tradition in post-war Canada. Their incorporation of Augustine's ideas into that idealist tradition brought an emphasis on the sovereignty of God and the reality of sin to the fore in the United Church and confirmed the need, argued by John Line during the 1930's, to relate the moral order of God's will to historical-structural existence. By synthesizing God's grace with his sovereign will in the Word which was "in the beginning," moreover, they emphasized the location and continuity of divine grace within the constitution of creation, and particularly in humanity's creative moral impulse of which Christ was the incarnation. Thus Augustine's metaphysics provided for a reconstructed analogia entis which identified the moral imagination with spiritual reality, and for a renewed interpretation of historical redemption as the process of the triumph of the creative moral imagination in and over nature.

In both cases, the modern reconstruction of classic Christian interpretations of the relation between God's Kingdom and the world were seen to offer solutions to twentieth-century mainline Protestants' search for an "enlightened" and "larger" evangelism. While chastened by their sense of the crisis of modern civilization and the threat of a secular world order, their claim to a transcendent moral order was not an abandonment of cultural responsibility. Rather, their claim that God's

sovereign will impinged on history gave them new urgency and confidence, despite the power of secularized forces, to claim contemporary culture for the Kingdom of God. To that end, United and Presbyterian Protestants began to redirect their efforts from the modern evangelical pietism of the interwar years to a renewed engagement with social issues like politics and economics, education and scholarship, and international peace. As the United Church's BESS warned in 1954, its long emphasis on personal evangelism threatened to become "a retreat of the Church from the world into a pietistic mysticism or a narrow sectarianism," and, by abdication, an acceptance of the status quo. "If evangelism may be called the proclamation of the word, social service might be called its flesh."²¹⁸

Indeed, especially for progressive Augustinians, the historical-structural world had taken on a new sacramental meaning as the revelation of the divine will, and as the locus and instrument of creative personal freedom. But modern Augustinians interpreted that sacramentalism in distinctly modern ways. While seeking the transcendent good, their critical pursuit of that good remained rooted in an anthropocentric historical self-consciousness that preserved Reinhold Niebuhr's paradox, namely the "impossible possibility" of humanity as creatures in a relative world, but seeking the transcendent. Hence, their Augustinianism remained fundamentally optimistic regarding the potential divinity of humanity by virtue of the creative moral imagination, and liberal in its assumption that the correlative of grace was freedom for the exercise of the spirit and human personality.

²¹⁸UCC, RP, 1954, "Board of Evangelism and Social Service," 392.

Postscript:

"Freedom and Grace" in Post-World War II Canada

[M]an is called to be a creator, to exercise his creative gift of spirit with its freedom, in loving response to the call of Him by whom he has been made. To the one who yields himself to this call, God graciously bestows the gift of His creative Spirit. All human creativity is thus a dialectic between human freedom and divine grace.¹

The central theme of this study has concerned the struggle of mainline Canadian Protestants to reclaim the transcendent reality and grace of God in response to the secularizing trends in modern thought and social structures which threatened to close out the claims of God, as well as the grounds of human freedom and moral responsibility, from the purview of natural experience. They did so not only to create an apologetic refuge, but also to reclaim the grounds for prophetic critique of a civilization which they continued to regard as their own, but which seemed since the First World War to have become increasingly antithetical to the Kingdom of God. In contrast to their progressive evangelical roots, twentieth century "modern evangelicals" sought a new modus vivendi for a Christianity that would be disentangled from modern western culture and oriented to the divine will, but that yet would be experienced in, and indeed would transform, contemporary society.

The roots of this shift were complex. In part, they lay in a growing sense of the impasse of historicist criticism and its failure to disclose the unique otherness of God and his Word, and a deepening criticism of western civilization that emerged especially in the wake of World War I and the crises of the interwar years. From the disenchanting social gossamer Ernest Thomas; the Queen's tradition of William Jordan, William Morgan, and E. F. Scott; and the Welsh evangelicalism of

¹United Church of Canada, Record of Proceedings, 1950, "Appendix: Report of the Commission on Culture," v.

Richard Roberts, even before World War I mainline Canadian Protestants began trying to secure the uniquely divine "spiritual" reality of religion against skeptical critics and the historicist reduction of Christianity merely to a relative cultural tradition. This effort was reinforced by a new generation of scholars, led by John Dow, John Baillie, John Line, Gregory Vlastos, R. B. Y. Scott, and Walter Bryden, all of whose formative years during the first decades of the twentieth century left them, by the 1920's, disillusioned with western society and the trend to naturalism in modern critical thought. Their work displays the turn from what they now anathematized as modern "secular" humanism and the bankruptcy of liberal Protestantism, to claim the unique reality of God in Christ and the Spirit.

Their efforts to reconstruct a modern "enlightened evangelicalism" revealed several further dimensions. Most leading mainline Protestant scholars were British-trained, and they sustained the late nineteenth and early twentieth century British evangelical tradition that combined a strong evangelical piety with a modern historical-critical approach to scholarship.² That British connection served to mediate both a continuing post-Kantian idealism, such as that of Alfred North Whitehead, and the evangelical "realism" of James Denney and T. M. Lindsay. Similarly, the pursuit of an "enlightened evangelicalism" by Canadian scholars encompassed both a spiritual realism that affirmed the reality of God in Christ and the direct experience of the Holy Spirit, as well as an historical realism that assumed the validity of the critical method and that God must be encountered and relevant to the experienced world. Furthermore, this double-edged realism prepared both British and Canadian scholars to accept, in varying degrees, the more radical "crisis theology" of Karl Barth and Emil Brunner and the Protestant "realism" of American scholars like Reinhold Niebuhr and Walter Horton, though they did so with a continuing concern to relate the wholly other God to historical experience.

Thus the post-war struggle to disentangle Christianity from western civilization and reclaim

²See Mark Noll, Between Faith and Criticism: Evangelicals, Scholarship, and the Bible in North America, 2nd Ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), 72.

the transcendent reality of God arose out of the legacies of both modern historical-critical consciousness and evangelical "realism." Through their scholarship, post-war modern Protestants simultaneously criticized modern culture and society, and returned to the roots of their Protestant traditions in patristic Christian scholarship and the theology of the Reformation. Most significantly, their turn to Augustine and Calvin mark a striking shift from the pre-war modern "Constantinianism," which identified God's Kingdom with the progress of western civilization, to a modus vivendi with modern culture characterized by tension between the Eternal and sinful humanity, between the Kingdom of God and man-made world orders, and between the free life of grace and the laws, traditions, and structures of the natural order.

Especially as it was couched in the framework of a critical perspective, this attempt to reclaim a transcendent reality produced a deep, but potentially fruitful ambiguity. While insisting on the prophetic and redemptive meaning of transcendent grace for historical life, modern Protestants continued to wrestle with the dilemma of how one could speak of a transcendent God within the matrix of the historical-structural world. The dilemma for modern Protestants was reflected in S. D. Clark's pioneering sociological study of the relationship of Protestantism to modern Canadian society during the late 1940's. While identifying "religion" with transcendent or otherworldly concern, Clark nevertheless focused his "scientific" and historical study on the social institutions and role of Protestantism, and accounted for changes in these as the products of social forces. Predictably, since social structures were assumed to be secular, Clark interpreted virtually every attempt to express Protestantism in historically significant ways as constituting a shift from transcendent to secularized concerns.³ The alternative of concentrating on purely "religious" or "theological" concerns, however, risked what more recent but less sympathetic historians have bluntly suggested was a retreat from

³S. D. Clark, Church and Sect in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948), xii, 270, 433-35. See also Clark, The Developing Canadian Community, 2nd Ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), 125-27, 145-48.

relevance to the "real" lives of ordinary Canadians.⁴ Indeed, in the post-World War II period mainline Protestants themselves began take up again the question of how the Eternal was related to historical-structural existence, and thus how Christianity might be "in the world but not of it."

In doing so, they recovered the dilemma experienced by the early church in the midst of classical culture. Their responses to that dilemma were modern forms two conflicting positions that have echoed from the early church through Medieval and modern Christianity. The "majority" position of Richard Roberts, John Dow, and C. N. Cochrane might best be called an "ontological" interpretation of the relationship between God and historical-structural reality. Emphasizing the Platonic ontology woven into Augustine's interpretation of history, they claimed a transcendent sovereign God whose will and Word were continuous with a spiritual, moral substance in the world, particularly in human personality and history. Like Medieval scholastics, they assumed a hierarchical duality consisting of spirit and natural structures, and attempted to claim room for the life of the spirit, in free and creative culture, in the midst of the techniques and structures of modern society. Looking back, they reclaimed the continuity of the western tradition with Christianity; looking forward, they anticipated the triumph of a culture of grace, identified with freedom, a moral community, and the creative life of the mind, that would embrace and supersede the order of law and technique.

By contrast, the "minority" position of Walter Bryden, James Smart, and A. C. Cochrane, might best be called the "eschatological" interpretation of the relationship between God and historical-structural reality. Like Barth and Tertullian, they insisted upon the radical discontinuity between God and a sinful world, and hence on the discontinuity between Christianity and the western tradition. Like Medieval mystics and chiliasts, they claimed God's prophetic judgement on human culture and identified God's Kingdom with a new eschatological order of the spirit. As they attempted to

⁴John H. Thompson, Allan Seagar, Canada 1922-1939: Decades of Discord (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), 75; Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond, John English, Canada Since 1945: Power, Politics, and Provincialism (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 109.

articulate the claims of that Kingdom on historical-structural reality, they acknowledged, borrowing from Calvin, an original God-given order in creation. Though the glimmer of ontic continuity remained, however, the moral disruption of sin left creation in need of radical transformation by the new age of the Spirit. Nevertheless, the existential presence of grace extended to all of humanity's historical-structural experience, for the whole was to be claimed for a radically new order of the lordship of Christ.

Though they envisioned the reality of grace cutting across historical-structural reality in different ways, both positions meant that historical-structural existence was relative to the Eternal, while conversely the Eternal made claims which relativized temporal existence and the secularized culture in which mainline Protestants themselves lived. Inescapably, as Augustine had argued, in the present age the Kingdom of God was intertwined with, and in tension with, a secular historical-structural order.

The idea of that tension, however, was far from "irrelevant" to post-war Canadian culture. To the contrary, the idea of that tension was central in Canadian life, to borrow Richard Roberts' terms, as it extended across the "horizontal" plane of Canadian culture, and on the "vertical" axis in the continued tension in the Protestant churches between reliance on God's grace and human creative freedom and responsibility.

On the "horizontal" plane of post-World War II Canadian culture, the claims of the Eternal moral order and human creative freedom, or what A. B. McKillop describes as the enduring idealist "moral imperative,"⁵ reverberated through the cultural criticism of such prominent Canadian scholars as Harold Innis, Northrop Frye, Hugh MacLennan, Margaret Laurence, W. L. Morton, George Grant, and others. In their works, C. N. Cochrane's progressive Augustinian interpretation of the tension

⁵A. B. McKillop, A Disciplined Intelligence: Critical Inquiry and Canadian Thought in the Victorian Era (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979), 231-2.

between historical-structural existence and Eternity, or between the kingdoms of grace and nature, was articulated in the pursuit of a culture of grace which claimed space for a creative freedom and moral order amid a modern technocratic and rationalist culture epitomized in the American empire.

The warning against what George Grant later would call "Technology and Empire" was led by C. N. Cochrane himself. Throughout his studies of classical and modern rationalism, Cochrane implicitly warned against the attempt of humans to impose their own rational order on history through technocratic instruments and the totalitarian state. His 1945 lectures at Yale University and University College, on such titles as "National Necessity and Human Freedom," "Personality and History," "The Imperfection of Politics," and "The Augustinian Prognostic," identified the totalitarianism and absolutism of the modern state with what Augustine called the "fantastica fornicatio" of Greek rationalism.⁶ Like that of Reinhold Niebuhr, Cochrane's Augustinian interpretation of history assumed the reality of a divine moral order that challenged human attempts to construct their own eternal city, and sought to preserve a realm of human freedom to realize that distinctly moral order in relative historical forms. For Cochrane, Augustine's theocentric metaphysic suggested a tension between a transcendent moral order and human structures that opened the possibility for free and creative history-making.

In his 1946 obituary of Cochrane, Harold Innis described Cochrane as one of the great modern philosophers of civilization.⁷ Innis's pre-war studies of the Canadian staples economy, his metropolis-hinterland theory, and his strong streak of environmental determinism reflected the functionalist, historical, and ecological themes of the Chicago school of sociology in which he was trained.⁸ While

⁶Harold Innis, "Charles Norris Cochrane, 1889-1945," Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, 12 (1945), 96-7.

⁷Innis, "Charles Norris Cochrane, 1889-1945," 96-7.

⁸Marlene Shore, The Science of Social Redemption (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 94. See also Carl Berger, The Writing of Canadian History, 2nd Ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 97-102.

reticent to identify openly with any particular religious doctrines or activism, Innis's Baptist upbringing, however, gave him an emphasis on individualism and non-conformity that seemed at odds with environmental determinism.⁹ The features of Cochrane's work that Innis noted in 1946, however, suggest that Cochrane's Augustinianism provided a way to reconcile, and indeed to creatively develop, Innis's Chicago school social science and his Baptist individualism. According to Innis, Cochrane's rejection of speculative rationalism, his emphasis on the continuity of experience and history, and his approach to historical knowledge through a limited empirical method, modelled the "realist" and historical approach to the social sciences that Innis himself admired.¹⁰ But Innis also welcomed Cochrane's criticism of rationalist claims to possess the eternal order, and of attempts to impose that order by technocracy and totalitarian political power. As Ronald Keast notes, Cochrane's critique of classical culture provided the central ideas for Innis' identity of Christ with the creative Word, and his "agnostic" rejection of all human efforts to capture that Word by absolutizing human doctrines or systems.¹¹ In his critique of empire, according to Innis, Cochrane had exposed what was the equivalent of original sin, namely modern man's secularized pride in the determination to create, out of their own fantasies, a man-made order.

Though it would be too much to claim that Cochrane alone accounts for it, Innis's post-war scholarship on technology and communications can be seen as the application and extension of Cochrane's cultural critique to the modern techniques of empire. As Arthur Kroker notes, Innis' post-war "phenomenology" of the structures and techniques of civilization, particularly those concerned with communications and the state, employed social science to expose the techniques of control, and

⁹Marlene Shore. The Science of Social Redemption (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 84, 94.

¹⁰Innis, "Charles Norris Cochrane, 1889-1945," 96-7.

¹¹Ronald Keast, "'It is Written -- But I Say Unto You': Innis on Religion," Journal of Canadian Studies, 20, 4 (Winter 1985-86), 21-22.

at the same time to locate the "interstices" where humanity might act freely and creatively.¹² In his The Bias of Communication (1951), Innis pleaded for a recovery of balance between the spatial extension of order and the dynamic freedom of time.¹³ For Innis, the realm of time and history, as Cochrane had shown, was the realm of the particular and of the free action of conscious personal wills.¹⁴ Against all attempts to claim and impose an eternal order that in actuality was merely man-made, therefore, Innis appealed to history -- Cochrane's dynamic process of becoming -- to counter the forces of abstract rationalism and material control and to preserve both the limits and the potential for human freedom.

Despite his differences with Innis, the work of historian William Lewis Morton displays fundamentally similar themes. Morton's early work challenged the centralized "Laurentian" interpretation of Canadian history suggested by Donald Creighton and also Innis, and pleaded for recognition of the distinctiveness of western Canadian regions and peoples.¹⁵ Thus, Morton extended the critique of empire to the relations between regions within Canada. In contrast to Innis's Chicago school social science training, Morton's training was in idealist philosophy under Rupert Lodge. Though in a more speculative variation, his post-World War II studies on the national community shared Innis's concern for a moral Reality that was prior to, and encompassed, the natural environment and rational techniques and social structures. As A. B. McKillop notes, Morton's post-war work attempted to interpret history "philosophically" as the pursuit of the Reality beyond the Appearance

¹²Arthur Kroker, Technology and the Canadian Mind: Innis /McLuhan/Grant (Montreal: New World Perspectives, 1984), 90-2.

¹³Harold Innis, The Bias of Communication, intro. by Marshall McLuhan (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971 [1951]), 76, 86.

¹⁴Innis, "Charles Norris Cochrane, 1889-1945," 96-7.

¹⁵A. B. McKillop, "Introduction," Contexts of Canada's Past: Selected Essays of W. L. Morton, A. B. McKillop, ed. (Toronto: Macmillan / Carleton Library Series, 1980), 6.

that would unify the One and the Many, but notably, would unify them in a community of moral freedom.

Perhaps better than any, Morton's idealist "Red Tory" conservatism represents the application of an idealized Augustinian interpretation of history to Canadian culture. Morton insisted on the subordination of nature to a given moral Reality which was beyond the finitude and imperfection of humanity.¹⁶ Yet history, and the meaning of Christ, consisted in the process of reconciling the moral good with the external, structured reality of environment and landscape. Morton's conservatism interpreted tradition as part of an organic and dynamic process of becoming, so that both tradition and freedom were taken up into the moral process of realizing the good. Though "agnostic" about the modern gods of technocratic progress and "pessimistic" about man's ability to impose the good in the construction of his own rational order, Morton hopefully anticipated that the good might be disclosed in the historical process.

The themes of free pursuit of the moral good, the process of becoming, and the triumph of grace were also central in Margaret Laurence's Manawaka novels and Hugh MacLennan's The Precipice (1948) and Each Man's Son (1951). To be sure, that pursuit of grace was not to be found in the legalism of a Puritanical Calvinism, nor in either fundamentalism or a "respectable" institutionalized "churchianity." Rather, as Robert Chambers notes, when Laurence's eccentric characters like Hagar Shipley in The Stone Angel (1964) face moments in life for which "earthly solutions seem either inadequate or impossible," they seek the good of a mysterious and transcendent God.¹⁷ Conscious of their own fallibility and the broken fabric of their social relationships, their

¹⁶See especially W. L. Morton's "Canadian Conservatism Now," and "The Possibility of a Philosophy of Conservatism," in Contexts of Canada's Past: Selected Essays of W. L. Morton, A. B. McKillop, ed. (Toronto: Macmillan / Carleton Library Series, 1980), 243-54, 266-84.

¹⁷Robert Chambers, "Margaret Laurence's Women," Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Summer 1983), 18-26.

appeal to grace is the last recourse of social outcasts, is answered by the loving regard of God, and is taken up in half-conscious facing of the realities of life and the resolution of past sins. MacLennan's concerns were similar to Laurence's, though his characters more directly reflect on the threat of technical control.¹⁸ MacLennan portrayed the unwitting broken-ness left by fundamentalist and legalistic Calvinism and the powerful evil of its secularized forms in Stephen Lassiter's aggressive pursuit, in The Precipice, of the American dream of technological and capitalist progress. Conscious of the irreparable, tragic loss of a more primitive paradise, MacLennan's heroes, like Daniel Ainslie in Each Man's Son, find the hope of a new, if as yet transitory paradise, in the resolution of struggling relationships to mature and accepting love. As T. D. MacLulich puts it, MacLennan's early novels portray the redemption of the American Dream of self-made legalism and materialism "by an infusion of Canadian Morality."¹⁹

One final illustration of the attempt to claim space for the creative pursuit of the transcendent moral good can be found in the work of Northrop Frye. In his late-1930's graduate work at Oxford on William Blake's Romantic, chiliastic criticism of industrialization, reminiscent of Richard Roberts' interest in Blake, Frye discovered the themes of tragedy and irony, and the literary symbols of a moral universe.²⁰ Throughout his career, Frye sought to expose within the structure of the literary universe the expression of creative moral personality. While criticizing the "techniques" of the modern cultural industry and its ties to the "American empire," as in his contribution to the United Church's

¹⁸For comments on MacLennan, see especially Helen Hoy, "'The Gates Closed on Us Then:' The Paradise-Lost Motif in MacLennan's Fiction;" and Robert D. Chambers, "Hugh MacLennan and Religion: The Precipice Revisited;" and T. D. MacLulich, "The Precipice: MacLennan's Anatomy of Failure," in Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Winter 1979-80), 29-45, 46-53, 54-65.

¹⁹T. D. MacLulich, "The Precipice: MacLennan's Anatomy of Failure," Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Winter 1979-80), 59.

²⁰Frye's study of Blake eventually was published as Fearful Symmetry (1947). For further comments on Frye, see John Ayre, "Frye, Herman Northrop," in The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2nd Ed., Vol. 2 (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1988), 851-2.

Commission on Culture, Frye would interpret literature and culture as the incarnation of moral personality and creativity, and as a process concerned with the search for the eternal good. Hence, in his much later The Great Code (1982), he would apply his method of literary critique, reminiscent of Rudolf Bultmann's "formsgeschichte" method, to the Bible in search of its great moral truths.²¹ For Frye, this return to the Hebraic and Christian roots of western culture offered the answer to Plato's search for meaning. With an Augustinian moral realism that disclaimed any illusions that the good already had been realized, Frye nevertheless retained a teleological hope, similar to Cochrane's process of becoming, that the divinely-inspired creative process gradually might approximate the good.

Frye's work also indicates an important link to calls for educational reform in the late 1950's and early 1960's. Already in 1950 the United Church's Commission on Culture had urged the renewal of the western humanist tradition. Shortly thereafter, Hilda Neatby issued her famous critique of modern education in So Little for the Mind (1953). The pragmatic assumptions and techniques of modern education, she claimed, failed to prepare students for the significant moral questions for life.²² By the early 1960's, Frye was a participant, and report editor, of the Joint Committee of the Toronto Board of Education and the University of Toronto, established to review the curriculum of public schools.²³ Similarly, James S. Thomson participated in the Montreal Protestant Board of Education. Thomson was a well-known United Church theologian whose early career included teaching at Pine Hill Divinity School in Halifax between 1930 and 1937. In 1937 Thomson succeeded E. H. Oliver as president of the University of Saskatchewan, and also served as managing director of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for 1949. After 1949, he became dean of the newly formed

²¹Northrop Frye, The Great Code; The Bible and Literature (Toronto: Academic Press Canada, 1982), 17, 40-50.

²²Hilda Neatby, So Little For The Mind (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Co., 1953).

²³See Joint Committee of the Toronto Board of Education and the University of Toronto, Design For Learning, Northrop Frye, ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962).

McGill Divinity School.²⁴ Thomson's works echoed Richard Roberts' interest in Augustinian theology, and also the United Church Commission on Culture's concern to relate Christianity to contemporary education. In one presentation to Montreal's Protestant Board of Education, he argued that modern western education was rooted in the Bible and the Christian tradition, and that religion and moral values should be reintegrated into public and university training.²⁵

In contrast to these illustrations of a hopeful progressive Augustinianism, George P. Grant provides an example of philosophical pessimism that was roughly analogous to the "minority" position of Bryden's eschatological interpretation. Though as late as the 1960's he would profess himself as yet unable to believe, he would increasingly, if eccentrically, embrace Presbyterianism. Already in his graduate work at Oxford under A. D. Lindsay during the late 1940's, however, Grant's study of John Oman led him on a path reminiscent of Bryden's. As William Christian notes, Grant gleaned from Oman that modern science and the pursuit of man's self-will had sundered man from nature and from God's revelation in nature.²⁶ And in closing off the possibility of that revelation, modern society had undermined the moral foundations of society that were dependent on man's relationship to God. Beyond Oman's Kantian personalism, Grant proceeded to argue, in Barthian tones though without having read Barth, that man needed to be gripped by a Wholly Other reality whose essence was Love, and must freely reach out to embrace that love.

These concerns would resonate through Grant's philosophical career during the late 1950's. His first major work, Philosophy in a Mass Age (1959), set out an historical approach to moral philosophy that, like progressive Augustinians, expected that history would illumine the true and the

²⁴United Church Archives (UCA), Biographical Files, "James S. Thomson."

²⁵UCA, Biographical Files, James S. Thomson, "The Church and Education," (typescript, n.d.).

²⁶William Christian, George Grant, A Biography (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 147-49.

good.²⁷ By the mid-1960's, however, with the publication of Lament for a Nation (1965), Technology and Empire (1969), and Time as History (1969), Grant not only shared Morton's "agnosticism" concerning the modern gods of progress, but furthermore had become far more pessimistic about the possibility that man might recover the good in history. The deep structures of modern thought and society, and modern man's attempt to remake history in a progressive "tradition of the new," had thoroughly obscured the transcendent archetype in the world as well as man's vision of the good.²⁸ At best, man could only listen, watch, and wait for "intimations of deprival" that might arise out of the remembrance of a lost good.²⁹ Like Bryden's paradox, Grant's dilemma was that though man could only know the good within time, all his efforts to know and articulate that good were compromised by his own socio-historical finitude. Without Bryden's mystical, existential faith in an eschatological Christ, however, Grant's pessimism marked the limit of hope rather than the prospect of radical transformation.

Despite Grant's pessimism, these illustrations together indicate the convergence of Canadian scholarship in a modern Augustinianism which, from the assumption of an Eternal moral order, challenged the modern gods of technocratic science, the state, and material progress, and attempted to define a Canadian community in terms of the Eternal moral order. In their modern revision, advocates of that Augustinianism identified God's will and grace with the impulse of creative and moral freedom, and in most cases optimistically anticipated the disclosure and realization of that moral order within the historical process. Thus they interpreted historical-structural experience as a multi-storied tension between the Eternal and the temporal, between personal and moral freedom and

²⁷George Grant, Philosophy in a Mass Age (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1959), v.

²⁸George Grant, Philosophy in a Mass Age (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1959), 18; George Grant, "Tradition and Revolution," Canadian Forum, 50 (April-May, 1970), 88-9.

²⁹George Grant, "A Platitude," in Technology and Empire (Toronto: House of Anansi, 1969), 143.

structure, and between present tragedy and the teleological promise of transformation. In this way, the recovery of an Augustinian sense of tension offered the grounds for renewed cultural criticism and transformation.

It is worth noting further three particular themes of that progressive Augustinianism. First, in contrast to the Niebuhrian legacy which suspected power structures, the Canadian interpretation of Augustinianism assumed the legitimacy of scientific technique and social structures like the state. Their appeal to Augustine, including his Platonic ontology, had provided for the extension of a substantialist idealism which located God's Word in the constitution of historical-structural reality, thereby affirming its validity. Second, however, their identification of grace with a moral order of freedom in the midst of structures insisted that historical-structural reality was relative and subordinate to the pursuit of moral ends. Thirdly, they had identified the realization of that moral end with the dynamic unfolding of the historical process. Hence, they advocated the recovery of the classical western past, but also an open-ended future in which the present structures might be transcended and transformed in reconciliation with the good.

During the late 1950's and early 1960's, the hope and urgency of this transformation once again galvanized the mainline Protestant churches into new campaigns to make Christianity "relevant" to contemporary life. Though certainly the best known example, Pierre Berton's The Comfortable Pew (1965) was neither the only nor the first to challenge any comfort that the mainline churches might take from their newfound Augustinian theology and its emphasis on the exclusive sovereignty of God. Already in 1955, the Presbyterian Church appointed a committee, consisting of J. D. Smart, D. V. Wade, C. M. Pitts, James Dutton, and J. L. W. McLean, to draft a message on "The Mission and State of the Church." In its 1956 report, this committee urged that it was time the Presbyterian Church outgrow its "minority movement complex" and, rather than merely perpetuating itself,

recognize its responsibility to present a vital witness of the Gospel to the whole world.³⁰ In particular, it complained that the greatest weakness of the Presbyterian Church was the lack of vital knowledge and loyalty to the Bible, Reformed doctrine, and the spiritual role of the institutions of the church. If the church was to take on a significant role in society, it must move beyond mere administration of the church to take up its missionary task, and it must start with submitting itself to frank self-criticism and continual reformation by the Word of God. That reformation required renewed commitment to personal devotion and obedience in "the practical affairs of everyday life," and renewed emphasis by the church on instruction of its membership, effective fellowship, and democratic participation in church government, to prepare itself for vital evangelism.

In following years, both Presbyterian and United Churches would, with increasing urgency, examine both the relevance of their Christianity to the "practical affairs" of "secular" life, and their own failure to embody Christ's presence in the world. In the early 1960's, for example, the United Church would publish a new catechism that included Donald Mathers', The Word and the Way (1962), J. S. Thomson's God and His Purpose (1964), and Gerald R. Cragg's The Church and the World (1966). While these offered a modern Augustinian view of the sovereignty of a transcendent God in the world and the consecrating role of the church, on the basis of modern "critical" interpretation of the Bible and society, an intense debate marked by Stewart Crysedale's Churches Where the Action Is! (1965) and the Board of Evangelism and Social Service's symposium published as Why the Sea is Boiling Hot (1966) opened new questions about the relevance of the church to contemporary life and reflected the concern of some for a more radical "secular" Christianity.

Especially in Crysedale's sociological studies, the concern for "relevance" seemed to reflect a new progressive emphasis on human freedom and responsibility, and on modernist accommodation

³⁰Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC), Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly, 1956, "Appendix: Report of the General Assembly's Committee on The Mission and State of the Church," 248-49.

to the culture of the Sixties generation. The new theology, according to Crysdale, stressed "God at work in the world," and a new morality and evangelism of social involvement.³¹ The church's mission was to translate the good news of God's work in bringing a new age into being into action by transforming the "secular" life of the world. And in order to do so, Crysdale advocated a perspective that was "both sociological and theological," and an "experimental" approach of studying contemporary social and economic structures in order to identify the "real needs" that the church must address.

Despite Crysdale's emphasis on change, the rising self-criticism among mainline Protestants, and their concern for "relevance", demonstrates the dynamic relationship in modern Protestant thought, and on Roberts' "vertical" axis, between divine grace and human freedom and responsibility to embody that grace creatively in the world. The new concern to relate Christianity to contemporary society was generated out of a long process of reorientation to reclaim the transcendent reality of God, and with that reality the assurance of human freedom in the midst of a structured world and a transcendent moral order from which Christians might prophetically critique modern culture.

Indeed, at the heart of his The Word and the Way (1962), which was the center-piece of the United Church's "new curriculum," Donald Mathers contrasted Augustine's insistence on human reliance on God's grace with Pelagius's assertion of human free will, and in doing so located the debates of the early 1960's in the perennial struggle of the Christian tradition to grasp the relationship between divine grace and human freedom, and between God and history. For Mathers, Pelagius' assertion of freedom and responsibility apart from divine grace, finally left man with the impossible burden of being perfect by his own techniques and through a merciless legalism.³² With Augustine,

³¹Stewart Crysdale, Churches Where the Action is! (Toronto: United Church of Canada, Board of Evangelism and Social Service, 1966), 3.

³²Donald M. Mathers, The Word and the Way (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1962), 147-58.

Mathers argued that it was only through the power of God's grace that man was free from the reality of sin, and free to embody that grace creatively in the world. In the modern Augustinianism of twentieth-century mainline Canadian Protestantism, the "way" of human freedom and social transformation was necessarily linked to the presence of transcendent grace in the world.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Primary Sources:

A. Archives:

Knox College, Caven Library, Walter W. Bryden:

"The Reign of Naturalisms," unpublished typescript, n.d. [circa 1935].

"St. Augustine, Ecclesiastic, Philosopher and Theologian (354-430)," unpublished mimeograph, n.d.

National Archives of Canada, George M. Grant Papers.

United Church Archives, Biographical Files:

Samuel D. Chown, clippings entitled "'The World Has Struck Its Tents And Is Once More On the March,'" Toronto Star (4 June 1919), and "Ample Opportunity Of Today Brings Before Modern Church Challenge To Greater Service," (no journal title, no date).

John Dow, clipping entitled "Toronto Conference Minutes 1964."

James Endicott.

John Line, clipping entitled "Toronto Conference Minutes 1971."

John Mackay, clipping entitled "Doctor John Mackay," Winnipeg Free Press (16 May 1938).

William Morgan, newspaper clipping, H. A. Kent, "Late Rev. William Morgan, D.D.," New Outlook (8 February 1928).

Richard Roberts, newspaper clipping, "Centennial Celebration at Historic Sherbourne Street Church," The Toronto Star (April 18, 1987), by Donald Jones.

James S. Thomson.

United Church Archives, Documents, transcript entitled "Richard Roberts," by Gwen Norman, 1966.

United Church Archives, Methodist Church of Canada, Army and Navy Board.

B. Committee Reports:

Joint Committee of the Toronto Board of Education and the University of Toronto, Design For Learning, Northrop Frye, ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962).

Presbyterian Church in Canada. Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly:

1928, "Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion."

1933, "Report of the Committee on Evangelism."

1935, "Report of the Committee on Evangelism and Church Life and Work."

1942, "Report of the Committee on Evangelism and Church Life and Work."

1943, "Committee to Investigate Conditions in the Colleges."

1943, "Report of the Board of Evangelism and Church Life and Work."

1943, "The Presbyterian College, Montreal."

1944, "Report of Nominations."

1945, "Appendix: A Statement of Faith."

1945, "Report of the Board of Evangelism and Church Life and Work."

1946, "Report of the Committee on 'Statement of Faith.'"

- 1946, "Report of the Board of Evangelism and Social Action."
- 1947, "Report of the Board of Evangelism and Social Action."
- 1947, "Report of the Committee on Articles of Faith."
- 1948, "Appendix: Supplementary Report, Board of Evangelism and Social Action."
- 1948, "Report of the Committee on Articles of Faith."
- 1949, "Report of the Board of Evangelism and Social Action."
- 1949, "Report of the Committee on Articles of Faith."
- 1950, "Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation."
- 1951, "Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation."
- 1952, "Appendix: Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation."
- 1954, "Appendix: Report of the Joint Committee on Church and Nation."
- 1954, "Report of the Board of Evangelism and Social Action."
- 1955, "Committee on Articles of Faith."
- 1956, "Appendix: Report of the General Assembly's Committee on The Mission and State of the Church."

United Church of Canada, Record of Proceedings,

- 1934, "Evangelism."
- 1934, "Evangelism and Social Service."
- 1934, "Report of the Commission on Christianizing the Social Order."
- 1936, "Evangelism and Social Service."
- 1938, "Board of Evangelism and Social Service."
- 1938, "Economic and Social Research."
- 1940, "A Statement of Faith."
- 1940, "Evangelism and Social Service."
- 1942, "Church, Nation and World Order Interim Report."
- 1942, "Statement of Faith -- Second Interim Report."
- 1942, "Theological Faculty, McGill University."
- 1942, "Board of Christian Education."
- 1944, "Board of Evangelism and Social Service."
- 1944, "Forward Movement After the War."
- 1944, "Proposed Constitution for a Canadian Council of Churches."
- 1946, "Commission on the Christian Faith."
- 1946, "Commission on Christian Marriage and Christian Home."
- 1948, "Board of Evangelism and Social Service."
- 1950, "Committee on Culture."
- 1950, "Appendix: Report of the Commission on Culture."
- 1954, "Board of Evangelism and Social Service."
- Yearbook, 1926 and Record of Proceedings of the First General Council, "Evangelism and Social Service."
- Yearbook, 1927 and Record of Proceedings of the Second General Council, "Foreign Missions."
- Yearbook, 1928 and Record of Proceedings of the Third General Council, "Foreign Missions."
- Yearbook, 1934, "Evangelism and Social Service."
- Yearbook, 1939, "The Board of Christian Education."
- Yearbook, 1943, "Board of Evangelism and Social Service."
- Yearbook, 1947, "Evangelism."
- Board of Evangelism and Social Service, Annual Report, "The Christianizing of Industry," Yearbook, 1926, Record of Proceedings of the First General Council.
- Board of Evangelism and Social Service, Annual Report, 1926-27, "Thy Will Be Done,"

- Yearbook, 1927, Record of Proceedings of the Second General Council.
----- Board of Evangelism and Social Service, Annual Report, 1928, "He Shall Reign," Yearbook, 1928, and Record of Proceedings of the Third General Council.

C. Journals:

- Canadian Forum, 1919-1934.
Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, 1924-28.
Canadian Student, 1921-1935.
Christendom, 1935-1950.
Christian Century, 1918-1935.
Christian Guardian, 1900-1925.
The Expositor, 1900-1925.
Expository Times, 1925-32.
Hibbert Journal, 1890-1925.
New Outlook, 1925-45.
Presbyterian Witness, 1901-1914.

D. Monographs and articles:

- Anderson, K. C. "The Collapse of Liberal Christianity." Hibbert Journal, 8 (1909-1910).
Anonymous, "Is Any Religion Adequate? Musings of a Rural Minister," New Outlook (15 February 1933).
'Archibald Ray.' "What to Preach -- That is the Question," New Outlook (18 January 1933).
Arnold, Matthew. "Culture and Anarchy," in The Portable Matthew Arnold, Lionel Trilling, ed. New York: Viking Press, 1949.
Augustine. City of God, Gerald G. Walsh, Demetrius B. Zema, Grace Monahan, Daniel J. Honan, trans. Garden City: Image Books, 1958.
Baillie, John. The Interpretation of Religion: An Introductory Study of Theological Principles. New York: Scribners, 1928.
----- "The Meaning of Duty: A Plea for a Reconsideration of the Kantian Ethic," Hibbert Journal, 24 (1925-26).
----- "The Predicament of Humanism," Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, 8, no. 2 (March-April 1931).
----- "The Psychological Point of View," The Philosophical Review (May 1930).
----- The Roots of Religion in the Human Soul. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1926.
Barth, Karl. The Word of God and the Word of Man, Douglas Horton, trans. U.S.A.: Pilgrim's Press, 1928.
Brecken, Egerton R. M. "Getting Rid of Sin; A Lenten Meditation." New Outlook (27 February 1929).
----- "Towards Understanding the Chinese Puzzle," New Outlook, (28 October 1925).
Brett, George Sydney. "The Evolution of Orthodoxy." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought 3, no. 2 (March-April, 1926).
----- "The History of Science as a factor of Modern Education." Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, XIX, 1925, sec. II.
----- "'The Interpretation of Religion.'" Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, 6, no. 2 (March-

- April 1929).
- . "The Modern Mind and Modernism." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, 5, no. 2 (March-April, 1928).
- . "The Philosopher's Stone." Canadian Forum, 6, no. 72 (September 1926).
- . "Some Beliefs About Psychology." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, 1, no. 6 (November-December 1924).
- . "A Woman in Philosophy." Canadian Forum, 3, no. 31 (April 1923).
- Brown, Arthur W. "The Marching Years." New Outlook (30 December 1925).
- Brown, Walter T. review of Science and Religion. By J. Arthur Thompson. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 2, No. 6 (November-December, 1925).
- . "The Transcendence of God," Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, 1., no. 3 (May-June, 1924).
- Brunner, H. Emil. The Theology of Crisis. New York: Scribner's Sons, 1930.
- Bryden, Walter Williamson. The Christian's Knowledge of God. Toronto: Thorn Press, 1940.
- . Separated Unto the Gospel, Donald V. Wade, ed. Toronto: Thorn Press, 1956.
- . The Significance of the Westminster Confession of Faith. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1943.
- . The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul. London: James Clarke & Co, 1925.
- . Why I Am A Presbyterian. Toronto: Presbyterian Publishing, 1934.
- Case, Shirley Jackson. The Historicity of Jesus. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1928, [1912].
- Chalmers, Randolph Carleton, ed. The Heritage of Western Culture. Toronto: Ryerson, 1952.
- , and John A. Irving, eds. The Light and the Flame; Modern Knowledge and Religion. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1956.
- , -----, eds. Challenge and Response; Modern Ideas and Religion. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1959.
- Chown, Samuel D. "Conferences for Christian Efficiency." Christian Guardian (February 7, 1917).
- . "Revival Now." Christian Guardian (17 December 1918).
- Cochrane, Arthur C. The Church and the War. Toronto: Thomas Nelson, 1940.
- . The Church's Confession Under Hitler. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962.
- Cochrane, Charles Norris. Christianity and Classical Culture. New York: Oxford University Press, 1957 [1940].
- . "The Mind of Edward Gibbon." University of Toronto Quarterly, XII (1942-3).
- Davis, H. J. "History or Myth?" The Canadian Forum, 7, no. 81 (March 1927).
- . "The Saving of Man." Canadian Forum, Vol. 3, No. 22 (May 1923).
- Denney, James. "The Atonement and the Modern Mind." The Expositor, 6th Series, Vol. 8 (1903).
- . "Christianity and the Historical Christ." The Expositor, 8th Series, Vol. 5 (1913).
- . Studies in Theology. David F. Wells, intr. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976 [1895].
- Dow, John. God's Eternal Plan; The Kingdom. Toronto: Board of Evangelism and Social Service of the United Church of Canada, 1932.
- . "The Historic Jesus." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 6, No. 5 (September-October 1929).
- . Jesus and the Human Conflict. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1927.
- . "The Preacher's Page; Be Ye Perfect." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 3, No. 5 (September-October, 1926).
- . "The Preacher's Page; Before the Deluge." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 9, No. 1 (January-February 1932).
- . "The Preacher's Page; Cease Clinging." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 6, No.

- 5 (September-October 1929).
- "The Preacher's Page; The Christ and the World Forces." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 3, No. 2 (March-April 1926).
- "The Preacher's Page; 'Fellow-workers with God,' and 'Christian Consolation,'" Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 5, No. 1 (January-February, 1928).
- "The Preacher's Page; Inconspicuous Religion." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 3, No. 3 (May-June 1926).
- "The Preacher's Page; Men of Violence." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 4, No. 6 (November-December 1927).
- "The Preacher's Page; Nature and Redemption." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 8, No. 5 (November-December 1931).
- "The Preacher's Page; On the Road." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 4, No. 3 (May-June 1927).
- "The Preacher's Page; 'One Like the Son of Man,' and 'A Lamb as it had been Slain.'" Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 4, No. 4 (July-August 1927).
- "The Preacher's Page; The Vine," Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 7, No. 5 (September-October 1930).
- "The Preacher's Page; Vox Clamantis." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 4, No. 4 (July-August 1927).
- "The Preacher's Page, By Words." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 7, No. 4 (July-August 1929).
- Durkin, Douglas. The Magpie. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974 [1923].
- Endicott, James. "The Lordship of Christ." New Outlook (19 September 1928).
- "Religion and World Unity." New Outlook, (24 March 1926).
- Fairbairn, R. Edis. "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, 'Being Dead, Yet Speaketh.'" New Outlook (21 August 1935).
- "Witness Against War." United Church Observer (October 1939).
- Falconer, Sir Robert. "Humanism." The Hibbert Journal, 24 (1925-26).
- Forsey, Eugene. "The Economic Problem." Towards the Christian Revolution, R. B. Y. Scott and Gregory Vlastos, eds. Kingston: Ronald P. Frye & Co., 1989 [1936].
- "The New Economic Order." Towards the Christian Revolution. R. B. Y. Scott and Gregory Vlastos, eds. Kingston: Ronald P. Frye & Co., 1989 [1936].
- Foster, Harvey G. "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, 'Jesus and Violence,'" New Outlook (2 October 1935).
- Frye, Northrop. The Great Code; The Bible and Literature. Toronto: Academic Press Canada, 1982.
- "Trends in Modern Culture." The Heritage of Western Culture; Essays on the Origin and Development of Modern Culture, Randolph Carleton Chalmers, ed. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1952.
- Gordon, J. King. "A Christian Socialist in the 1930's." The Social Gospel in Canada, Richard Allen, ed. Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1975.
- "'Dare the Church Be Christian?' A Sermon preached at the Metropolitan Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, March 12, 1933." New Outlook (22 March 1933).
- "Nova Scotia Sees a Great Light." Christian Century, Vol. 53, Pt. 1 (27 May 1936).
- "Our Readers' Forum; J. King Gordon, 'Understand Before We Criticize.'" New Outlook (16 April 1930).
- "The Twilight of this Age," review of Reinhold Niebuhr, Reflections on the End of an Era. The World Tomorrow (1 March 1934).
- Gosse, R. E. "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, 'Resignation or Rebellion?'" New Outlook

- (18 March 1936).
- Grant, George P. Philosophy in a Mass Age. Toronto: Copp Clark, 1959.
- Technology and Empire. Toronto: House of Anansi, 1969.
- "Tradition and Revolution." Canadian Forum, 50 (April-May, 1970).
- Harrington, E. L. "What Science Expects of the Church." New Outlook (19 November 1930).
- Harris, Rev. J. Russell. "Towards a Christian Social Order." New Outlook (17 June 1931).
- Hayward, Percy R. "What is there in Religious Education?" Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, 1, no. 2 (March-April 1924).
- Hooke, S. H. "A Modern Lay Apologia." Canadian Forum, Vol. 3, No. 35 (August 1923).
- "Quo Vadis." Acta Victoriana, 40, no. 3 (December 1915).
- "The Religion of a Scientist: I." Canadian Forum, Vol. 4, No. 39 (December 1923).
- "The Religion of a Scientist, II." Canadian Forum, Vol. 4, No. 40 (January 1924).
- "Sacred Books." Canadian Forum, Vol. 2, No. 22 (July 1922).
- "The Saving of the Church." Canadian Forum, Vol. 3, No. 30 (March 1923).
- "That One Face." Canadian Forum, Vol. 3, No. 27 (December 1922).
- "The Three Taps." The Canadian Forum, 8, no. 88 (January 28).
- Huestis, Charles Herbert. "Our Readers' Forum; 'Unemployment and Its Problems.'" New Outlook (26 November 1930).
- "What Einstein Did to My Mind." New Outlook (10 April 1929).
- Hunter, George. "Physics and Metaphysics." The Canadian Forum, 9, no. 108 (September 1929).
- "Science and Religion." The Canadian Forum, 7, no. 74 (November 1926).
- Innis, Harold. The Bias of Communication, intro. by Marshall McLuhan. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971 [1951].
- "Charles Norris Cochrane, 1889-1945." Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, 12 (1945).
- Jackson, George. The Preacher and the Modern Mind. London: Charles H. Kelly, 1912.
- Jordan, William G. Biblical Criticism and Modern Thought, or, The Place of the Old Testament in the life of today. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909.
- "Criticism and Revelation." The Presbyterian (December 30, 1909).
- "Hebraism and Hellenism in the Second Century B. C." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, 2, no. 5 (September-October, 1925).
- "Theological Literature." Queen's Quarterly 20, no. 3 (January 1912-1913).
- Ketchum, J. Davidson. "The Case for Human Mutation." Canadian Forum, Vol. 2, No. 24 (September 1922).
- "The Saving of God." Canadian Forum, Vol. 3, No. 31 (April 1923).
- Langford, Frank. "Young People in the United Church; Devotional." New Outlook, (5 May 1926).
- Leach, H. Frank. "Is Worship a Lost Art?" New Outlook (4 April 1928).
- "The Preacher and the Psychology of Religion." New Outlook (4 November 1925).
- "Psychology and Religious Experience." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, 5, no. 1 (January-February 1928).
- Line, John. "Are We at the End of an Epoch? What should the Church Do?" New Outlook (14 June 1933).
- "Barth and Barthianism." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 6, No. 2 (March-April 1929).
- "The Beginnings of Christological Doctrine." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 2, No. 3 (May-June 1925).
- "Catholic Theology and Modern Culture; Books By Jacques Maritain." Christendom, Vol. 1 (1935-36).

- "Conditions of Religious Renewal." The Christian Century, Vol. 53, Pt. 1 (3 June 1936).
- "Fundamental Unity of Spiritual and Social Religious Values; The Substance of an address Given Before the Toronto Ministerial Association." New Outlook (18 March 1931), 253, 264; and (25 March 1931).
- "How Humanism Came and What It Is," Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 8, No. 2 (March-April, 1931).
- Inspiration and Modern Criticism. London: Epworth, 1925.
- "The Johannine Doctrine of the Sacrament," Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 4, No. 4 (July-August 1927).
- "Knowledge, Metaphysics, Religion." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 7, No. 5 (September-October 1930).
- "Letter to the Editor, 'Never Again.'" New Outlook (21 November 1934).
- "The Philosophical Principles." Towards the Christian Revolution, R. B. Y. Scott and Gregory Vlastos, eds. Kingston: Ronald P. Frye & Co., 1989 [1936].
- "The New Physics and the Religious View of the World." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 7, No. 1 (January-February 1929).
- "Problems of Today. X. The Nature of our Knowledge of God," The Expository Times, Vol. 50 (1938-39).
- "Our Readers' Forum; 'A Defence of Dr. Brunner,' by John Line; 'Mr. Silcox Replies,' by C. E. Silcox," New Outlook (14 August 1935).
- "Religious Activities Among Students." New Outlook (16 October 1929).
- "The Theological Principles." Towards the Christian Revolution, R. B. Y. Scott and Gregory Vlastos, eds. Kingston: Ronald P. Frye & Co., 1989 [1936].
- "Truth Is In Order To Goodness." Theology Today, Vol. 2 (July 1945).
- Macdonald, J. F. L. "A Lectionary for the United Church." New Outlook (24 March, 1926).
- MacIver, R. M. "The Bookshelf: Metaphysics." The Canadian Forum, 4, no. 37 (October 1923).
- "The Dance of Life," The Canadian Forum, 4, no. 42 (March 1924).
- Mackay, John. Religion as Friendship with God; a New Statement of the Old Doctrines. Toronto: Westminster, 1906.
- Macmillan, J. W. "The Slump." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 2, No. 1 (January-February 1925).
- "Unemployment: Its Causes." New Outlook (12 November 1930).
- "Unemployment as a Problem of Business." New Outlook (19 November 1930).
- "Unemployment: the Remedies." New Outlook (3 December 1930).
- Machen, J. Grescham. "Christianity and Culture." The Presbyterian (February 27, 1913), 268-70; (March 6, 1913).
- Manson, William. "Foundations Which are not Removed," Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, 1, no. 1 (January-February, 1924).
- "From An Expositor's Notebook." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, 2, no. 3 (May-June 1925).
- "New Testament Criticism in Relation to the Christian Religion, I," The Expository Times, 37 (1925-1926).
- "review of 'The Soul of Modern Poetry,' by R. H. Strachan," Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, 1, no. 2 (March-April 1924).
- McLachlan, D. N. "The American Federation of Labour." New Outlook (2 October 1929).
- "The Church and the Industrial Crisis," New Outlook (2 September 1931).
- "Commission On Social Order." New Outlook (20 December 1933).
- "Evangelism. Outlining the New Policy Recommended by the Board." New Outlook (23

- November 1927).
- "Pentecost: No Room for a Man-Made Programme." New Outlook (28 May 1930).
- "The Place of the Church in the Life of Today," New Outlook (18 November 1931).
- "Realizing God: The Supreme Need," New Outlook (16 January 1929).
- McLaurin, J. B. "The Gospel in India." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, 2, no. 2 (March-April, 1925).
- McLeod, H. A. "What the Church Expects of Science." New Outlook (20 February 1930).
- "What the Church Expects of the University." New Outlook (19 March 1930).
- Moore, F. J. "Christian Social Doctrine." The Canadian Forum, Vol. XII, No. 142 (July 1932).
- "Correspondence." Canadian Forum, 3, no. 35 (July 1923).
- review of Christ and Society, by Charles Gore, The Canadian Forum, 9, no. 102 (March 1929).
- Moore, Irene. "The Duty of the Christian Church." Canadian Forum, Vol. 3, No. 33 (June 1923).
- Moore, John. "Anchors of the Soul." New Outlook, (5 October 1927).
- "The Ability of Christ." New Outlook (21 August 1929).
- "Behold, the Dreamer." New Outlook, (1 September 1926).
- "The Essentials of Life." New Outlook (3 July 1929).
- "Religion, Youth and the Church." New Outlook (29 July 1925).
- review of Social Law in the Spiritual World, by Rufus M. Jones, and Can We Find God, by Arthur B. Patten, in Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 1, No. 3 (May-June 1924).
- Morgan, William. The Nature and Right of Religion. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clarke, 1926.
- "Religion's Right and Value." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, 3, no. 4 (July-August 1926).
- "Religion and Philosophy." The Expositor, 8th Series, 7 (1914).
- Morrow, E. Lloyd. Church Union in Canada; Its History, Motives, Doctrine and Government. Toronto: Thomas Allen, 1923.
- Morton, W. L. "Canadian Conservatism Now." Contexts of Canada's Past; Selected Essays of W. L. Morton, A. B. McKillop, ed. Toronto: Macmillan / Carleton Library Series, 1980.
- "The Possibility of a Philosophy of Conservatism." Contexts of Canada's Past; Selected Essays of W. L. Morton, A. B. McKillop, ed. Toronto: Macmillan / Carleton Library Series, 1980.
- Murray, J. Lovell. The Call of a World Task in War Time. Toronto: Student Volunteer Movement, 1918.
- Murray, Walter C. "What the University Expects of the Church." New Outlook (12 March 1930).
- Myers, Rev. Dr. C. A. "Teaching Religion to Childhood and Youth; An Old Task With a New Need." New Outlook (10 June 1925).
- Neatby, Hilda. So Little For The Mind. Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Co., 1953.
- Nicholson, J. W. A. "Evangelize the Inevitable." New Outlook (8 April 1931).
- "Realism in Religion, Giving the Prayer Wheel Another Turn." New Outlook (21 March 1934).
- Niebuhr, H. Richard. Christ and Culture. New York: Harper & Row, 1951.
- The Kingdom of God in America. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1953.
- "Theology and Psychology: A Sterile Union." Christian Century, 44, pt. 1 (January 13, 1927).
- Niebuhr, Reinhold. "Barth -- Apostle of the Absolute." The Christian Century, Vol. 45, Pt. 2 (13 December 1928).
- "Barthianism and Political Reaction." Christian Century, Vol. 51, Pt. 1 (6 June 1934).
- "Christianity and Classical Culture," University of Toronto Quarterly, Vol. 10, No. 4 (July 1940-41).
- Leaves From the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic. Cleveland and New York: World Publishing, 1929.
- "Let the Liberal Churches Stop Fooling Themselves!" Christian Century, Vol. 48, Pt. 1 (25

- March 1931).
- "What the War Did to My Mind." Christian Century, Vol. 45, Pt. 2 (27 September 1928).
 - "Why I am Not a Christian." Christian Century, Vol. 44, Pt. 2 (15 December 1927).
 - "Why I Leave the F.O.R." The Christian Century, Vol. 51, Pt. 1 (3 January 1934).
 - Oliver, Edmund H. "The Place and Work of the United Church in the Life of Canada." New Outlook (10 June 1925).
 - Pidgeon, George C. "The Kingdom of God Movement in Canada." New Outlook (18 November 1931).
 - "Canada's Kingdom of God Movement, II. The Church's Faith." New Outlook (27 May 1931).
 - "Canada's Kingdom of God Movement, V. The Privelege of Youth." New Outlook (17 June 1931).
 - "Members of Christ's Body." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 2, No. 6 (November-December 1925).
 - "Leadership in Evangelism; the Moderator Urges Aggressive and Persistent Effort." New Outlook (20 January 1926).
 - "Protestantism and Church Unity." New Outlook (3 December 1930).
 - , and D. N. McLachlan. "The Christward Movement," [letter on behalf of the Commission on Evangelism to the Presbyteries] New Outlook (18 November 1931).
 - Platt, Rev. Frederic. "Certainty and the Christian Faith; A Series of Short Articles for Christian People on the Sure Foundations of the Christian Religion, I-VII." New Outlook (22 July 1925 -2 September 1925).
 - Richards, Rev. A. L. "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order." New Outlook (27 February 1935).
 - "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, 'Annual Conference.'" New Outlook (29 May 1935).
 - "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, 'National Conference.'" New Outlook (20 May 1936).
 - Riddell, J. H. "The Inclusiveness of the United Church of Canada." New Outlook, (28 March 1928), 8.
 - Ritchie, D. L. "Answering the Challenge." New Outlook (24 July 1929).
 - "Barth and Barthianism." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 6, No. 5 (September-October 1929).
 - "Christian Experience and Theology," Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 4, No. 5 (September-October, 1927).
 - "The Church and Public Life," Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 3, No. 3 (May-June 1926).
 - "'The Everlasting Gospel,' What is Substance and What is Form in Religion," New Outlook (11 May 1927).
 - "A Gospel for Today," New Outlook (6 April 1927).
 - "Have We a Gospel?" New Outlook (24 September 1930).
 - "Is the Church Afraid of Her Lord?" New Outlook, (15 June 1927).
 - "The New Challenge," New Outlook (16 January 1929).
 - "The Prophet for Today," New Outlook (24 February 1926).
 - Roberts, Richard. "Christianity at the Crossroads." New Outlook (29 April 1931).
 - The Christian God. New York: MacMillan, 1929.
 - "'A Church for Us All' Sermon Preached by the New Moderator, Rev. Richard Roberts, D.D., at the General Council, September, 13, 1934." New Outlook (19 September 1934).
 - "Communism and the Kingdom of God; A Sermon Preached at Sherbourne Church, Toronto,

- on Sunday Evening, March 22nd." New Outlook (8 April 1931).
- "The Doctrine of God." Hibbert Journal, Vol. 23 (1924-25).
- "Easter: If In This World Only...!" New Outlook (8 April 1936).
- "The Ethics of William Blake." Hibbert Journal, Vol. 17, No. 4 (1918-1919).
- "The Gospel at Philippi, 'What things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ.'" New Outlook (16 September 1931), 875.
- The High Road to Christ; A Popular Essay in Restatement. London: Cassel, 1912.
- "How to Spend Advent, II." New Outlook (17 December 1930).
- "Imago Dei." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 2, No. 5 (September-October, 1925).
- "The Impending Canadian Election." New Outlook (9 October 1935).
- "'Jacob and the Ladder,' Sermon Preached at the Reopening after Reconstruction of Sherbourne Church, Toronto, Sunday, November 24, 1929." New Outlook (11 December, 1929).
- "Jesus or Christ? A Rejoinder." The Hibbert Journal, Vol. 8 (1909-10).
- "Jesus and the Unemployed." New Outlook (6 May 1931).
- "A Little Commemoration of St. Augustine, II." New Outlook (19 November 1930).
- "The Moderator to the Church: II. The Moderator's Mission." New Outlook (31 October 1934).
- "The Moderator to the Church: IV. The Beloved Community." New Outlook (14 November 1934).
- The New Man and the Divine Society. New York, Macmillan, 1926.
- "'Nunc Dimittis;' Some Thoughts for a Clouded Christmas." New Outlook (10 December 1937).
- "Placarding Jesus Christ the Crucified." New Outlook (21 September 1927).
- "In Praise of Humanism." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 8, No. 2 (March-April 1931).
- "The Preacher as Interpreter." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, Vol. 3, no. 2 (March-April, 1926).
- "The Quiet Hour." New Outlook (14 January 1931-26 March 1937).
- The Renaissance of Faith. London: Cassell, 1912.
- "The Revealing of the Sons of God," New Outlook (30 June 1926).
- "Revival Without Tarrying for Any; Sermon preached in Sherbourne Church, Toronto. Sunday Morning, Sept. 20th." New Outlook (30 September 1931).
- "The Saints in the Bleachers; A Sermon preached in Sherbourne Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, Nov. 1st." New Outlook (25 November 1931).
- "Solid Ground in a Shaking World." New Outlook (7 October 1931).
- "The Son of Man in Men." New Outlook (31 December 1930).
- "The Theological Dilemma in America." The Hibbert Journal, Vol. 25 (1926-27).
- "A Theological Renaissance." Christendom, Vol. 2 (1937).
- The Spirit of God and the Faith of Today. Chicago: Willett, Clark & Corby, 1930.
- "A Theological Renaissance." Christendom, Vol. 2 (1937).
- "Thy Kingdom Come." New Outlook (25 October 1929).
- "The Word Became Flesh; Sermon preached on the opening Sunday of his ministry in Sherbourne Street United Church, Toronto, on the evening of January 2." New Outlook, (19 January, 1927).
- "Wheels and Systems; A Plea For Another Theology." Whither Christianity?, Lynn Harold Haugh, ed. New York: Harper, 1927.
- Sclater, J. R. P. "Articles on Foundations of Christian Faith, I-IX" New Outlook (4 November 1925 - 6 January 1926).

- , The Public Worship of God. New York: George H. Doran, 1927.
- Scott, Ernest F. "Some Doubts About Psychology." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, 1, no. 2 (April 1924).
- , The First Age of Christianity. 1926.
- , The Kingdom and the Messiah. 1911.
- , "The New Criticism of the Gospels." Harvard Theological Review, 19, no. 2 (April 1926), 143-163.
- , "The Place of Apocalyptical Conceptions in the Mind of Jesus." Journal of Biblical Literature, 41 (1922).
- , "The Present Position of New Testament Theology." Harvard Theological Review, 6, no. 1 (January 1913).
- Scott, Robert Belgarnie Young. "Among the New Books: 'The Church and Society, by F. Ernest Johnson,' reviewed by R. B. Y. Scott." New Outlook (26 June 1935).
- , "The Biblical Basis." Towards the Christian Revolution. R. B. Y. Scott and Gregory Vlastos, eds. Kingston: Ronald P. Frye & Co., 1989 [1936].
- , "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, 'Individual Freedom.'" New Outlook (22 January 1935).
- , "VI. How I Interpret the Bible." Interpretation (July 1951), 318-328.
- , "Individual Freedom." New Outlook (22 January 1936).
- , "Priesthood, Prophecy, Wisdom, and the Knowledge of God." Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 80 (1961).
- , "Shall We Make Peace?" The New Outlook (6 January 1937).
- and David A. MacLennan. "The Christian Contribution to Rebuilding of Society, Pt. II." New Outlook (13 March 1935).
- and David A. MacLennan. "Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, The Christian Contribution to Rebuilding of Society." New Outlook (6 March 1935).
- Shaw, John Mackintosh. Essentials and Non-Essentials of the Christian Faith. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928.
- , "The Moderator's Mission in Kingston." New Outlook (20 February 1935).
- Shoemaker, Samuel M., Jr. "House-Parties Across the Continent." Christian Century, Vol. 50, Pt. 2 (August 23, 1933).
- Silcox, Claris Edwin. "Among the New Books: 'The Church Controversy in Germany, by Anders Nygren; Recent Developments in German Protestantism, by Dr. Otto Piper; The Mediator: A Study of the Central Doctrine of the Christian Faith, by Emil Brunner,' reviewed by C. E. Silcox," New Outlook (26 June 1935).
- , 'Mr. Silcox Replies,' by C. E. Silcox." New Outlook (14 August 1935).
- , "The Oxford Groups in Canada." Christian Century, Vol. 51, Pt. 2 (September 12, 1934).
- Smart, James D. The Interpretation of Scripture. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961.
- , "The Irrelevance of Natural Theology to the Christian Religion." Hibbert Journal, Vol. 38, no. 2 (January 1940).
- , "Karl Barth and Other-Worldliness." The Expository Times, Vol. 45 (1933-34).
- , "A New Interpretation of Isaiah Lxvi: 1-6." Expository Times, Vol. 46 (1934-35).
- , "A Redefinition of Jesus' Use of the Parables." Expository Times, Vol. 47 (1935-36).
- , "The Return of Theology to the Church." The Expository Times, Vol. 49 (1937-38).
- Smyth, James. "The Faith of the Modern Man." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought 1, no.1 (January-February 1924).
- Stapleford, Frank N. "The Relation of the Church to Social Work." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, 2, no. 1 (January-February, 1925).

- Stewart, J. L. "An Anti-Christian Crusade in China." New Outlook (24 June 1925).
- "The Present Crisis in China. Communism or Christianity, Which?" New Outlook (5 August 1925).
- Taylor, William R. "Evolution and Immortality." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, 2, no. 1 (November-December 1925).
- "Hellenism and the Wisdom Literature." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, 1, no. 6 (November-December, 1924).
- "Sir Robert Falconer: III. Religion and Scholarship." University of Toronto Quarterly, 1, no. 1 (October, 1943).
- Thomas, Ernest. "About Books and Their Writers." New Outlook (16 June 1926).
- "China as the Moderator Sees it." New Outlook (12 October 1925).
- "Insurgent Movements in the Church." The Canadian Forum, 3 no. 29 (February 1923).
- "The Message of Dr. Maltby." New Outlook (3 October 1928).
- "'Prepare to Meet Thy God.'" New Outlook (2 September 1925).
- [Edward Trelawney]. "Religious Experience and Education." New Outlook (22 July 1925).
- review of The Historical Life of Christ. By J. Warschauer.... London: Ernest Benn, Ltd. Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, 4, 2 (March-April 1927).
- "Richard Roberts as Theologian," New Outlook (20 July 1927).
- "Should the United Church Condemn War? Article II. We Wrestle Not Against Flesh and Blood." New Outlook (12 August 1925).
- "The Significance of Political Groups." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, 1, no. 1 (January-February, 1924).
- "Social Reform and the Methodist Church." The Canadian Forum 1, no. 9 (June 1921).
- "The Truth About Foreign Missions." New Outlook, (9 December 1925).
- "The Truth About Modern Missions; Shall We Promote Christianity or Western Civilization?" New Outlook (9 December 1925).
- "Young Life Facing a New World." New Outlook (11 January 1928).
- Thornton-Duesbery, Rev. J. P. "The Guidance of God. A Study of the Oxford Group Movement." The Expository Times, Vol. 43 (1931-32).
- Vlastos, Gregory. "God of Wrath." The Christian Century, Vol. 52, Pt. 1 (24 April 1935).
- "God of Wrath, God of Hope, God the Power Within," The Canadian Student, Vol. XVI, no. 6 (March-April 1934).
- "Jesus' Conflict With the Pharisees." Christendom, Vol. 2 (1937).
- "Karl Barth, Prophet and Dogmatist; review of Karl Barth, Prophet of a New Christianity? By Wilhelm Pauck. Harper & Brothers, \$2.00." The Christian Century, Vol. 49, Pt. 1 (6 January 1932).
- "The Impossible Possibility; review of An Interpretation of Christian Ethics, by Reinhold Niebuhr. New York: Harper & Brothers, \$2.00." Christendom, Vol. 1 (1935-36).
- "The Religion of Community; review of The Structure of Religious Experience, The Terry Lectures for 1936, by John Macmurray. Yale University Press, \$1.50." Christendom, Vol. 2 (1937).
- "The Religion of a Fool." The Christian Century, Vol. 45, Pt. 2 (4 October 1928).
- "Through the Eyes of Twenty-One." The Christian Century, Vol. 46, Pt. 1 (19 June 1929).
- "What is Love?" Christendom, Vol. 1 (1935-36).
- Wallace, Edward Wilson. "'In Him is Life,' Article V: The Jerusalem Conference Considers the Christian Message." New Outlook, (23 May 1928).
- "'It Seemed Good to the Holy Spirit and to Us,' Article X. The Significance of the Jerusalem Conference." New Outlook (27 June 1928).

- . "The Pattern on the Mount." Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, (July-August 19128).
- . "'Religion and Education,' Inaugural Address." New Outlook (12 February 1930).
- . "'Who is Sufficient For These Things.' The First Week of the Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Conference." New Outlook, (16 May 1928).
- Warfield, Benjamin. "The Essence of Christianity and the Cross of Christ." Harvard Theological Review, 7, 4 (October 1914).
- Whidden, H. P. "What is Liberal Education?" Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, 1, no. 1 (January-February, 1924).
- Woodworth, James S. "Are Economic Questions 'Moral'?" New Outlook, (19 January 1928).
- . "Unemployment: A World Problem, Article II." New Outlook (29 October 1930).

II. Secondary Sources:

A. Articles:

- Ahlstrom, Sydney. "The Scottish Philosophy and American Theology." Church History 24 (1955).
- Airhart, Phyllis D. "What Must I Do To Be Saved?' Two Paths to Evangelical Conversion in Late Victorian Canada." Church History, (September 1990).
- Allen, Richard. "Introduction," in Salem Bland, The new Christianity (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973 [1920]).
- Ayre, John. "Frye, Herman Northrop." The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2nd Ed., Vol. 2 (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1988).
- Ban, Joseph D. "T. C. Douglas and W. Aberhart, A Comparison of their Theological Premises and Social Perspectives." Costly Vision, The Baptist Pilgrimage in Canada, Jarold K. Zeman, ed. Burlington, Ontario: Welch, 1988.
- Bean, Everett H. "Frank Baird," in Called to Witness; Profiles of Canadian Presbyterians, Vol. 2, W. Standford Reid, ed. Hamilton: Presbyterian Church of Canada Church Historical Society, 1980.
- Brown, Rev. James Brown. "Theologians of our Time; XI. John Baillie." The Expository Times, Vol. 75 (1963-64).
- Burke, Sara. "Seeking the Highest Good: Social Service at the University of Toronto, 1888-1937." Journal of the Canadian Historical Association, Vol. 5 (1994).
- Cavert, Samuel McCrea. "The Younger Theologians." Religion in Life (1936).
- Chambers, Robert D. "Hugh MacLennan and Religion: The Precipice Revisited." Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Winter 1979-80).
- . "Margaret Laurence's Women." Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Summer 1983).
- Clifford, N. Keith. "His Dominion: a vision in crisis." Studies in Religion, II, 4 (1973).
- Cook, Ramsay. "Francis Marion Beynon and the Crisis of Christian Reformism." The West and the Nation, Carl Berger and Ramsay Cook, eds. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976.
- Fraser, Brian J. "From Anathema to Alternative, The Gordons and Socialism." A Long and Faithful March, Harold Wells and Roger Hutchinson, eds. Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1989.
- . "Theology and the social gospel among Canadian Presbyterians: A Case Study." Studies in Religion, 8 / 1 (Winter, 1979).
- French, Goldwin. "The Evangelical Creed in Canada." The Shield of Achilles; Aspects of Canada in the Victorian Age, W. L. Morton, ed. Toronto / Montreal: McLelland and Stewart, 1968.
- Gauvreau, Michael. "Protestantism Transformed: Personal Piety and the Evangelical Social Vision, 1815-1867." The Canadian Protestant Experience, 1760-1990, George A. Rawlyk, ed.

- Burlington: Welch, 1990.
- Hiebert, Erwin N. "Modern Physics and Christian Faith." God & Nature; Historical Essays on the Encounter between Christianity and Science, David C. Lindberg and Ronald Numbers, eds. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986.
- Hoy, Helen. "'The Gates Closed on Us Then:' The Paradise-Lost Motif in MacLennan's Fiction." Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Winter 1979-80).
- Hutchinson, Roger. "Introduction." Towards the Christian Revolution, R. B. Y. Scott and Gregory Vlastos, eds. (Kingston: Ronald P. Frye & Co., 1989 [1936]).
- , "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order: 1934-45." A Long and Faithful March, Harold Wells and Roger Hutchinson, eds. Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1989.
- Irving, John A. "The Achievement of George Sydney Brett." University of Toronto Quarterly, 14, no. 4 (July 1945).
- Janzen, Eileen Calder. "King Gordon's Christian socialism and the Kingdom of God," Studies in Religion, 16 / 3 (Summer 1987).
- Jasen, Patricia. "Arnoldian Humanism, English Studies, and the Canadian University." Queen's Quarterly, 95, no. 3 (Autumn 1988).
- Keast, Ronald. "'It is Written -- But I Say Unto You': Innis on Religion." Journal of Canadian Studies, 20, 4 (Winter 1985-86).
- Kiesekamp, Burkhard. "Christendom, Nationalism and the Fate of the Nineteenth Century Evangelical Consensus." Acadiensis, XXV, 1 (Autumn 1995).
- , "Presbyterian and Methodist divines: their case for a national church in Canada, 1875-1900." Studies in Religion, II, 3 (1973).
- Klempa, William. "Protestant theology: Canada." The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought, Alister E. McGrath, ed. Cambridge, Mass.: Basil Blackwell, 1993.
- Klinefelter, D. S. "The Theology of John Baillie: A Biographical Introduction." Scottish Journal of Theology, 22, no. 4 (December 1969).
- Latourette, Kenneth Scott. "Ecumenical Bearings of the Missionary Movement and the International Missionary Council." A History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1517-1948, Ruth Rouse, Stephen Charles Neill, eds. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967.
- Marshall, David. "Methodism Embattled: A Reconsideration of the Methodist Church and World War I." Canadian Historical Review, 66, no. 1 (1985).
- Marshall, I. Howard. "James Denney." Creative Minds in Contemporary Theology, Philip E. Hughes, ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966.
- McGrath, Alister E. "Augustine of Hippo." Historians of the Christian Tradition; Their Methodology and Influence on Western Thought, Michael Bauman and Martin I. Klauber, eds. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995.
- McKillop, A. B. "Introduction." Contexts of Canada's Past; Selected Essays of W. L. Morton, A. B. McKillop, ed. Toronto: Macmillan / Carleton Library Series, 1980.
- McLelland, Joseph C. "Walter Bryden; 'By Circumstance and By God'." Called to Witness, Profiles of Canadian Presbyterians, Vol. 2, W. Stanford Reid, ed. Hamilton: Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1980.
- MacLulich, T. D. "The Precipice: MacLennan's Anatomy of Failure." Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Winter 1979-80).
- Moir, J. S. "The Canadian Baptist and the Social Gospel Movement, 1879-1914." Baptists in Canada; Search for Identity Amid Diversity, Jarold K. Zeman, ed. Burlington, Ontario: Welch, 1980.
- Pitsula, J. M. "W. G. Brown, 'Righteousness Exalteth a Nation.'" Saskatchewan History, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Winter 1980).
- Reid, W. Stanford. "The Quebec Trio." Called to Witness; Profiles of Canadian Presbyterians, Vol.

- 2, W. Stanford Reid, ed. Hamilton: Presbyterian Church Committee on Church History, 1980.
- Rider, Peter E. "Introduction." The Magpie, by Douglas Durkin. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974.
- Semple, Neil. "'The Nurture and Admonition of the Lord': Nineteenth-Century Canadian Methodism's Response to 'Childhood'." Social History, Vol. 14, No. 27 (May 1981).
- Sher, Richard. "Professors of Virtue: The Social History of the Edinburgh Moral Philosophy Chair in the Eighteenth Century." Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment, M. A. Stewart, ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.
- Schrotenboer, Paul G. "Emil Brunner." Creative Minds in Contemporary Theology, Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966.
- Sinclair-Faulkner, Thomas. "Theory divided from practice: The introduction of the higher criticism into Canadian Protestant seminaries." Studies in Religion, 10 / 3 (Summer, 1981).
- Smart, James D. "The Evangelist as Theologian." Separated Unto the Gospel, Donald V. Wade, ed. Toronto: Thorn Press, 1956.
- Wells, David. "On Being Evangelical: Some Differences and Similarities." Evangelicalism; Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990, Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington, and George A. Rawlyk, eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Wise, S. F. "Sermon Literature and Canadian Intellectual History." Readings in Canadian Social History, Vol. 2; Pre-Industrial Canada, 1760-1849, Michael S. Cross and Gregory S. Kealey, eds. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982.
- Wright, Robert A. "The Canadian Protestant Tradition 1914-1945." The Canadian Protestant Experience 1760-1990, G. A. Rawlyk, ed. Burlington: Welch, 1990.

B. Books:

- Ahlstrom, Sydney. A Religious History of the American People, 2 Vols. Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1975.
- Airhart, Phyllis D. Serving the Present Age; Revivalism, Progressivism, and the Methodist Tradition in Canada. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992.
- Allen, Richard, ed. The Social Gospel in Canada. Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1975.
- Allen, Richard. The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada, 1914-1928. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971.
- Armour, Leslie, and Elizabeth Trott. The Faces of Reason; An Essay on Philosophy and Culture in English Canada 1850-1950. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1981.
- Austin, Alvyn J. Saving China: Canadian Missionaries in the Middle Kingdom, 1888-1959. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986.
- Axelrod, Paul. Youth, University, and Canadian Society. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989.
- Bebbington, David. Evangelicalism in Modern Britain, A History from the 1730's to the 1980's. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992 [1989].
- Patterns in History. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1979.
- Berger, Carl. Science, God, and Nature in Victorian Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983.
- The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1970.
- The Writing of Canadian History; Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing since 1900,

- 2nd Ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986.
- Berkhouwer, G. C. The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956.
- Bothwell, Robert, Ian Drummond, and John English. Canada Since 1945: Power, Politics, and Provincialism. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981.
- Braaten, Carl E. New Directions in Theology Today, Volume II: History and Hermeneutics. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965.
- Breisach, Ernst. Historiography; Ancient, Medieval, and Modern. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.
- Burke, Sara. Serving the Highest Good; Social Service and Gender at the University of Toronto, 1888-1939. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996.
- Childs, Brevard S. Biblical Theology in Crisis. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970.
- Christian, William. George Grant, A Biography. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993.
- Christie, Nancy, and Michael Gauvreau. A Full-Orbed Christianity; The Protestant Churches and Social Welfare in Canada, 1900-1945. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996.
- Clark, S. D. Church and Sect in Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948.
- . The Developing Canadian Community, 2nd Ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968.
- Clifford, N. Keith. The Resistance to Church Union in Canada, 1904-1939. Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1985.
- Collingwood, R. G. The Idea of History. New York: Oxford University Press, 1956.
- Cook, Ramsay. The Regenerators; Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985.
- Davie, George Elder. The Democratic Intellect; Scotland and Her Universities in the Nineteenth Century. Edinburgh: The University Press, 1961.
- Drummond, Andrew and James Bulloch. The Scottish Church, 1688-1843. Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1975.
- Drummond, Ian. Political Economy at the University of Toronto. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983.
- Endicott, Stephen. James G. Endicott: Rebel Out of China. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980.
- Francis, R. D. Frank H. Underhill, Intellectual Provocateur. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Frank, Douglas. Less Than Conquerors; How Evangelicals Entered the Twentieth Century. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986.
- Fraser, Brian J. The Social Uplifters; Presbyterian Progressives and the Social Gospel in Canada, 1875-1915. Waterloo: Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion/Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1988.
- Gauvreau, Michael. The Evangelical Century; College and Creed in English Canada from the Great Revival to the Great Depression. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991.
- Gilkey, Langdon. Reaping the Whirlwind; A Christian Interpretation of History. New York: Seabury Press, 1976.
- Grant, John Webster. A Profusion of Spires; Religion in Nineteenth Century Ontario. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988.
- . The Canadian Experience of Church Union. Toronto: Ryerson, 1967.
- . The Church in the Canadian Era. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1972.
- . George Pidgeon; A Biography. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1962.
- Grant, William and Frederick Hamilton. Principal Grant. Toronto: Morang and Co, 1904.

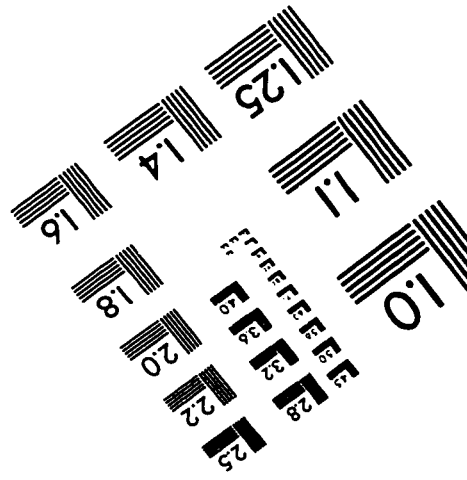
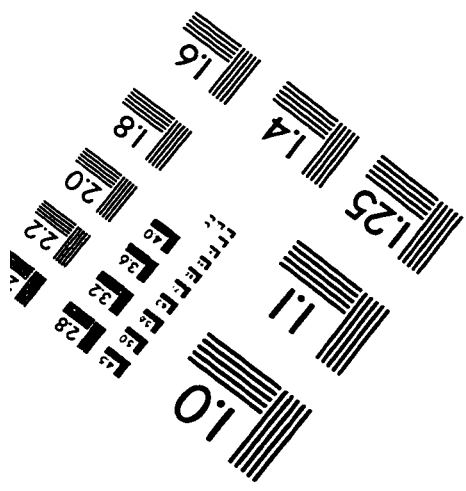
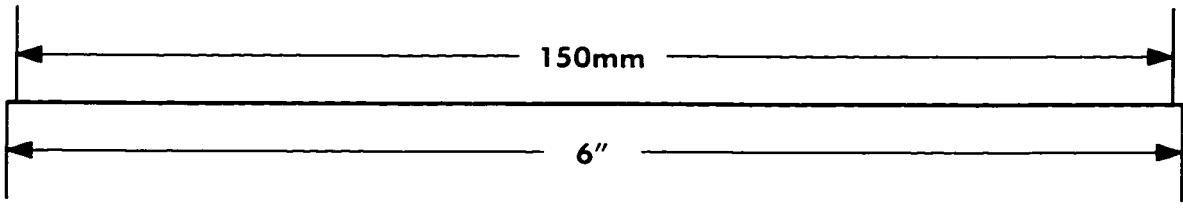
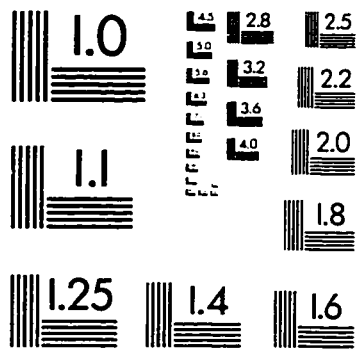
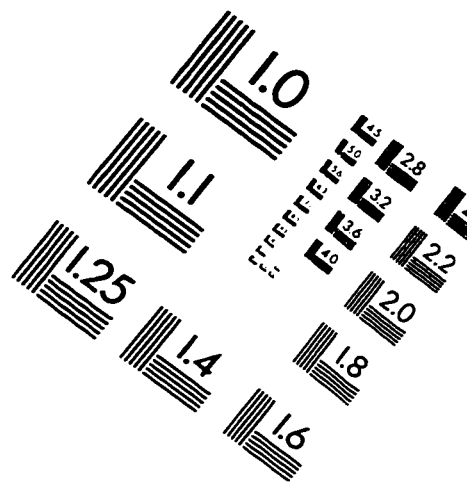
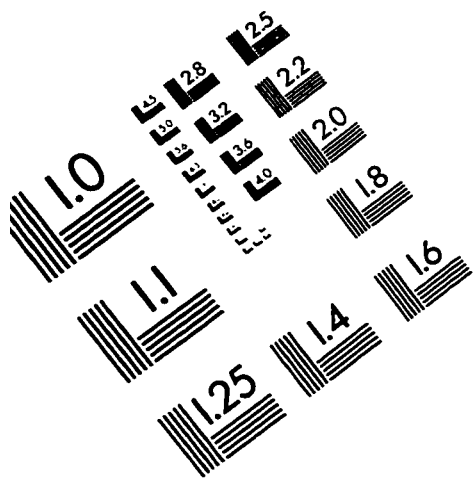
- Grant, William and Frederick Hamilton. Principal Grant. Toronto: Morang and Co, 1904.
- Graves, S. A. The Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960.
- Greenlee, James G. Sir Robert Falconer; A Biography. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988.
- Horn, Michiel. The League for Social Reconstruction: Intellectual Origins of the Democratic Left in Canada, 1930-1942. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980.
- Hutchinson, William R. The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism. New York: Oxford, 1976.
- Kroker, Arthur. Technology and the Canadian Mind: Innis/McLuhan/Grant. Montreal: New World Perspectives, 1984.
- Lears, Jackson. No Place of Grace; Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920. New York: Pantheon Books, 1981.
- Lyon, David. The Steeple's Shadow; On the Myths and Realities of Secularization. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.
- MacLeod, John. Scottish Theology. Philadelphia: Banner of Truth Trust, 1943.
- Mandelbaum, Maurice. History, Man, and Reason: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Thought. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971.
- Marsden, George. The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970.
- Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925. New York: Oxford, 1980.
- The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief. New York: Oxford, 1994.
- Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.
- Marshall, David B. Secularizing the Faith; Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.
- McKillop, A. B. Contours of Canadian Thought. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987.
- A Disciplined Intelligence: Critical Inquiry and Canadian Thought in the Victorian Era. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979.
- Matters of Mind: The University in Ontario, 1791-1951. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994.
- McLoughlin, William G., ed. The American Evangelicals. 1800-1900. Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1976.
- McNaught, Kenneth. A Prophet in Politics; a Biography of J. S. Woodsworth. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959.
- Meyer, Donald. The Protestant Search for Political Realism 1919-1941, 2nd Ed. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1960.
- Moir, John S. Church and State in Canada, 1627-1867; Basic Documents. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967.
- Enduring Witness, 2nd Ed. Hamilton: Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1987.
- History of Biblical Studies in Canada. Chico, California: Scholar's Press, 1982.
- Nash, Roderick. The Nervous Generation: American Thought, 1917-1930. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1970.
- Neatby, Hilda. Queen's University Vol. I, 1841-1917. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. The Gospel in a Pluralist Society. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1989.
- Niebuhr, H. Richard. The Kingdom of God in America. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1953.
- Noll, Mark. Between Faith and Criticism; Evangelicals, Scholarship, and the Bible in North America, 2nd Ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991.

- Noll, Mark, Nathan O. Hatch, George M. Marsden. The Search For Christian America. Westchester, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1983.
- Owram, Doug. The Government Generation; Canadian Intellectuals and the State, 1900-1945. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986.
- Passmore, John. A Hundred Years of Philosophy, Rev. Ed. New York: Basic Books, 1966.
- Patrides, C. A. Patrides, ed. The Cambridge Platonists. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969.
- Pelikan, Jaroslav. The Christian Tradition, Vol. 5: Christian Doctrine and Modern Culture (Since 1700). Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989.
- , The Excellent Empire; The Fall of Rome and the Triumph of the Church. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987.
- Reardon, Bernard. Religious Thought in the Victorian Age. London: Longman, 1980.
- Russell, Jeffrey Barton. A History of Medieval Christianity. Arlington Heights: Harlan Davidson, 1968.
- Sandeen, Ernest. The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800-1930. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1980 [1970].
- Scharf, Betty R. The Sociological Study of Religion. New York: Harper, 1970.
- Shore, Marlene. The Science of Social Redemption. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987.
- Shortt, S. E. D. The Search for an Ideal: Six Canadian Intellectuals and their convictions in an age of transition, 1890-1930. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976.
- Smart, James D. The Divided Mind of Modern Theology. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967.
- Socknat, Thomas P. Witness Against War, Pacifism in Canada 1900-1945. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987.
- Spykman, Gordon J. Reformational Theology; A New Paradigm for Doing Dogmatics. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992.
- Stackhouse, John G., Jr. Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century; An Introduction to Its Character. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993.
- Stromberg, Roland. European Intellectual History Since 1789, 3rd Ed. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1981.
- Tarr, Leslie K. Shields of Canada: T. T. Shields, 1873-1955. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1967.
- Thompson, John H., and Allan Seager. Canada 1922-1939: Decades of Discord. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985.
- Van Die, Marguerite. An Evangelical Mind: Nathanael Burwash and the Methodist Tradition in Canada, 1839-1918. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989.
- Walsh, H. H. The Christian Church in Canada. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1950.
- Welch, Claude. Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century, Vol. 2, 1870-1914. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985.
- Wells, Harold, and Roger Hutchinson, eds. A Long and Faithful March. Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1989.
- Westfall, William. Two Worlds; The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario. Kingston & Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989.
- Westermann, Claus. Creation, John J. Scullion, trans. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974 [1971].
- Wilson, Bryan. Contemporary Transformation of Religion. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976.
- Wright, Robert. A World Mission; Canadian Protestantism and the Quest for a New International Order, 1918-1939. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991.
- Zahrnt, Heinz. The Question of God; Protestant Theology in the Twentieth Century, R. A. Wilson, trans. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966.
- Zeman, Jarold K., ed. Baptists in Canada; Search for Identity Amid Diversity. Burlington, Ontario: Welch, 1980.

C. Unpublished Dissertations:

- Hutchinson, Roger C. "The Fellowship For a Christian Social Order; A Social Ethical Analysis of a Christian Socialist Movement." Toronto School of Theology: unpublished Th.d, 1975.
- Jasen, Patricia J. "The English-Canadian Liberal Arts Curriculum: An Intellectual History, 1800-1950." University of Manitoba: unpublished Ph.d. dissertation, 1987.
- Ross, Douglas H. Ross. "A Theological Analysis of the Socio-Critical Role of the United Church of Canada Between 1925 and 1939." University of Saint Paul, Ottawa University: unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, 1981.
- Vissers, John Anthony. "The Conception of Revelation in the Theology of Walter W. Bryden." University of Toronto: unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1988.

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



APPLIED IMAGE, Inc.
1653 East Main Street
Rochester, NY 14609 USA
Phone: 716/482-0300
Fax: 716/288-5989

© 1993, Applied Image, Inc., All Rights Reserved